

॥ वाक्माला वन्दनीये नमः ॥

VEDANTA KESARI

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132

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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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No. 5

HOW EVEN THE GREAT ONES SURRENDER

Vijay Goswami, one of the leading personalities of the Brahmo Samaj, came from a very noble family of Bengal, noted for its piety and other spiritual qualities. One of his ancestors had even been an intimate companion of Sri Chaitanya. As an ardent follower of the Brahmo Samaj, Vijay, no doubt, meditated on the formless Brahman, though his innate love of God had merely been waiting for the proper time to manifest itself in all its sweetness. Much later he found it impossible to conceal his faith in God with forms, and therefore separated himself from the Brahmo Samaj.

One day Vijay Goswami arrived and respectfully took the dust of Sri Ramakrishna's feet. The Master was very fond of him on account of his piety, truthfulness and devotion. Vijay had lived for a long time at Dacca and had had a vision of Sri Ramakrishna there. Asked by Mahima Chakravarti about his experiences at the holy places which he had recently visited, Vijay said, "What shall I say? I realize that everything is here where we are sitting now. This roaming about is useless. At other places I have seen two, five, ten or, at most, twenty-five per cent of the Power that I see fully manifested here (showing the Master). Here alone I find the full one hundred per cent manifestation of God." (To the Master) "It is only because you are so easily available that you have created so much confusion. If you were sitting on the peak of a mountain and one had to walk long distances and climb up high altitudes, one would understand your worth." (With folded hands) "I have now realized who you are."

Sri Ramakrishna (in a state of ecstasy): "If so, then so be it!" Saying: "Yes, I have understood," Vijay fell prostrate before the Master, held his feet on his chest and clung to them. Sri Ramakrishna was in deep samadhi, motionless like a picture. The devotees were overwhelmed by this sight. Some burst into tears, some chanted hymns. Mahimacharan sang with tears in his eyes: "Behold the embodiment of Love Divine!"

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE AND ACHARYA NIMBARKA

नान्या गतिः कृष्णपदारविन्दात्
सदृश्यते ब्रह्मशिवादिवन्दितात् ।
भक्तेच्छयोपात्तसुविन्यविग्रहाद-
चिन्त्यशक्तेरविचिन्त्यशासनात् ।

There is no refuge other than the lotus feet of Krishna. It is clear from their being worshipped by Brahma, Siva and others. Though His will or command is inconceivable and His power incomprehensible, He, for easy meditation, assumed a body according to the wishes of the devotees.

One of the theistic schools of Vedānta is known as Svābhāvika-bhedābheda-vāda. Acharya Nimbarka is the propounder of the Vaishnava faith following this philosophy. He was a Telugu Brahmin and was born in Mungipatana or in Nimbagrama situated in Vridavana or in the district of Bellari. He was variously known as Nimbarka, Niyamānanda, Nimbāditya, Haripriya etc. He was the son of Aruna and Jayanti Devi, and is considered in his sect as the avatar of the Sudarsana Chakra, the disc of Lord Vishnu. He was born probably after 13th century (if not in the 11th century A.D.). Much details of his life are, however, not known. According to the traditional account of Nimbarka's sampradāya, he was a naishtika Brahmacharin, and then having taken sannyasa, he went to Vrindavana for intense sadhana. He travelled throughout India and preached his doctrine. Srinivasa, Devacharya, Keshava Kashmiri, Madhava-Mukunda, Anantarama and Purushottama are some of the noted writers of this school.

The important works of Sri Nimbarka are a short commentary on the Brahmasutra called *Vedānta-pārijata-saurabha*, as well as ten verses, *Dasasloki*, elucidating his view of the distinctness of jiva, Isvara and jagat (individual soul, God and world). His disciple Srinivasa wrote the *Vedānta-kaustubha* with a full exposition of Nimbarka's views. Nimbarka's commentary is very

concise and non-controversial. His sect belongs to the Sanatkumara sampradaya, one of the four main Vaishnavite sects. He based his system on the teachings of Sri Ramanuja as all the Bhakti schools did, and followed the vritti of Audulomi. The theological aspect, however, has more similarity with the Chaitanya school which came later. The essentials of his system relate to the five topics viz., the nature of God and of the finite self, bhakti, obstacles to it and mukti or the fruit of Lord's grace.¹

The ultimate categories or reals, according to Nimbarka, are Brahman, cit and acit. Brahman is the highest reality, the creator and ruler of the universe. He is possessed of attributes and is the abode of infinite beauty, bliss and tenderness. He is essentially gracious to His devotees and out of pity grants them His vision. Brahman is Krishna and is always accompanied by Radha who is to be worshipped conjointly with Him. In Dasasloki he speaks more explicitly of Radha-Krishna as the ultimate reality.

The cit or jiva or the individual soul is essentially of the nature of intelligence. The soul is a knower and as such is essentially a self-conscious Ego and continues to be so even in the liberated

state. It is a doer and enjoyer also. But it is under God's control. It is eternal and always retains these characteristics. The soul being a part of Brahman is both different and non-different from Him. Souls are atomic in size and are infinite in number. There are two kinds of souls, viz., souls in bondage and freed souls (baddha and mukta). The bound souls may be karmins (virtuous and sinners) and knowers, who have different destinies after death.

The acit is divided into the primal matter, non-primal matter and time. Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the universe. The jagat, world, is the kārya, effect, of Brahman who is the kāraṇa, source. Brahman is saktimān and jiva and jagat are His two powers. Between Brahman and the world there is natural and qualitative difference. Brahman is conscious, subtle, non-material and even pure. The jagat is opposite to all these. It is unconscious, gross, material and impure. Hence, there is natural difference between the two. Again, the identity is also equally true.

While giving the relation between Brahman, the cit and the acit, Nimbarka gives his theory of svābhāvika-bhedābheda-vāda. The three are the controller, enjoyer and enjoyed respectively. Brahman is the cause and the soul His effect, like the sun and its rays. Brahman is the controller, the whole, the worshipped, the object to be known and attained; the soul is the controlled, the part, the worshipper, the knower and the attainer. So there is a natural (svābhāvika) difference between the two. The similar is the case with the universe. But the non-difference is equally true, for the effects and parts are non-distinct from the cause and the whole.

Thus, the relation between Brahman, on the one hand, and the universe on the other, is a relation of natural difference-

non-difference (svābhāvika-bhedābheda), just like that between a snake and its coil, or between the sun and its rays. Just as the coil is nothing but the snake, yet different from it, just as the ray is nothing but the sun, yet different from it, just as the different kinds of stones, though nothing but earth, are yet different from it, so the souls and the universe, though nothing but Brahman (Brahmātmaka), are different from Him because of their own peculiar natures and attributes.²

Moksha or salvation, according to Sri Nimbarka, means becoming like the Lord (tad-bhāvāpatti). It is attaining similarity with Him in nature and qualities. This is possible due to the grace of the Lord. A man has an inclination towards salvation through the grace of God. He then approaches the Guru and does sadhana which pleases the Lord who frees him from Avidya. After the accumulated fruits of action are exhausted, he gets the direct vision of God and attains similarity with Him. And this is salvation. Though there is similarity, there is no complete identity with God. The freed soul, however, realizes itself as non-distinct from Brahman.

It is clear from the above that since salvation means the attainment of the nature of Brahman, as well as that of one's own nature, the freed soul realises itself as non-distinct from Brahman, which non-distinction is not incompatible with a distinction between itself and Brahman. That is to say, as everywhere else, the relation between the soul and Brahman is one of natural difference-non-difference, in salvation, too, there being similarity as well as distinction between the two.³

² Roma Bose : *Vedānta-pārijata-saurabha* of Nimbarka, Vol. III. p. 42.

³ Cf. *Ibid*, p. 44.

¹ उपास्यरूपं तदुपासकस्य च

कृपाफलं भक्तिरसस्ततः परम् ।

विरोधिनो रूपमयेतदाप्ते :

जेया इमेऽर्था अपि पंच साधयिः । *Dasasloki*, 10.

is purified and by the third, one-pointedness in Brahman develops in the devotee. This has been called as parabhakti in the devotional scriptures. Through this devotion Brahman is realised.

Acharya Nimbarka's sampradaya is divided into two main sects. In the 16th century Keshava Bhatta started the Virakta and Harivyasa the Grihastha branch of this sect. There are two other minor sects also, called Haridasi and Harivyasi. The main seat of the Nim-

barka sect is said to be Dhruvakshetra in Mathura. The Nimats have many Duaras or groups in North and Western India. There are many followers in Bengal also. They use Tulasi beads for rosary and marks of tilaka with gopi-chandana on forehead and other places of the body. The sect of Nimbarka is noted for its devotion and service to God and austerity for Him, which may fruitfully be emulated by all spiritual aspirants.

AT THE HOLY FEET OF 'M'

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI DHARMESHANANDA

28th July, 1931, Tuesday.

At about 6 p.m. I went to see M. (the writer of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) on the balcony of the four-storied school building in Amhurst Street, Calcutta. He greeted me with a kind smile and asked me to sit close to him. I sat beside him after taking the dust of his feet. He was referring to the apathy of a certain young man towards the world and his desire to lead a monastic life. Looking at Dr Mitra, M. said, "Why don't you let him stay for twelve years wherever he likes?"

The young man was the brother-in-law of Dr Mitra. He was a married man with a daughter of marriageable age. But out of indifference to worldly affairs he had left them and was then living at Ramakrishna Advaita Ashram in Banaras without any intention of returning home. His brother one day came to M.'s house and complained about him saying: "What kind of renunciation is this? Leaving behind a sick brother and a grown-up daughter what religious life can he lead at Banaras? We will see how long he can stay away. I am very soon leaving for Banaras and I mean to drag him back home. What sort of religion it is which makes him oblivious of his duties to

his family, without making him seriously try for God-realization either?"

M.: It is really a shame! Going to Banaras instead of shouldering the responsibilities of a married life! As if he is bubbling out with renunciation! And then some are married twice and others thrice! Even Sadhus find it hard to tread the path of renunciation; but still they try their best after having given up everything. But what is the renunciation of these people? To enjoy everything that the world can provide and listen occasionally to religious discourses. Those who have poor relatives to look after, should live so far away as to make it impossible for them to find out. It is not so easy to remain detached from worldly affairs, and feel at the same time that they are free from attachment. What do you say, Satinath! You seem to be looking round. Why? Wait; it is not evening yet. Listen to all these. There is something more to follow. Those who want to enter the monastic life must not live so close to their relatives; they should associate only with Sadhus.

It was evening. Sri M. lighted the lamp and entered the room on the walls of which were many pictures of deities, as also the picture of

young Narendranath along with other monks of Baranagar Math and a picture of Sri Krishna from Kumbha Mela. M. was looking at all these pictures and talking about them. Then about half an hour he remained deep in meditation and prayer after which he came back to his seat on the terrace. A young man in ochre clothes who had just entered the monastic order came in. He was a devotee of the Mother-Goddess (Shakti). M. asked me to read out the Devi Bhagawata to him. I started reading it from the beginning—the chapter of creation which Suta spoke to Saunaka. Occasionally M. went on explaining some passages here and there. The talk centered on many sages like Manu and on Brahma and Vishnu. The place was Naimisaranya which was unaffected by the evils of the present age. The chariot wheel of the sages "Naimi" stopped here and that is why it was called Naimisaranya. There were 28 Manus, Vaivaswata being the 28th.

Amrita Babu: Were there no Manus before this?

M.: That is what is said here. We ourselves know very little indeed.

Myself: Perhaps there were! They stated what they had realised. There is truth even above truth.

M.: How much can we know with this little intellect of ours. It is our duty to accept what we hear and then to practise what the sages and great Incarnations have told us. There is nothing else to be done. Just look at this universe! Who knows anything about it? Do you know all about these stars, the sun, the moon and the sky and the breeze? This life of ours will cease if there be no air to breathe and all our calculations and judgments will come to nought. And the mechanism of our body is equally wonderful. The surgeons are surprised after performing operations of stomach, heart, etc. to see how the food passes and gets transformed into blood and flesh, fat and marrow through numberless small and big blood vessels; and again the

intellect is formed out of its subtle essence. Do you know who has created all these mechanism and how it works? Where will your intellect be if all these stop for a while. The Master used to say: "What is your pride and vanity when you can't prevent a man making water in your mouth when you are sleeping?" The Master used to speak of supernatural powers thus. Once a man came driving a carriage to ask for a medicine for Orchites. To him the Master said, "It is not I but a Sadhu in the Panchavati who gives medicine." It is no part of religion to cure diseases. The love for God is the end of all religions is the opinion of the Master.

Myself: The saints knew God, but in a spirit of humility they said, "Oh God, we know nothing of you at all." Great men are always humble enough to admit their ignorance of so many things.

M.: It is beyond our power to know God. Do you think I have known Him? He is beyond human comprehension. Only by His grace can one develop some love for Him. And for that we must always weep and pray. (Then with a deep emotion he continued :) The Master would ask Narendranath to sing the song:

"Drunk with the wine of God,
Let the heart be full,
Lie down on the ground,
And flood it with your tears with cries of
'Hari; Hari.'"

(He sang this song and said :) 'Always beg for His grace and meditate on Him. Cry for Him in solitude. Worldly attachments will lead you nowhere. It is only His divine grace that really matters.'

When I rose to take my leave he said: 'Wait.' He wanted to give me the holy 'Prasad' but felt he would be detaining me more than was necessary and therefore said: 'You can go. I won't keep you any longer. You have drunk the nectar of divine thoughts to-day.'

st August, 1931, Saturday.

On the balcony of the school building. Sri 1., Amulya Babu, Amrita Babu, Lalit Babu, Mukunda Babu, Sudhir Babu and Benoy Maharaj were present there and Dr Mitra came afterwards. (They were talking about the birth-day celebration of Sri M.)

M. : I have not been keeping well, so how do you like my proposal that you should all go to the Math and perform the Master's worship here instead of here?

Benoy Maharaj : And you feel that it will have much trouble, isn't it? But will it be possible for us to perform it there?

M. : Why, these people will purchase all that is necessary and go to the math and organise everything.

B. Maharaj : The point is that there is almost every day a function of this kind in the Math, that is why we proposed to have it here.

M. : But when the Sadhus come here, I may become nervous and I am sure everybody will then be worried about me and you will be guilty of negligence in the service of the Sadhus. Afterwards he changed his mind and said to the new devotees who were present there : "I hope you will kindly come here. We shall have the Master's worship here. Just see what a tremendous hardship the Master went through to establish this order; but then he was ever cheerful, even when he was reduced to a skeleton. From His holy mouth would flow his ambrosial words in a never ceasing stream. He was eager to know about everybody and was full of affection for all."

To-day M. meditated deeply for about an hour and a half and I too tried to meditate sitting beside him. To-day he seemed to be graver than usual.

After sometime he said to Purnendu : 'Sitapati Maharaj has come; we should give his are.' (Then he smiled and said :) 'We should be careful to see that he is not out of pocket; what do you say?' Purnendu : 'Yes, of course.'

It was past nine at night and I took my leave and I took the dust of Sitapati Maharaj's feet before I left. They were then discussing plans as to how to make the festival a success.

Monday, 3rd August, 1931.

Today in 13/2 Guru Prasad Chaudhury Lane, there was the Master's special worship on the occasion of the celebration of M.'s birth day. I could not sleep at all last night but only took a nap for a couple of hours before morning and after taking my bath left Holy Mother's house. On reaching I began to arrange the flowers I brought. Jatish Maharaj who had come from the Math was busy with the Puja, with Hiranmaya Maharaj in charge of all arrangements.

Sitapati Maharaj after having made the necessary preparations on the ground floor came up now and sat facing north and began to recite the 'Chandi'. At 10-30 a.m., M. came and having prostrated himself before the Master sat with his face southward. From 10-30 a.m. to 12-00 noon he listened to the recitation of the 'Chandi'.

A sacred fire was lit beside which M. sat till 1 o'clock. He then saw the waving of lights before the Master and himself looked after the entertainment of the monks. He then sat down to his own meals and lovingly got the grand son of Jiten Babu to sit beside him and fed him with the sanctified food.

In the evening I was also present there in the school building between 6-00 to 9-30 p.m. Just before night at about 6-00 p.m., a devotee started singing devotional songs. After an hour came Swami Suddhananda Maharaj and about thirty to forty Sadhus from Math. They also joined in the music. At about 8-00 p.m., came M. in an abstracted mood. He prostrated himself before the Master's photo and his mind seemed to be far away. After greeting all the Sadhus with profound respect he remained there for about half an hour. Afterwards at the request of Sitapati Maharaj he retired to his room as he was feeling a terrible

pain in his hand since noon. But he could not keep himself confined to his solitary room when the Sadhus were there as invited guests in his house. He was again seen on the roof where the Sadhus sat down to their food. I also accompanied M. to have a look at the monks taking their meals. Upada Maharaj recited a poem about the Master which M. enjoyed very much. A bright smile radiated from his face. There stood in front of him two Sadhus. At

a distance was seated Satyen Maharaj on a bench. He had sent some sweets through Chandra Babu as an offering to the Master. At about 9-30 p.m., when I came downstairs after taking my meals, I found that M. was humbly seated along with the devotees. I took the dust of his feet and returned to Udbodhan at about 10-00 p.m. with a little prasada for the Sadhus of the Holy Mother's place.

(To be continued.)

THE UNDEFINABILITY OF THE ENTITY AND THE NON-ENTITY AS PROVED BY SHREEHARSA

SRINATH S. HASURKAR

That the main importance of 'Khandana-Khādyā',* the monumental work of Shreeharsha, lies in its being a masterly illustration of the advaitic dialectics, none can ever deny. None can also ever dispute the fact that while keeping his devastating attacks as fierce as ever, the principal opponents, the great advaitic logician has constantly in his mind, are the followers of the Nyāya-Vaisesika schools of philosophy. Any number of instances, as a matter of fact, can be quoted in support of either of the two theories. A minute study of the contents of the great work, nevertheless, reveals an interesting fact, which is equally unassailable. It reveals that in the course of his marathon disputations, the great advaitin, on many a specific point of metaphysical value, has actually transcended these limitations completely, enlarged the actual field of his demolishing attacks, and has taken the entire realm of the Indian philosophical thought, believing in the Definability of the universe, under his fire. It, naturally, imports a unique importance to the monumental work of Shreeharsha, — an importance, which no earnest student of the Indian philosophy, — whatever particular school thereof he might be

then specifically inclined to, — can ever conceive at.

The present article aims at an objective presentation of the main arguments, put forward by the great dialectician on one of such points of metaphysical value. It aims at a systematic study of the principal arguments, advanced by the great advaitin in order to establish the fundamental undefinability and the consequential invalidity of the Entity ('Bhāva') and the Non-Entity ('Abhāva'), — the two concepts, which enjoy widest possible acceptance in the field of philosophical deliberations.

In order to expose the assumptional truth, sustaining the concepts, referred to above, the author of the Khandana-Khādyā takes up, as indeed is his general practice, the generally-accepted definitions of the Entity and the Non-Entity, one by one, examines each of them to the minutest possible extent, exposes every possible flaw, inherent therein, and condemns it as unacceptable.

Taking up the problem of the Definability of the Entity, first, Shreeharsha remarks — Some philosophers maintain that the Entity can be legitimately defined as 'that', which becomes the object of the notion of 'is' ('asti-iti-pratiti-visayatvam bhāvatvam')¹. But, they seem

* 'Khandana-Khādyā': Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras, — Publication.

¹ Khandana-Khādyā 1043/5 to 1045/10.

to have forgotten that according to such a definition of theirs, even the Non-Entity would be able to present itself on an Entity, since it too, like the 'bona fide' Entity, can, and does, become the object of the notion of 'is', — as, for example, in the case of a cognition, such as — 'there is an absence of the jar', and an Entity as a Non-Entity, since it, sometimes, can, and does, become the object of the notion of 'is not,' — as, for example, in the case of a cognition, such as — 'there is not a jar'. They also seem to have forgotten that on the adoption of such a definition, they are bound to be asked to explain whether in their opinion the word — 'is', employed above, denotes the meaning of the word — 'is', or whether in their view, it denotes the word itself, and nothing else, — a question, to which they cannot return an effective reply by opting for the first alternative, because that meaning itself has not been agreed upon as yet, or by opting for the second alternative, because that would revive the difficulty, already described above. An option for the second alternative would mean, moreover, that in the eyes of the advocates of the current definition of the Entity, no Entity, if it happens to become an object of the cognition, not denoted by the specific word — 'is', but by some other word, such as, for example, 'exists', can be considered as an Entity! They would not be able to argue hereon that since this other word happens to be a synonym for the original word — 'is', there should be no difficulty in such an instance as this being covered by the definition, under discussion. Because, there being no unanimity of opinion as regards the exact *one* meaning, commonly denoted by the two words — 'is' and 'exists', the latter cannot be viewed as a synonym of the former at all. They would not be able to argue hereon that since the word — 'exists' is used by one person to denote that, to denote which another person uses the word — 'is', the former can be legitimately viewed as a synonym of the latter; and thus the difficulty, such as envisaged above, need not arise at all. Because, it being undeniable that the word — 'pra-

meya' (i.e. that, which can be known) can be, and actually is, used by one person to denote a particular thing, to denote which another person, can, and actually does, use the word — 'abhidheya' (i.e. that, which can be spoken of), and still both those words are not synonymous with each other, — the rule, as laid above, is itself faulty! Moreover, the explanation, given above by the protagonists of the view, under discussion, is bound to tempt their critics to spring up an embarrassing question as to what is *that*, to denote which the word — 'is' is maintained to have been used by another person, then to press on further along this line, and finally to point out that if it is definable as such, why the advocates of the view, under scrutiny, do not define it, enthrone it as the definition of the concept of the Entity itself, and wash their hands of this business of gloating upon the usage of mere words!

The Entity is that, which is not of the nature of the negation of something else ('apara-pratishedhātmatvam bhāvatvam')² — declare some thinkers. But, — beginning the critical refutation of second definition, — says the author of Khandana-Khanda-Khādyā, — these thinkers seem to be unaware of a very obvious defect, inherent in this definition of theirs. They obviously do not seem to realise that there being no exclusive purpose to be served by the expression, — 'something else', used in the definition, the latter inevitably stands out as consisting of a superficial part. They, moreover, do not seem to realise that, — both the entity and the non-entity being of the nature of the negation of each other, the entire definition of theirs, with or without the said expression, does, on a bit deeper investigation, turn out to be without anything as its legitimate sphere of operation. They might argue here that like the nature of the negation of the entity, as enjoyed by the non-entity, the nature of the negation of the non-entity, as enjoyed by the entity, is not commonly apprehended. But, the validity of such an argument, even if accepted, — since it does not effect any change in the

² Ibid: 1046/1 to 1050/1.

prospects of the definition proper, — does not matter here very much. Of course, banking upon the validity of the above argument, the advocates of the current stand can effect some change in the main definition and then state that — the Entity is that, which is apprehended — not in the form of the negation of something else ('a-para-pratishedha-mukhena prati-yamanatvamābhāvatvam'). But, this they can do only at the risk of exposing themselves to some unrelishable eventualities. As a logical sequence of such an acceptance, they will have to accept, — for example, — that the character of being an entity, as enjoyed by a particular entity, such as, — for instance, — a jar, cannot be taken in by any external sense-organ, such as, — for instance, the visual one, — simply because the character of being apprehended, as enjoyed by the said particular entity, cannot be taken in by the said external sense-organ. As a logical sequence of such an acceptance, they will have to accept, moreover, that the apprehension, such as — 'There is no non-entity', is an apprehension, which has got nothing for its object. Because, here they cannot maintain that it has got an entity for its object, — simply because the entity here being apprehended in the form of the negation of something else, their own definition would not allow them to do that. They cannot maintain, on the other hand, that it has got a non-entity for its object, — simply because that being what is exactly denied by the apprehension, concerned, their own common sense would not allow them to do that. They cannot say that an apprehension such as this, itself, being an impossibility, they should not be exercised in such a fashion on that score at all. Because, an apprehension such as this it is quite possible that a person, listening to such a sentence, as — 'There is no non-entity', would really have as a natural result of listening to the employed words, equipped with the essential pre-requisites. Verily, even the advocates of the view, under discussion, might have heard of a rule, declaring that — 'The words, when employed in accordance with the specific rules,

can give birth to an apprehension on the part of the listener of a thing, even if it is totally non-existent in reality'. Of course, in order to get clean out of this predicament, they can argue here that the term — 'apprehended', used by them in the definition, under discussion, has, from the very start, meant 'directly apprehended': all the above criticism, therefore, is essentially based upon the erroneous appreciation of the opponent's point of view. But, really speaking, even after playing clever in such a fashion, — they will not be able to see the end of all the difficulties. They will be told, for example, that there being no acceptance on the part of any philosopher, — to whatever school of opinion he might then belong, — that *all* the entities in the universe can and do become the object of direct apprehension, — such an amplified definition of the entity is bound to give rise to a difficulty, definitely not less unrelishable. They will not be able to argue in reply that such a difficulty as this will arise only for those thinkers, who subscribe to atheism. Because, as a counter-argument, they will be told by their critics that there being no proof, which can unchallengeably establish that all the entities in the universe are directly apprehended by God—not in the form of the negation of something else,—even within the circles of the theist thinkers, the course of the definition, under discussion, would not be so smooth as they naively maintain. No purpose is ever likely to be served, — they will be told further, — even by changing their previous stand and saying that the entity is that, which is apprehended even through the medium of the word ('śabda-pramāna'), — not in the form of the negation of something else. Because, though by virtue of such an elaboration of the original definition, they will be able to overcome the difficulty, envisaged above, they will soon be confronted by another difficulty, equally embarrassing. They will be asked whether, in their well-considered opinion, the particular character, which they are citing or the definition of the entity, is identical with the entity, that is being sought to be defined,

as whether it is different therefrom, — a question, indeed, to which they will not be able to return a convincing reply by opting for either of the two alternatives. For, if they opt for the former, — a question as to how far it is logically permissible to cite that, which is being sought to be defined, as the definition thereof — will rear up its head. And if they show clear inclination for the latter, they will find their hands still heavy with the problem of propounding what is the entity *proper*, the entity proper, that is, with reference to which they have laboriously propounded the particular character as the definition. An option for either of the two said alternatives, on their part, will encourage into being more and more difficulties in their path. For, if they opt for the first, they will not be able to point out as to how an entity, — even when it is being apprehended in the form of — ‘This is no non-entity’, — is universally acknowledged to be an entity, and not a non-entity. And, if they opt for the second, they will not be able to say whether that, which constitutes the entity proper, can be included in one or the other out of the six categories, are not. They will be further thrown into greater confusion by their critics, — concluding his criticism of the concept of the entity, says the author of the Khandana-Khanda-Khādya, — by asking them one simple question, — as to whether in their opinion, that which constitutes the entity proper, exists in its own self or not, — a simple question, to which they can never give a satisfactory reply by opting for either of the two said alternatives; for, while the option for the former on their part is ruled out by the illogicality of the stand, resulting therefrom, that for the latter is fraught with a different type of incongruity: because, it is bound to betray its advocates as openly maintaining that — ‘that, which constitutes the entity proper, though being apprehended, — not in the form of the negation of something else, is, itself, a non-entity’!

This detailed criticism of various definitions of the Entity, which ultimately establish the

un-definability thereof, does, — remarks the author of Khandana-Khanda-Khādya, — establish the similar character of the Non-Entity, (‘Abhāva’) also. Because, with the character of the Entity turning out to be undefinable, the character of the Non-Entity irresistibly turns out to be so. The undefinability of the Non-Entity can be, moreover, established on quite independent grounds. For example, it is sometimes maintained that the Non-Entity is that, which is of the character of negation (‘nise-dhātmaktvam abhāvatvam’).³ But, the advocates of such a stand seem to be unaware that by making such an assertion they are actually tempting their critics to spring up another question, — namely, — what do they exactly mean when they make such an assertion. Do they mean that the Non-Entity is that, which is of the character of refutation? Or, do they mean that the Non-Entity is that, which is of the character of the Non-Entity? Or, do they mean that the Non-Entity is that, which is apprehended in the form of negation? As a reply, they would not be able to opt for the first alternative, because, if they do so, — both the Entity and the Non-Entity being of the character of refutation of each other, — according to their definition, the Entity also would become entitled to be called a Non-Entity. An option for the second alternative also is ruled out for them, because, if they opt for it, they would find themselves not a step nearer to the solution of the problem, posed before them in the form of the question. So is an option for the last alternative. Hereon, they might say that they are least disturbed by all this criticism, because by their original definition what they wanted to convey was that in their opinion — the Non-Entity is that, which is contradictory of the Entity. But, by putting forth such an explanation, they will be actually tempting their critics to raise a different type of question, — to ask them, for example, whether, in their view, to pass the test, set by their definition, it is essential for a Non-Entity to be contradictory of all the entities in the universe,

³ Ibid: 1051/2 to 1053/1.

or whether being contradictory of a particular entity would suffice for the said purpose. To such a question, they will not be able to give a satisfactory reply by opting for either the first alternative, — because, if they opt for it, they will ultimately find that no particular Non-Entity being contradictory of all the entities, none of the particular non-entities will ever be able to declare itself as a Non-Entity, as the second alternative, — because, if they opt for it, they will ultimately find that it being undeniable that such a contradictoriness can be found even among some particular entities with reference to some other particular entities, according to the definition of the Non-Entity, as proposed by them, even the former will be able to declare themselves as non-entities. Hereon, of course, they might say that all this is nothing but a wilful misinterpretation of their explanation of the original definition; for, what they had actually meant by their explanation was that the Non-Entity is that, which is contradictory of, — i.e. which does not occupy the same substratum, as occupied by, — the Entity. But, if they take up a serious consideration of the implications of this stand of theirs, they are sure to realise that even after furnishing such an explanation of their original explanation, their position is not going to improve materially. Because, such a contradiction is undeniably found to be present between even the entities, — entities, such as the generality of ‘gotva’ and the generality of ‘aśvatva’. And still they are never rated as the ‘non-entities’. The prospects of their prospects growing a bit brighter, consequent on their explaining the conception of contradiction in a different way and saying that the Non-Entity is that, which is contradictory of, — i.e. the assertion whereof amounts to the negation of, — the Entity, — are also quite dim. Because, as a result of putting forth such an explanation, they are sure to be asked by their critics whether in their view, this assertion and this negation are identical with each other, or whether in their opinion, they are different from each other. To such a question, they will not be able to give a

satisfactory reply by opting for either the second alternative, — because, if they opt for it, they will find that since the assertion of a particular entity, — such as the generality of ‘aśvatva’, necessarily amounts to the negation of another entity, — such as the generality of ‘gotva’ in the example — ‘This is a cow’, the same old tendency to overflow one’s legitimate boundaries is inherent in their new explanation as persistently as ever, — or the first alternative, — because, if they opt for it, they will be bluntly told that since the ‘absence’ itself is being discussed and disputed, the concept thereof cannot be thus employed in the present context as though already agreed upon.

The Non-Entity is sometimes defined as — that the apprehension whereof is dependent upon the apprehension of the pratiyogi (‘pratiyogi — nirupanādhina — nirupanatvam’), — taking up the second definition of the Non-Entity, says Shreeharsa.⁴ But, he points out, the advocates of such a definition should be asked as to what do they exactly mean by the term — ‘pratiyogi’, they have used in this definition of theirs. They cannot mean thereby simply that, ‘which is merely different, or something else’. Because, if they do so, then, — the apprehension of the relation, called — conjunction, being dependent upon the apprehension of the entities, related to each other by that relation, which are ‘different’ from the relation, concerned, — that relation, — according to their definition, would turn out to be a non-entity! Similarly they cannot mean thereby that, ‘which is contrary’. Because, if they do so, then, — they will render themselves liable to be tortured on the point of the concept of contradiction, involved in such a stand, in the manner, already detailed above! Similarly they cannot mean thereby that, ‘which is not existent’. Because, if they do so, then, — having thus employed the concept of the Non-Entity through the term — ‘not existent’ with a view to enunciate an intelligible definition of the concept of the Non-Entity itself, they will themselves become guilty of the defect of self-

⁴ Ibid: 1054/1 to 1054/4.

dependence, and the definition of theirs of an irresistible tendency to overflow its legitimate boundaries, — sure that it is to take under its coverage even the instances of the specific knowledges, such as — 'There were heavy showers' etc., simply because the apprehension thereof is undeniably dependent on the (past) apprehension of that (i.e. the heavy showers), 'which is not existent'!

An attempt is sometimes made to define the Non-Entity as — 'that, which, when apprehended, is invariably apprehended as particularized by the reference to that, which is to be refuted ('pratiksepya-visistam eva yad bhāti sah abhāvah'), — taking up yet another definition of the Non-Entity, — remarks the Advaitin.⁵ But, says he, the advocates of such a definition should be told that the nature of refutation itself being disputed, the nature of what is to be refuted also turns out to be likewise, and consequentially the definition, as proposed by them, to be unworthy of the acceptance.

Those, who believe in the definability of the Non-Entity, should be asked, moreover, — concluding his deliberations, remarks the author of the Khandana-Khanda-Khādyā⁶, — as to whether the definition of the Non-Entity, in favour of which they happen to be, is, in their opinion, itself an Entity, or whether, according to their view, it is a Non-Entity. If, by the way of an answer to this question, they opt for the first alternative, they will be virtually maintaining that the non-entity is a substratum of an Entity and thus will be inviting endless ridicule on themselves. They might feel like arguing here that the definition of the Non-Entity is essentially an Entity; in spite of this, however, the ridiculous position, envisaged above, does not arise at all, because the substratum of that definition is the particular knowledge, which, itself, is an Entity: this does not come in the way of the Non-Entity being treated as *having* the definition for its

own, because, such a treatment is essentially secondary by character. But, they should be warned that in such a case they should be prepared to accept as correct the interpretation of their above stand, laying down that in their view, the definition of the Non-Entity stands essentially included in one of the attributes of the knowledge, — which they will never like to do! They, of course, might like to argue hereon that such an acceptance on their part is not at all necessary, because, in their view, the definition, concerned, constitutes a separate attribute of the knowledge. But, they should be plainly told that even after adopting such an uncommonly imaginative stand, their prospects are not going to brighten at all. Because, they are bound to be asked further by their critics as to whether, in their opinion, the Non-Entity, which is thus secondarily treated as having the definition for its own, is, when taken together with its definition, a Non-Entity, or whether, in their view, it is an Entity. — a question, indeed, to which they will not be able to return an effective reply by opting for either of the two alternatives. Because, while an option for the former is bound to give rise to the defect of self-dependence, the same for the latter is sure to lead its advocates to the censure for indulging in self-contradiction. All this criticism of the first alternative, proposed in connection with the original question, should not lead the believers in the definability of the Non-Entity to believe that if they just show their inclination in favour of the second alternative and accordingly maintain that the definition of the Non-Entity is, itself, a Non-entity, theirs will be a safe passage. Because, they also are bound to meet considerable difficulties. They are bound to be asked, for example, whether in their opinion, the definition of the Non-Entity, which, itself, is a non-entity, has its own self for one of its substrata, or not. In reply to such a question, they will not be able to show their preference for the first alternative, — because of the defect of self-dependence, such a preference is bound to bring upon them

ultimately, or the second alternative, because in that case, the definition, as proposed by them, will betray itself to be too incomprehensive to take under its coverage all the cases, legitimately belonging to its fold.

The objective study of the principal arguments, put forward by Shreeharsa, to expose the fundamental undefinability of the Entity and the Non-Entity, which has been presented above, provides a convincing example, illustrating the point, stated in the opening portion of the present article, namely — though the chief importance of his monumental work lies in its being a matchless illustration of the Advaitic dialectics, though the principal oppo-

nents, the great Advaitin always trains his guns upon, are the followers of the Nyāya-Vaisesika schools, yet in the course of his masterly disputations, Shreeharsa, on many a point of great metaphysical value, is actually seen transcending these limitations completely.

Indeed, it is because of these-like ruthless criticisms, taking the entire realm of the Indian philosophical thought, believing in the definability of the Universe under their devastating fire, that his monumental work has earned for itself an ever-lasting reputation as being the 'anirvacaniyatā-sarvasvam', the best enunciation of the Advaitic doctrine of Undefinability, ever possible!

CONCEPTION OF GOD IN ADWAITA

K. SAVITHRI

'From the East comes Light' runs a Latin saying. When mankind groaned in the primitive darkness, the first gleam of philosophical light came from the Orient. The first peep into this old Manuscript of Universe was made in the East. When the faltering steps of metaphysical quest began in Greece with Pythagoras (532 B.C.) and Socrates (399 B.C.), in India, it was an advanced stage after a journey in the quest. The highest philosophy of life developed in the Upanishadic age dating 8th Century B.C. in India. And so the quest after philosophy must have started in India a thousand years before Christ.

The fundamentals of Hinduism do not have anything to do with theological dogma. It gives a rationalistic approach to the question 'What is the cause of the Universe?' Our Scriptures prohibit all thoughts of difference between God, the individual soul, and the Universe. They speak out the voice of the illustrious Shankara, the torch bearer of Advaita Doctrine: 'The Soul is God!' That identity may sound startling to the occident. The roots of Hinduism lay in the

question 'Who am I' and not with its apparent pantheistic set up. The Science of soul enunciated in India is logical, and modern, although it is the oldest. The Western theology begins with the premise that man is a body—a being, who has a soul within. The Vedanta starts with the premise that man, the being is the soul; it is shrouded in the body. Thus Hinduism is not dogmatic but didactic; it is not a fanatical approach to religion but a rationalistic approach to theism. That approach is nothing but Vedanta. The message of Hinduism is the message of Vedanta, and the message of Vedanta is universal religion. It is benevolent to every creed; it never conflicts with any form of worship or religion. In a world full of religious fight and fanaticism, Vedanta is universal in its appeal.

The lesson 'That thou art' is not only taught in the Upanishads but in all our scriptures. To argue with Advaita is to argue with Mandukya Upanishad which proclaims that it is the ultimate spirit which takes many shapes. The Purushasukta testifies that it is the creator who moves within the womb. It is the birth-

⁵ Ibid: 1057/1-2.

⁶ Ibid: 1055/1 to 1056/3.

less one who takes birth in many shapes.¹

There is a great misconception that the Vedanta doctrine is meant for those who have retired to ascetic life, or for the disappointed persons, and old hags who set their one foot in the grave and are incapacitated to expect anything from the world of ours. The mission of Vedanta is to drive out the inequality between man and man. It has sent forth the message 'your soul is all-comprehensive; its interests are the interests of all and their interests are identical with yours.' Thus Vedanta opens out a vastly brilliant vista of unfathomable potentialities and divine vision before all. From the ethical point of view it is unimaginable how one having faith in Vedanta and seeing in everything the same vitalizing force, can entertain ideas of jealousy, hatred, antagonism, inequality etc. 'That thou art' is the bedrock of democracy, for this is the ennobling conception of 'God, vitalising the entire creation, the whole universe'.

If atheism does not believe in the existence of God as the creator of the world, and just accept Prakriti (Nature) to be the cause of creation let us go back to Darwinism, which says that the universe came into existence by a process of evolution, starting from the primary life-giving matter; and that Nature helped the development of the living beings by the law of 'Natural Selection' and the law of the 'Survival of the Fittest'. That is unmistakably saying that creation is systematic, and deliberate. Nature itself is systematic; animate and inanimate things have a sort of regularity in them; even in the sun revolving, in the movements of the moon, and the heavenly bodies with a fixed orbit for them; they do not go astray; even in growth, reproduction, and decay of the plant life, are all deliberate. There is an element of law in them; a predestination in them. We should admit that nature is reasonable and not wreckless. That is indirectly recognising God. The

intelligent principle which governs creation and which is called the Absolute Brahman or Paramatma or God by the Saints, is given the name of Nature by Atheism. Even if we say that Nature is not that Intelligent principle, we cannot prove atheism. That Intelligent principle is God. Matter is insentient, while the spirit (Purusha) is sentient. The Universe is the result of the Union of both. Thus the atheistic standpoint is not proved. The Svetasvatara Upanishad proclaims the omnipresence of God thus :

एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गृहः
सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।
कर्माव्यक्तः सर्वभूताधिपानः
साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणश्च ।

There is no use of proving the existence of God by the analogy of worldly things, which are nothing more than Phantoms—perishable and ephemeral. The apparent world according to the doctrine of unity is the product of the mind. That from which mind and its thoughts spring and into which they sink must be the only True One. As Gaudapada says 'That which does not exist before and after although appears to exist in the present, is really a non-existence, a myth.' The Gita says clearly : 'That which is not never comes into being; that which is never ceases to be.'²

The duality of the world is a Chimera. As long as the mind is objective, the phantom of the world is as real as the self. In reality the self is attributeless. Although He is the cause of the world He cannot be limited by space and time. He is both the efficient and material cause of the world. Clay is the material cause, the potter's wheel, the potter etc. are the efficient cause of a pot. A pot is made of clay. It is the effect and the clay is the material cause. But the clay cannot by itself assume the shape of a jar; the work of a potter's wheel, etc. is needed to give it the shape of a pot. The

¹ प्रजापतिश्चरति गर्भे अन्तः ।

अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते ।

² नामतो विद्यते भावो नामावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ।

potter is the efficient cause. The Supreme Spirit which is the cause of all, is self-sufficient; the Universe is also self-sufficient (or perfect; it comes from the Absolute Spirit which is self-sufficient (or perfect). That which remains after subtracting the universe from the Perfect One is also perfect. The Universe which has sprung from God subsists in God and is also merged in God. That God is revealed in the form of the Universe is expressed by the Sruti thus :

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णानि पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमिवावशिष्यते ।
(Isavasya Upanishad)

When Christ said, 'The Kingdom of God is within you', he was considered to be a heretic. He preached the doctrine of Unity and died for that. But his followers left the monistic doctrine he preached and for which he died on the cross. In the West the idealism of Kant and others have been left in the wilderness. But Shankara's logical method has given us our most precious possession i.e. the doctrine of Absolute Monism.

And the idea of the body being just the place wherein the soul the real person dwells is given in unmistakable terms by the Gita. The body is called the soil, the field, the Kshetra; the soul is the Kshetrajna and Kshetrajna is he who feels towards it as 'this is mine'³ :

What is this 'I'? Is it the body, or the senses? In simple words we can say that, that which we refer to as 'I' is the soul. Just as the actual stage of saying 'I am sleeping' never comes, although we can say 'I am going to sleep' and I slept; so too the experience about having died never comes. 'I' and 'die' never go together. Even after death the soul lives; life still persists; the soul is eternal, immortal. We get tired of a person by familiarity, for familiarity may breed

³ इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद गो वेति न प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ।

(XIII 2)

contempt; we get tired of a dress, of a house, of our work, etc. We want to get rid of them. But there never comes a stage when we want to get rid of living. Even the sudden mental emotions preceding suicide or procrastinations such as 'To be or not to be that is the question where it is nobler in the mind to bear the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them.',—when the time comes to end life, or at the time of parting of life, the body, every cell of the body clamours for life, for living on. This can be proved by the state of a person under anaesthesia. His body is going to be cut by the surgical knives. He is administered medicine to make him dead; under anaesthesia, his mind is not alive, it is not like the state of sleep. It is a state of death; even if the body is burnt, he will not feel it. When the anaesthetic is administered, every inch of his body protests to yield to it. Although he knows the reality of the situation, the body, of its own accord protests and refuses to die! Even so when the actual time of death comes, even the suicide will long to live or at least unconsciously long to live. Living is natural to us. Death is unnatural although death lays its icy hands upon monarchs and mendicants alike. The moment the body is defeated by death, the soul goes in quest of another body; the soul is eternal. It is 'Sat'! That is what is meant by नामतो विद्यते भावो नामावो विद्यते सतः; or by the 'indestructibility of matter,' 'conservation of energy,' etc. taught by Physics. If we are existing now we will exist for ever. Nothing will come of a nothing. We can never cease to exist. The word *srishti* connotes throwing out from within and not making a new one! All our senses act outward. We cannot see our own eyes except in reflection somewhere. Whatever comes into being are all what was! It was unmanifest; it has now manifested itself. So also for death; the word *nāsha* means 'cease to be seen' and not complete annihilation. Death is not the end; it is a stage. The

destruction of a candle by burning it is not the death of it only a *nāsha* for it, but it is seen in the form of carbon and hydrogen.

Vedanta declares that the soul is not only *Sat* (eternal) but also *Cit* (wisdom). It is *cit-swarupa* but covered by a crust of avidya (nescience). Knowledge is latent; it requires to be lit. It does not go to the soul from outside. It comes out from within. Even the word 'education' means drawing out. When avidya (ignorance) is driven out by education, when the clouds are driven out, the sun shines; the soul shines with knowledge. We hear of many child prodigies. The modern medical science cannot explain it. The soul has perfect knowledge says Vedanta.

Sorrow (*duhkha*) is not natural to us. However much the poet may say about the world as 'here men sit and see each other groan', sorrow comes from without and not from within. We say, 'He looks happy outside but has a sorrow-laden heart within'. That does not mean sorrow is from within. We are all in an eternal quest for happiness. Whether we get that happiness in life, or life is just a long struggle in a wilderness of disappointments, is a different question. At least we try to be happy. The joy that we wish to get (although the means by which we try to get like riches, etc., are all perishable) is an unlimited, eternal, unadulterated joy. Further the average human mind, is always in thoughts—fears or hallucinations, care-laden; hence we cannot say that it is happy. But just listen to a melodious music, your favourite tune! When the music goes and when you are absorbed in that, your mind is extremely happy. What is the reason? During that time, the soul is not thinking of anything; it is free from all thoughts from outside. There we see the natural state of the Self, which is bliss. Further all living beings have an eternal desire to be free from all bondages. For the soul is absolutely free from all bonds. All human beings have an unconscious desire to be guided by their own wishes and judgement.

Irrespective of the fact whether we are atheists or theists we cannot deny these attributes of the soul or the Self of the Vedanta, the Good of Plato.

The more we sink into ourselves, and see within, the lesser the sorrows. In Christianity it is said in simple words 'Man is HIS own image'. In the Genesis it is said, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and earth'. It means God created! But the Sankalpa of God as per Upanishads is manifestation and not creation:—'I shall become many.' Further, nothing else existed except God. When we accept the Upanishadic text that He became the visible and invisible universe, we cannot deny Shankara's Advaita. There is no question of what God created the Universe from. The pot, vessel, etc. are just names of different manifestations but the substance is only clay. In the Chandogya Upanishad we see Svetaketu's father telling him 'If, my dear, you know a lump of earth, you know, you verily know all earth-made things differing names and forms the underlying substance being the earth. . . . The same is the case with regard to the Universe, the underlying substance of it all being the Absolute' (VI i. 4-6).

He alone is True; the rest being appearance. This is called the Vivarta wherein the manifested world is superimposed on the Reality; the one 'Sat' by Adhyasa (which as Shankara explains) is a matter of seeming (Sankarabhasya on I.1.1, of Brahma Sutra).

Thus in monism lies the solution of the deepest problems of science and metaphysics, and the final goal of all religions. The message of Vedanta is Universal, for it is not built around the personality of any founder. Having no founder it stands upon the eternal spiritual laws. It embraces the scientific truth. The 'Universal spirit' of Vedanta is the 'Good' of Plato, 'Substantia' of Spinoza, 'Dinge an Sich' (transcendental thing in itself) of Kant, the 'Will' of Schopenhauer, the 'Unknown' of Herbert Spencer, the 'Matter' of Materialism.

Knowledge of Brahman referred to in

'Brahma-jijnasa' by Badarayana and the lessons 'Ekamevadvitiyam' (one only, without second) stated in the Chandogya Upanishad and 'ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः' (Brahman exists truly; the universe falsely; the created being is only Brahman and no other) should not lead us to the conclusion that it is not necessary to follow the rules of conduct laid down in the sastras. The Upanishads say: 'सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर'. Shankara admits a relative existence *Vyavaharika satta* of the world. The paramatma having created the Universe entered into it, afterwards. All this universe is Brahman; it proceeds from Him; it is dissolved in Him; it breathes in Him, nothing really exists but the one Impersonal spirit. Yet so long a man does not realise God, he must

follow the rules of conduct laid down by Sastras; he is affected by the pleasures of heaven and the pains of hell. Vedanta teaches God is without form and is invisible. That does not mean that it is a mistake to worship the incarnations of God and His images. Most men are incapable of worshipping God in his invisible aspect. The ordinary multitude must worship the personal God.

Although Vedanta is not only the doctrine of Shankara alone, but of many others also, there is no doubt that non-dualism, the cardinal features of Shankara's philosophy preaches that the world is illusion. Other exponents of Vedanta system do not accept it. To know the truth about it, it is necessary to acquire the *Brahma-jijnasa* of Badarayana by a thorough study of his work, the 'Brahma Sutra' with its different interpretations.

SRI SANKARACHARYA, SRI CHAITANYA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA—(A Study)

HEMANTA KUMAR SEN

The trio were Incarnations of God and had immaculate conception. Sri Sankara born of Sivaguru and Vishista Devi in a Nambudri Brahmin family at Kaladi in the Kerala State in 788 A.D. was considered an incarnation of Siva Chandramauliswara.¹ Vishvambar *alias* Sri Gouranga was born of Sri Jagannath Misra and Sachi Devi in Navadwip in Nadia District in 1485 A.D. He was considered an incarnation of Sri Krishna. Gadadhar born of Sri Kshudiram Chatterjee and Chandramani Devi at Kamarpukur in Hooghly District in 1836 A.D. was considered an incarnation of Gadadhar Vishnu. The trio had Brahminical origin too.

Sankara and Nimai were intellectual giants and both were polemic. Sankara could read books when he was 3 years old. He was

¹ The incident connected with his divine origin is related in pages 9 and 10 of my book on Acharya Sankara.

invested with holy thread at the age of 5 and sent to the house of his Guru for study. His extraordinary intellect and sharp memory enabled him to master all *shastras* within 2 years. Sankara was a celibate.

Nimai in his boyhood gave evidence of his brilliant memory and high calibre so much so that he mastered Vyakarana, Sahitya, Alankara Shastra, Purana, Smriti, Nyaya Shastra and Vedanta Philosophy before he crossed his minority and started his own *Chatuspathi* as an *Adhyapaka* at the age of 21 years. Nimai took a second wife in Vishnupriya after the demise of his first wife Lakshmi Devi, daughter of Vallabacharya. They had no issue.

Gadadhar on the other hand like Sankara was a *Srutidhara* and could reproduce verbatim whatever he once heard. He had aversion for knowledge merely as a source of livelihood.

The sun of knowledge, however, flashed itself in his pure serene and placid mind and he became a *Veda-vid* to prove that Hindu Vedas are revelation. Thus Sankara and Nimai had to strive to acquire knowledge the undistorted reflection of which revealed itself in the rippleless lake of Gadadhar's mind as he advanced in his *sadhana*. Gadadhar at the age of 24 married Saradamani, a girl aged 5 of Ramchandra Mukherjee of Jayrambati. This marriage had no consummation.

Sri Ramakrishna, which is the ascetic name of Gadadhar, tutored Saradamani to fit her to bear the burden of the Ramakrishna Order in her later life and when his *Sadhana* was ripe he worshipped her as an emblem of the Divine Mother.

Sri Gadadhar once lost his consciousness in his early life in a meadow on the way to Anur for worshipping Devi Vishalakshmi. On another occasion while walking aimlessly at a field at the age of 7 years he fell into a deep trance on noticing an impressive scene of a flock of white-feathered herons flying across a deep blue cloud.

Although the trio had a divine origin, they had to accept a Guru to adopt ascetic life—life as teachers of humanity. But Gadadhar never put on a saffron robe. Sankara after much persuasion had to obtain the consent of his mother to go in quest of the Supreme Truth. After wandering over a period of two months he came to the foot of Baidurjamani hill on the bank of the sacred Narmada. Here in a cave below the temple of Omkarnath he received the blessings of his spiritual Guru Govindapada. Within a period of 3 years he received full courses of instruction from his spiritual Guru on *Hatha Yoga*, *Raja Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga*. Sankara practised here a deep concentration and meditation under his fatherly guidance and was able to reach the super-conscious state to enjoy the bliss of solitude. He was *laghima siddha* also and could go by the aerial route.

After the demise of his father, Nimai proceeded to Gaya to make offering to the manes

at the Vishnupad. There he met Ishwarpuri, a devout Vaishnava Sadhu, who initiated him to Vaishnavism. This initiation brought a happy change in his life so much so that Nimai found it difficult for him to continue his profession as an *Adhyapaka*, being immersed in the bliss of *Harinamamrita*. With the development of his devotional urge Nimai left his revered mother and dear wife one night and proceeded to Katwa and got himself initiated into Sannyasa by Dandi Keshava Bharati at the age of 24 and took the name of Sri Chaitanya.

After the death of his father in 1843, Gadadhar went to Calcutta at the age of 16 with his elder brother Ramkumar, who started a *Chatuspathi* at Jhamapukur. Here too Gadadhar's lukewarmness for ordinary education set Ramkumar athinking what he should do with him. An opportunity came when Ramkumar was appointed a priest of the beautiful and famous temple of the Divine Mother Bhavatarini, constructed at an enormous cost at Dakshineswar by Rani Rasmani of pious memory. The attractive environment of the temple on the bank of the sacred river Ganges effected a happy change in the mind of Gadadhar, who came to assist his brother in his daily worship of the Goddess Kali. By his spirit of devotion and sanctity Gadadhar soon attracted the notice of connoisseur Mathura Mohan Biswas, son-in-law of the pious Rani, who appointed him a priest of the Goddess Kali at the age of 20. Gadadhar with intense devotion of mind and spirit began to worship the Divine Mother with a heart aching for Her *darshan*. One day exasperated at the Divine Mother's unresponsive and seclusive attitude not to reveal Herself before Her devotee in all Her glory, Gadadhar took hold of the sacrificial knife to end his life. Instantly to his utter amazement Goddess Kali appeared in a living form thrilling Gadadhar with joy ineffable and smilingly nodding at his greeting. An ecstatic enlargement of consciousness followed. The walls of the temple glimmered transparently, and in the midst of

that strange mild mellow of light waves stood the light condensed and superb form of the Divine Mother in Her extensive glory with face beaming in smiles and conveying bliss and *abhi* through Her hands. Gadadhar mystified, fell at Her beneficent feet crying 'Ma, Ma'. Now the lovely *lila* (pastime) of the Mother and son began to develop; Gadadhar unreservedly surrendered to Her to mould him as She liked. As the Divine Mother wanted him to develop in all spiritual aspects, different religious adepts came in proper time to Dakshineswar to make him specialize in their respective faiths.

Under the motherly care and helpful guidance of an erudite Brahmani Bhairavi, Yogeswari by name, Gadadhar within a period of 3 years acquired efficiency in 64 Tantrik rites. Thereafter he practised Vaishnavism in the garb of Hanuman and had vision of Sita-Rama, and also in the garb of a lady devotee to fathom the depth of celestial love. Many Vaishnava Sadhakas considered him an incarnation of Sri Gauranga when they found him in an ecstatic state in the midst of a Kirtan party. Pointing to his body he used to say, 'He who was Rama and Krishna is now Ramakrishna in the same receptacle.' Hence he is known by this name all over the world. Once in his early life he appeared in the role of Siva in a Jatra party and went into a deep trance. In 1865 with the permission of the Divine Mother he took initiation from Paramahansa Totapuri in the Vedantic aspect of Advaitavada and attained *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* within three days. He practised Islam under the guidance of Sufi Govinda Das and got vision of the Holy prophet—Mohammad. He heard the Bible from Sambhu Nath Mallick in his garden house, adjacent to Kali temple, which has now been converted into an international guest house. While steadfastly looking at a picture of the Virgin Mary and Baby Christ, at this residence for some time in the mood of a Christian devotee, a light from Christ merged into his body. Thus

in Sri Ramakrishna all by-paths of religious faiths merged to form a synthesis.

Sri Sankaracharya delighted to come in cross with the exponents of other schools of thought prevalent in his days to assert the supremacy of *Advaitavada*; but for common people unable to grasp its deep mysticism he suggested the worship of five gods—Surya, Ganesha, Durga, Siva and Vishnu. Although essentially a monist Sri Sankaracharya could not ignore the prevalent Hindu customs and wherever he went he worshipped the presiding deities of the locality composing suitable hymns in Their praise.

In debate Nimai asserted his supremacy over many Pandits. Once he was discussing *shastras* with his disciples on the bank of the Ganges at Navadwip on a silvery moon-lit night. A Pandit, who came to test Nimai, narrated the glory of the Ganges by composing some verses. Nimai readily pointed out to him some defects in his verses about their interpretation and *alankara*. Thereupon the Pandit saluted him as the chosen son of Devi Saraswati (Goddess of Learning).

Once while crossing the Ganges with another Pandit in a boat at Navadwip, Nimai had in his hand a manuscript copy of Nyaya-shastra. On noticing this copy the other Pandit heaved a deep sigh. Nimai enquired, 'What ails you?' The Pandit replied, 'Who will care to read my composition of Nyaya-shastra, when your book will be available?' On hearing this, Nimai threw away his manuscript into the Ganges without the least hesitation. Such a spirit of self-immolation is rare in these days. Sankaracharya too threw his manuscript copy of Astrology into the Ganges at Banaras under different circumstance.

Once Sri Chaitanya in the midst of a big Sankirtan party brought to submission a recalcitrant Muslim Kazi, who put under ban the chanting of Hari-nam in his jurisdiction. On another occasion when the tyrannic Jagai and Madhai while in a state of tippy flung on

Nityananda, who was chanting the sweet name of Hari, the broken piece of a pitcher causing a bleeding cut, Sri Chaitanya in a state of fury brought them to his heels. They repented, sought the grace of Nityananda and spent the rest of their lives as sincere devotees of Sri Hari.

Sarvabhauma, Chief Pandit at the court of the Rajah of Puri, who had a poor idea about Sri Chaitanya's intellectual gift, interpreted a scriptural passage in nine different ways. Sri Chaitanya interpreted the same passage in eighteen different ways. Sarvabhauma admitted his defeat and accepted Sri Chaitanya as his guide in life.

Sri Chaitanya, who is considered by the Vaishnavas as Sri Krishna incarnated in the garb of Sri Radha to fathom the depth of her celestial love, was a great leveller in society. His conception, which was later on professed by Sri Ramakrishna, that a bhakta (devotee) has no caste and even Jaban Haridas (a Muslim) got a prominent place amongst the disciples of Sri Chaitanya. He re-explored Sri Brindaban, hallowed with the memory and lila of Sri Krishna and paid a visit to Kasi and other places en route. Vaishnavism in modern times received a strong impetus from him.

Sri Chaitanya spent the best part of his ascetic life at Nilachal (Puri) where he practised the esoteric aspect of Vaishnavism with a limited few. For the common people Sri Chaitanya suggested Hari-nama-kirtan as the *nāmi* (Sri Hari) will respond where his *nāma* (name) is chanted with devotion. Sri Ramakrishna also advised people to chant the name of Hari morning and evening with the clapping of hands. That done, Sri Ramakrishna used to say, people will be free from sin and sorrow. Sri Chaitanya was a great

leveller of Hindu orthodoxy and advocated the chanting of Harinam in congregation. Sri Ramakrishna too was a leveller of Hindu orthodoxy. In Sankara's time orthodoxy received no chink to let in new light. Those who came to scoff at Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna returned fully convinced about their divinity.

Sri Sankaracharya was an *Advaitavadin*. Sri Ramakrishna, although he realised the *Advaitic* aspect, advocated like Sri Chaitanya who was *Achintya-bhedabhedavadin*.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that in our day today contact with this material world we could not ignore its *Vyavaharika satta* (utilitive aspect). For common people like us the idea of realisation of 'Brahman alone is real and world an illusion' seems to be a utopian dream. Keeping in mind its transitory nature we should be worldly-wise and not worldly-minded. We shall make a great stride towards the attainment of immortality—as the soul is immortal—if we in our present life be not materialists in outlook.

Sri Ramakrishna's advocacy of the synthesis of all religious views, has paved the way for international fellowship of faiths. As every cloud has a silver lining, so in spite of the gloomy outlook in the international situation the world is steadily approaching for a better understanding and establishment of good relationship between the different nations. The Saint of Kerala toured India for the propagation of Vedantic ideal of Advaitavada, whereas the Saint of Dakshineswar's message is silently penetrating all corners of the globe to promote brotherly consciousness and spiritual contact between a nation and a nation. The present doctrine of Pancha Shila in political relation between different nations is only an evolution of the Vedantic ideal.

Man has an idea that there can be only one religion, that there can be only one Prophet, and that there can be only one Incarnation, but that idea is not true. By studying the lives of all these great Messengers, we find that each, as it were, was destined to play a part, and a part only; that the harmony consists in the sum total, and not in one note.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

HYMN TO THE UNIVERSAL BEING

(Based upon the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā)

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

In Thy radiant body, Lord, I behold
All the gods and the diverse hosts of beings :
Mortals and immortals, the divine Creator,
Birds and beasts, worms and men — nature manifold.
Myriads of bellies I see, myriads of eyes
And faces and arms, and myriads too of thighs.
Bedecked Thou art with celestial ornaments,
Armed with many divine uplifted weapons,
Adorned with heavenly vestments and garlands,
And anointed with celestial unguents,
Boundless, resplendent, wonderful : the creation
Of moving and unmoving gathered in one.
With infinite forms glowing on every side,
Where is Thy end or middle or beginning ?
Thy eyes shine like sun and moon, without measure
Is Thy strength. Thy faces glow like blazing fire.
Thou fillest the space between heaven and earth,
And all the quarters of the sky. Mighty One,
Thy radiance consumes the whole universe.
All with splendid hymns exclaim : "Peace may there be !"
Seeing Thy blazing forms reaching to the skies,
Mouths wide open showing many a colour,
With many fierce tusks and glowing monstrous eyes,
The world is affrighted and trembles in fear.
Mortal creatures fall dead at Thy very sight,
Their consciousness blasted by Thy dazzling light.
Those awesome mouths, with their sharp teeth, strike terror
Like Time's all-devouring fire, stern, relentless,
Disorienting creatures, whose souls are trembling in fear :
Bring them peace, O Abode of the universe !
Kings and beggars, scholars and fools, young and old,
Enter Thy tusked mouths when their sure-fated hour
Comes ; they are caught helpless, frightful to behold,
In Thy dreadful jaws their heads crushed to powder.
Like many torrents rushing to the ocean,
Like moths plunging swift into a roaring fire.
Mortal creatures enter Thy open, savage mouths
To inevitable annihilation.

And how Thou lickest Thy lips and with laughter
Fillest the quarters as Thy conflagration
Scorches all creatures to their sure destruction
And this comely earth vanishes for ever.

From the Void Thou risest, the benign Father,
Into the Void, with all things, dost Thou enter :
Tell us who Thou art wearing this frightful mien,
O God Supreme, shower compassion on us.
Thou art, Lord, the mighty, world-destroying Time ;
We do not know Thy purpose, O Primal One !
Death embodied, Thou alone art real, Thy mere
Shadow is the merciful Progenitor.

O Lord, Thou art the Immortal,
This world's steady supreme support ;
The keeper of the eternal
Law, the Primal Being Thou art,
First of the gods, the ancient Soul.
O mighty King, greatest of all,
Thou art even the Creator's cause,
The final refuge from all laws.
Wisdom's true goal, the benign Lord,
Thou art knowledge and the knower ;
By Thee the universe is filled.
Thou art its final resting-place ;
Thou art wind and death and water,
Thou art earth, Thou art moon and fire ;
Thou art our sire and our grandsire,
Thou our friend and loving mother.

I salute Thee, O Father, on every side,
I salute Thee before, salute Thee behind,
I salute Thee a thousand times, and again
And yet again my humble salutation,
Of the moving and unmoving, the Creator
Thou art, the object of worship, and teacher
Venerable. There is no one Thy equal :
How can there be another superior ?
Therefore I bow down and prostrate my body
Before Thee, and seek Thy grace, adorable Lord.
As a father hears with his son, bear with me,
Or as a lover bears with his beloved.

NATURE OF INDIAN THOUGHT

VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA

Ancient Indian thought had the misfortune, in modern times, of being interpreted and generalised upon by persons who had slender knowledge of the ancient texts. Even those who had a workable knowledge of the texts lacked the sympathetic spirit and hence fell into hasty errors. Hence, in general histories of philosophy, Indian thought is dismissed with a bare mention in two to three lines. In this small article we shall undertake a sketch of the salient characteristics of Indian thought through a discussion of the usual western criticisms against Indian thought. These criticisms are summarized in W. T. Stace's *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, pp. 14-16.¹

(1) Stace says :

'Firstly, philosophy in India has never separated itself from religious and practical needs. The ideal of knowledge for its own sake is rarely to be found.'

The general conception that in India philosophy was never pursued as an independent subject of critical investigation is not correct. Philosophy was never the mere auxiliary of religion. Religion as understood in the West means, according to Cicero, diligent practice of prayer and worship. The Indian word 'Dharma' is more comprehensive. It does not mean mere ethics or a code of social righteousness. It means law and order both in a cosmic and a human sense. The later Buddhists of the Sarvastivadi school understood by this term 'elements'. The religious conceptions of the Upanisadic seers did not end with mere ceremonies and the repetition of sacred formulae but postulated an intuitional and mystic realisation of cosmic and even supracosmic truths. Philosophy revealed the nature of ultimate reality and religion consisted in a mystic identification with this

reality. Hence if this view be accepted, there is no scope for calling philosophy as an ancillary and dependent branch of knowledge.

Moreover, some of the Vedic hymns are a standing refutation of this point of view. In the primal state, the famous *Nasadiya Sukta* denies the presence of existence, non-existence, rajas (atoms), sky, day, night, death and immortality. In this Sukta one finds a very profound search for the apprehension of the first principle whence the cosmos (*visristi*) is derived. The denial of *sat* and *asat* shows that the Vedic mind was penetrating deeper beyond the phenomenal realms and was trying to visualise the one transcendent absolute mighty spirit in his vast power (*anidavatam svadhya tadekam*). The beginnings of the Ionic philosophy in Greece, however, show still a sensuous conception of *Hyle*—they accept hylozoism. The hymns, on the other hand, regard 'Apah' at some places as the *arche* but they have advanced in the *Nasadiya Sukta* and in the Rig Veda, X. 72, to the conception of monistic idealism—a feature of thought which begins in Greek philosophy only as late as the time of Anaxagoras and finds its culmination in Platonic idealism. The Upanisads carry this question of the primal procession of the cosmos forward. The Aditi and the Daksha of the Rigveda are fused into the Brahman. The Atharvavedic *Prithivi Sukta* formulated the conception of the vast *rita* (*ritam brihat*). The constant cry of the Upanisadic seers is to know the One, knowing whom the pluralistic phenomena are revealed in their entire nature. The Upanisads retain a compromising attitude towards the prevalent devotional cults but in the philosophic formulation of the highest reality, there is the least trace of devotional dualism. The Brahman is not to be worshipped, but to be contemplated as the profoundest entity of intuitive philo-

¹ W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy* (Macmillan & Co., London, 1946).

sophy. The famous sage Yajnavalkya says *atma va are drastavyah*. Let there be a profound enquiry into the Atman—this was the gospel of the Upanishads. The pure spirit of philosophical quest was certainly present in the Upanishads.

It was only when Lord Buddha appeared on the scene that a great ban was put upon pure speculation. But this was due to historical factors. The Indian philosophers of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. like Purna Kasyapa, Pakkuddha Kaccayana, Ajit Kesakambala, Sanjaya, and Gosala were undermining the foundations of morals through their nihilistic and materialistic methods of approach. Hence Lord Buddha appeared on the scene to set right the cause of morals and righteousness. Of course the restraint on pure speculation was not lasting. The Buddhist philosophers like Asanga and Vasubandhu formulated the rigorous idealism of the Yogacara school. Nagarjuna and Aryadeva preached frank nihilism, uninfluenced by any religious bias.

Even in the traditional schools of Indian philosophy free speculation was not absent. The Samkhya admits the existence of twenty-four principles on the basis of the epistemological analysis of the dualism of the subject and object involved in all cognition. The insistence on the prevalence of the threefold misery, and the absence of pain in the state of release as maintained in the Samkhya philosophy does not show any concession to religion. The Nyaya-Vaisesika categories of thought and of the manifold universe are based on a rigid formal analysis of mind and nature and are free from religious theism. The Vedanta undertook the enquiry into Brahman. Of course, it needed a great ethical preparation. But all dualistic traits, all sense of worshipper and worshipped, all ideas of Isvara and Jiva are kept on the empirical level. The supramundane Brahman is pure existence, pure consciousness and pure bliss and even these are not the attributes but the essence of the supreme reality. The Vedanta is the

one foremost system in the world that has made such a bold assertion of the phenomenal character of religion and worship. The Advaita monism relegates all sense of personal God and dependence on him to the lower level. Even Plato and Kant could not attain this boldness.

(2) Another criticism of Indian thought is that it never rises from the sensuous to pure thought. It is poetical rather than scientific. Stace says :

'It seldom or never rises from sensuous to pure thought. It is poetical rather than scientific. It is content with symbols and metaphors in place of rational explanations, and all this is a mark of the religious, rather than the philosophical, presentation of the truth... There are thousands of such passages in the Upanishads. But obviously these neither explain nor attempt to explain anything. They are nothing but hollow metaphors. They are poetic rather than scientific.'

This is entirely a misconception. The Samkhya conception of the Purusa is a standing refutation of it. The Purusa is the highest example of philosophic abstraction. It is pure consciousness devoid of any dualistic cognition. It is supremely luminous. All functions of knowing are attributed to the *buddhi* and *manas* and sense-organs. The Purusa is pure transcendence and has not the least relation with the Prakriti or the potentiality of nature. According to Vyasa, the famous commentator of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, even space and time—the two salient determinants of all mundane sensuous phenomena—are called mental abstractions. The Yogacara school of Buddhism denies the existence of objective phenomena. The Madhyamikas in their intense dialectical fervour deny the very existence of any reality. The Samkhya Prakriti is merely inferential. It is subtle beyond conception. These examples are sufficient to negate the proposition that Indian thought does not rise beyond the sensuous.

The great tradition of idealism which is traced to the *Nasadiya Sutta* has always dominated Indian thought. The Upanishads attempt

to rise to the heights of the Brahman and Atman—a stage which is beyond the grasp of the sensuous apparatus. The Kena Upanishad says that the Brahman is not the phenomena. It is *vachanvyudita, manaso manah, prano ha pranah*. The *Purusa Sutta* had laid the foundations of all future absolute idealism when it had stated that the manifested world is only one foot of the Purusa, the other three feet were hidden and the Upanishads have carried this tradition forward. The Mandukya Upanishad says that the God of the theologians is realised in the third state of human consciousness. The pure absolute is reserved for the *turiya*.

Lord Buddha regarded the entire manifold existence as being due to ignorance. He said that the psycho-physical organism was due to *vijnana* or consciousness. He further said that *trishna* and *bhava* i.e., the accumulated tendency produce the worldly existence of man. Hence he pointed out that the sensuous plurality was produced from the psychic. The Prasnopanishad had already propounded the concepts of *rayi* and *prana* or matter and force and primacy was attached to *prana* and this is a forecast of the *elan vital* of Bergson. The Atharvaveda says *yadidam kimcha jagat sarvam prana ejati nihsritam*—the existence of the primal force is here indicated.

Whether in the dynamic Buddhist conception of reality or in the concept of the Upanisadic and Vedantic absolute, there is the least trace of the sensuous. The Brahman is entirely supra-sensuous and can only be intuited by the seers. The dynamic energetic conception of matter pulverises and dissects physical nature almost to the vanishing-point and it can only be mentally apprehended. This is partly a confirmation of the supra-sensuous approach of the Indian thinkers. The Buddhist concept of *skandha* even implies a pulverising of the subject.

Supra-sensuous idealism of the subjective, objective or the absolute monistic supracosmic type has always dominated Indian thought,

from the Vedic conception of *rita, aditi, daksha* and *anidavatam svadhaya tadekam*, to the later Vedantic days when philosophers like Sri Harsha and Madhusudana called the entire universe *manah vijimbhita* and pleaded for the entire transformation of the human *psyche* to the subliminal and higher realm of the *asamprajnata samadhi*.

To refer to the analogy of the spider (p. 15 of Stace) in the Mundaka Upanishad and to the images of the Meru, Sun, etc. in the tenth chapter of the Gita as sensuous shows an entire misconception of human psychology. The spider analogy illustrates the great Vedantic doctrine of *vivartavada*—the case of apparent transformation. The references to the various glorious objects of the world as the manifestations of God shows a conception of the world-soul (the *visvarupa*) or the *vaisvanara purusha* of Chandogya Upanishad where all the manifested phenomena are viewed as the body of the God, thus preparing the way for absolute idealism wherein the objects will entirely vanish in their sensuous phenomenal form and only God or Brahman would survive. The Demiurgus of the Greek thinkers is comparable to this *vaisvanara purusa*.

(3) Another point of criticism against Indian thought is the historical question that Indian thought never exercised any influence on world thought. Stace says :

'Lastly, Indian thought is usually excluded from the history of philosophy because, whatever its character, it lies outside the main stream of human development. It has been cut off by geographical and other barriers. Consequently, whatever its value in itself, it has exerted little influence upon philosophy in general.'

This is also incorrect. Historians of the antiquities of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Indus Valley civilization are agreed on the borrowings of religious ideas from India. The Mesopotamian legend of the Deluge is directly Indian. In Seventh Century B.C., the Indians and Mesopotamians lived in the closest contact. There is some likelihood of that an

invasion occurred on the Indian frontier led by Semiramis, the Assyrian queen. The Asia Minor coastal islands were under the influence of the Babylonians. Hence Indian thought and ideas could very well have penetrated into those quarters. This supplies the possible historical clue for the influence of Indian thought on Ionia. There are some possibilities of the influence of Indian thought on Pythagorean arithmology and Platonic idealism.

There are more definite possibilities of the influence of Indian thought on Christianity. In medieval times Indian thought influenced Islamic writers. Hence it is not proper to say that Indian thought has been outside the stream of world thought and has not influenced the growth of thought in other countries. It would be superfluous to mention the tremendous influence of India on the thought of eastern Asia.

MAHA-SAMHITAS AND VYAHRITIS

(An Interpretation)

S. N. RAO

An all-comprehensive view of the universe in its totality of existences with all their interdependence and interrelatedness, is what is presented to us in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* through the concept of *Mahā-samhitās* and *Vyāhritis*. It is a presentation of *Viswa-rupa* in a different key, different from what is given to us in the *Gita*. It is scientific, within the comprehension of the human mind and human vision. Translated into English, the term '*Maha-samhita*' means a great combination which is here meant to be a Cosmic Combination. Five such Cosmic Combinations are given, and they constitute a picture of the universe as one integrated whole. They are perceptible verities of cosmic significance, basic factors of cosmic environment in which we are born and in which we have to grow. They are called combinations because they are not simple, but are composed of several constituents which go to make up each combination. All these are known and perceptible to our mind and senses. The teaching is from the known to the unknown. From these known fundamentals, we are asked to find the Great Unknown, the principle or the essence from which all that is known emanates. The entire field of phenomenal existence is divided and grouped under five different heads called

'*Maha-samhitas*'. Each group is a whole by itself, but it is a whole within a greater whole which may be described as the totality of manifestation or *Virat-Brahman*. Each group is further analysed under four factors which are called (1) *Purva-rupam* or prior form, (2) *Uttara-rupam* or posterior form, (3) *Sandhi* or the unifying factor, (4) *Sandhanam* or the act and process of unification. These factors are meant to indicate to us the nature and extent of relationships that exist within each group.

This first Cosmic Combination is termed '*Lokam*' which comprises the entire world of Modern Physics. The four constituent factors of this combination are as follows:—The first is '*Prithvi*' which stands for every individual formation of primordial matter of which our own planet Earth is an example. It is said to be the prior form. The firmament (*Dyaauh*) or the vault of heavens above every such formation of matter is taken as the posterior form. The third factor is the *Akasa* or the interstellar and interplanetary space, because no formation of matter can take place without the medium of space. Even the so called firmament is *Akasa* itself which is the unmanifest condition of matter in a highly tenuous state. It is not clear why the *Upanishad* men-

tions the firmament as the posterior form. The only probable reason is that the manifest and the unmanifest are eternally interchanging, alternatively becoming formful and formless through the process of evolution and dissolution. It cannot be said which is the prior and which is the posterior form. The fourth factor which aids the process of unification is the air or atmosphere (*Vayuh*) itself that surrounds all material bodies. This atmosphere is the immediate cementing factor with the rest of the universe or *lokam*. The concept of *lokam* thus comprises all the physical and material content in manifestation.

The second Cosmic Group is termed '*Jyotisham*' which means literally Light, and it stands for all the energy content in the universe. Cosmic energy manifests itself in several ways of which 'Light' is given the prominent place because it appears as fire on our Earth, as lightning in the sky, and as the Sun and stars in high heavens. In fact, this combination is made up of these as its four factors or constituents.

The third Cosmic Combination is termed '*Prajam*' in which the dominating element is Life. It constitutes all the vitalistic content in the universe and stands for all that is living. The term '*Prajam*' literally means humanity in general, and is here taken to include all living creatures. The four factors mentioned in the *Upanishad* are easily understood. Here is an ascent in our meditation from a purely physical and material plane of existence to the vitalistic level. The next step takes us to a higher level in the world of manifestation. This is the fourth '*Maha-samhita*' and it is called '*Vidyam*' which is the plane of knowledge, as distinguished from the physical and vitalistic plane. It is the realm of *Buddhi* and *Vijnanam*. The four factors mentioned are easily understood.

The fifth and the last cosmic complex is Man himself. Here, the term used is '*Atman*' and it is meant to cover the entire human personality, the highest product in evolutionary

development. It is this same human personality which is more fully analysed in the *Brahmananda Valli* section of the *Upanishad*. The vocal organs are given as the four constituent factors of that human personality, because the personality of man expresses itself through what he thinks, what he says and what he does. Man is the most intelligent and sentient entity and is therefore considered as an important factor in manifestation. An integral knowledge of that human personality is an essential step in the understanding of Cosmic Personality. Hence the inclusion of Man as one of the Cosmic Combinations.

Under these groups called *Maha-samhitas*, the entire universe, the totality of all existences, physical and psychical, vital and intellectual, is presented to us as manifestation emanating from one supreme Godhead. Each *Samhita* is a familiar particular as well as a familiar universal. The *Upanishad* does not contemplate any definite demarcation or separation between one group and another. The universe is one inter-related whole. It is the cosmic set-up in which each one of us is included and related to the greater whole. The object of classification is to facilitate our understanding the infiniteness and multiplicity of the world of manifestation and at the same time, the unity underlying the whole. In reality, there are only three primary fundamentals, namely the Universe, God and Man; all other fundamentals are secondary. Realisation of relatedness between the three is the main purpose of meditation on the *Maha-samhitas*.

ON VYAHRITIS

We are given four *Vyahrutis* in this *Upanishad*. They are *Bhuh*, *Bhuvah*, *Suvah*, and *Mahah*. What are these *Vyahrutis*? They are said to be mystic utterances. This is obviously not a complete and a satisfactory answer; it does not explain. They may be considered as symbolic sounds, symbolic of some cosmic particulars. Every *Vyahruti* may be said to point to a fundamental cosmic particular or particulars, asking us to find a relation

between those particulars and human personality. All *Vyāhritis* may therefore be taken as pointer readings because, through them, we are asked to read and understand that relationship between the Universe, God and Man. According to the text of the Upanishad, each *Vyāhriti* stands for four cosmic particulars, thus becoming a fourfold concept for our meditation or contemplation.

Take for example the first *Vyāhriti* 'Bhuh'. This sound stands for all the phenomenal universe which is the world of matter (Bhu-riti-va-lokah). It also stands for the Cosmic Principle behind all forms of heat, light, etc., which are contained in the world of energy (Bhu-riti-va-agnih). The same sound again stands for the Life Principle which sustains the world of all animate beings (Bhu-riti-va-vai-pranah). It further stands for all sacred knowledge which enlightens the world of mind and its functionings (Bhu-riti-va-jñāh). Thus we find this mystic sound *Bhuh* symbolises four cosmic particulars, namely, Cosmic Matter, Cosmic Energy, Cosmic Life, and Cosmic Mind or Intelligence. It has a fourfold content and is a fourfold concept. The next two *Vyāhritis*, namely *Bhuvah* and *Suvah* are meant to cover all other important entities of cosmic nature like the Sun, Moon, space and atmosphere. To these also, the Upanishad has given a fourfold content and a fourfold meaning. All the fundamentals of the cosmic set-up which we find under 'Maha-samhitas' are also here in these *Vyāhritis*. We have the same progressive gradation in manifestation from Matter to Energy, from Energy to Life, and from Life to Intelligence culminating in human personality.

The fourth *Vyāhriti*, *Mahah*, is given top priority and importance over all the others. The others are merely limbs of this supreme *Mahah*. This mystic sound symbolises the Godhead immanent both in man and in the universe. The Upanishad says it is Brahman or Atman Itself. It is equivalent to the sacred syllable OM. The concept of *Mahasamhitas*

stops at 'atman' conceived as man, as human individual only. Whereas, in the concept of *Vyāhritis*, the term 'Atman' is conceived as the spirit of Godhead indwelling in man. It is a great difference.

In common usage, the term 'Atman' denotes and contains the whole personality of man. It is the individual ego-self which directs all functionings both physical and psychical, and those functionings are done by the various organs which serve as limbs of that 'Atman'. It is the self-effulgent light from the Pure Consciousness behind that ego-self which makes these functionings possible. On this human personality scale, *Mahah* takes the place of Atman and illumines all functionings while the other *Vyāhritis* take their place as various limbs of the human body. Since the root meaning of *Mahah* is to grow big without limit, same as the word 'Brahman', this *Vyāhriti* is equated with the *Virat Brahman* or Cosmic Purusha. The universe is the body of that Cosmic Personality, the Universal Self as distinguished from the individual self. On this cosmic or universal scale, the other *Vyāhritis* take the place of various cosmic forces and become the limbs of that Cosmic Personality. All functionings on the cosmic scale are done under the guidance of that Cosmic Purusha, and He is said to magnify all the cosmic entities mentioned in the Upanishad. By equating this *Vyāhriti* with the Atman in man and again with the Cosmic Soul or Virat Atman, the Upanishad suggests that there is an intimate relation between the Universe, God and Man, and the forces operating in the universe are the same as the forces operating in human personality. The scale only is different. The first is the Macro-cosmic and the second is the Micro-cosmic. Hence there is every possibility of union between Cosmic Purusha which is God and the individual Purusha which is Man.

All that is known and yet to be known in the phenomenal world, all powers and forces physical and psychical, known and yet to be

known in Modern Science, are all contained in these *Maha-samhitas* and *Vyāhritis*. These form a link between the known and the unknown, constitute a bridge between the relative where we stand and the Absolute where we ought to be. Though we are in the known,

we are not cut off from the unknown. Though we are in the relative, we are not disconnected from the Absolute. The bridge is always there, and we are only to see it and walk through to reach the Absolute and attain the Bliss Eternal.

TAGORE'S CONCEPT OF 'JIVAN DEVATA'

(Presiding deity of the Poet's life)

S. P. BHATTACHARJI

Rabindranath is a poet-philosopher of integrated eternal values and his philosophy, born of intuition, expresses itself through his colossal creation.

We find both the finite and infinite in his philosophy. While the poet is the seeker of beauty, the philosopher is that of truth and both lead to the same supreme reality.

There is a fundamental unity in the genius of Tagore. The unique concept of personality, as evolved in his book, 'personality', gives a glimpse into the nature of his own personality which has manifested itself into the living contents of his creation underlying the unifying principle. The organic unity of its personality is the concrete expression of the development of his emotional and intellectual progress; his works.

Complete comprehension of Tagore presupposes comprehension of the concept of 'Jivan Devatā'—the Reality—and its apprehension alone would resolve many an apparent contradictions in him and his creation.

"The idea" Poet Tagore told Dr Thomson "has a double strand. There is the Vaishnava dualism, always keeping the separateness of the soul, and there is the Upanisadic Monism. God is winged in each individual and God is also the ground reality of all, as in the Vedantic unification. When the 'Jivandevata' idea came to me, I felt an overwhelming joy—it seemed a discovery, now with me—in this deepest self-seeking expression. I wish to sink into it to give myself up wholly to it. Today I am on the same plane as my readers. I am trying to find out what the 'Jivandevata' was."

Rabindranath is credited with the belief that this is true of all the great poets.

One of the eminent critics of Tagore and his former Literary Secretary, Ajit Chakravarty, characterised 'Jivan Devata' as 'one ever-evolving personnel' and 'It is an evolutionary consciousness'.

Dr Thomson remarked :

"Tagore proves his greatness, both as a poet and as a man, by rising completely above the 'Jivandevata' phase. It was lost in his strong religious experiences and absorbed into his general system of thought."

The Poet realised 'Jivan Devata' not as a *Tattwa* but as an idea. *Tattwa* means something which is comprehended by reasoning resulting in knowledge, whereas the 'Idea' is which is felt and perceived. In the former, there is reason and intellect, in the latter emotion and intuition; the one determines the truth, the other accepts it. The poetic nature of Tagore followed the second path in the quest of Truth.

The Indian rishis came to the conclusion that the *sumum bonum* of life is the realisation of the truth 'That art thou' (You are the Reality). Tagore could not subscribe fully either to the (Advaita) Vedantic view of life nor accept the Dvaita (dualism), the cult of Bhakti (loving devotion) as propounded by the Dvaita School of thought.

He was a poet of humanity and his idea of *Divinity of Man*, the eternal is the theme of his book 'Religion of Man'.

Tagore's God is not the transcendental reality of the Upanishads and his way of salvation is not that of the Vedantic pattern. His conception of God has not grown in his mind through any process of philosophical reasoning but suddenly flashed into his consciousness with a direct vision.

Man's personality is not limited to his (Man's) personality. It pervades and interweaves with the man in the whole universe. This unity is the resultant effect of the process of evolution which, after ages has reached man, must be realised in its unity with him, though in him it assumes a new value and proceeds to a definite path. It is a continuous process that finds its meaning in man and we must acknowledge that the evolution which science talks of is that of man's universe.

Tagore's idea of 'Jivan Devata' follows from his conception of the 'Religion of Man' as adumbrated in his 'Religion of Man'. 'In India philosophy ever sought alliance with poetry because its mission' averred Tagore presiding over the first session of the Indian Philosophical Conference 'was to occupy the people's life and not merely the learned seclusion of scholarship'.

Rabindranath was eager to live the life to its full. He could never have been an ascetic. He felt that deliverance 'was not for him in renunciation he would rather find the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of world's delight'. 'Thou ever pourest for me' he exclaims, 'the fresh draught of Thy wine'.

'Thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim'

Tagore's world is a flowing, changing world and he gets a glimpse of the transcendental reality through it.

He did not subscribe to the Monistic idea that the world is an illusion, as he felt that *Maya* would persist even if he dismisses this world of 'name and form' and believes in *Brahma* (Supreme Reality).

Eternal separation exists, according to Tagore, between God and the world and man, and *Maya* is responsible for this state of affairs.

He felt within himself the joy revealing to him the kinship and affinity between the exter-

nal world of nature crowded with living and non-living beings with his spirit and God within. To him, it became a matter of concrete expression the meaning of '*Isa vasyam idam*'—the God resides in water, in trees and herbs etc.

James H. Cousin, Poet and Philosopher, following his meeting with Poet Tagore observed that Rabindranath contended that his spontaneous lyrics are the 'transcripts from the voice of his *Ishta Devata* (chosen Deity)' indicating that his poems, like that of A. E. (George Russel) 'originated in some phase or realm of his individual inner nature, beyond and independent of his ordinary mental life'.

While we find in most of the systems of philosophy a reasoned account of the flight either from the Absolute to the finites or vice-versa, in Tagore we see it simultaneously from the Absolute and the finites. There is nothing like an ascending or a descending process, as he felt the finite-Infinite of the finite individual.

In 'Sandhya Sangeet' we find sorrow, doubts and disappointments are assailing him and there is a feeling that the universe is enveloped with pain and sorrow but in 'Prabhat Sangeet' (Morning Song), Chhabi-O-Gan (Picture and Song), Kadi-O-Kamal (Sharps and Shafts), a ray of hope was revealed to him.

But in the age of 'Manasi' he could seize upon something real; that 'what appeared to him as sensuous is in reality largely mental' but it still eluded him. It is here that his sympathy with the material and gross takes him to the mental aspect and he realised that by subduing the material, the spiritual element can manifest itself.

In 'Sonar Tari' (Golden Craft), the Poet realised the limitations of the individual life and appreciated the glory of the Cosmic life. He found that life has a meaning, a purpose. Here, we find for the first time, hazy traces of 'Jivan Devata', culminating in 'Chitra', where the Poet saw the difference between the two worlds; world of forms and of dreams.

He got a better view of the Real, the long-wished-for 'Jivan Devata'.

There is an attempt to bring about a synthesis between the two, but it appears it could not be brought about at this stage. Had he been an 'escapist' and just loved 'to live in a world of his own ideas', he would not have made any such attempt. But he is a poet of this world—poet of humanity and his love for this world finds expression in his works.

And the contradiction continues. He is in quest of that Mystery. Had he been just a realist either, there would have been no contradictions and they would have resolved themselves. But he is a poet of synthesis.

Doubts vanished in 'Chaitali' and contradictions camphered away. He finds a rhythm in nature, and yet he could not find himself in unison with it. The idea further unfolded in the 'Naivedya' and 'Kheya' where he had the fulfilment of the idea that 'nothing

is lost'. He is not separated from his God, the Cosmic God. Here he talked of human values. Here dawned the realisation about the surrender of the egoistic tendencies to the Cosmic order. In 'Gitanjali', 'Utsarga', 'Gitali' and 'Gitimalya', the Poet realised the Supreme Reality, 'Jivan Devata' and enjoys His company in pure love. The final battle of pain and evil is won and the victory of realisation is achieved.

To see the formless within the form, the great within the Small, is one of the basic ideas of Tagore's 'Sadhana'. Now the truth dawned on him that 'as in man, so in nature there is a continuous dance of life and joy, a renewal of life through death' and 'it is in the fulness of life along motion of freedom and of joy that pervades every particle of Reality'. In the enjoyment of life he often listened the call of the *Unknown* and the *Beyond* and the *Infinite* and realised the close affinity between the *Finite* and the *Infinite*.

CHASTITY AND HEALTH

ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

Health is the real wealth a man possesses on this earth. If money is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, much is lost. If character is lost, then, everything is lost.

That personal integrity is intimately linked up with health is a truth so often ignored not only by the man-in-the-street, but also by medical graduates and university professors. Wholeness of body or physical health is often consequential to the holiness of the spirit or integrity of mind and heart. The tap root and the elan vital that sustain personal integrity and physical health is purity, chastity, *brahmacharya*.

Forgetful of the scriptural injunctions, ignorant of the wisdom of the esoteric sages, we rely almost exclusively on medical prescriptions, chemical drugs, surgical operations and

injections to cure us of our diseases and regain our lost health. When we run to the nearest physician or chemist for any disease, we often ignore that Nature is the repository of health and vitality, that Nature's Laws—the Panchsila of Buddhist ethics and the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic revelation—are the inexhaustible reservoir of health and happiness. Drugs and chemicals may cover up ailments for a while, but radical cure of any disease cannot be secured without having recourse to Nature and Nature's laws.

Medical men who ignore Nature Cure or shelve spiritual values and ethical imponderables do often fail to diagnose the disease correctly, treat not only the symptoms but also the root of the disease properly. Poisonous drugs may heal some symptoms of the disease;

but often they create more diseases, both organic and functional. Medical men have killed many patients with their drugs without ever being accused of murder, because they hold a licence to practise their profession. Some medical men have grown rich, they have become multi-millionaires cashing on their London diplomas or U.S. medical certificates. Few are those brave men and women who pause for a while and test the accuracy of that medical science that ignores Nature's laws, personal integrity and chastity in the treatment of patients. Nay, contraceptives, abortions, unrestraint sexual life have all become part and parcel of that medical profession which ignores God, Nature and Chastity.

C. G. Jung, the greatest living psycho analyst of today, has said :

During the past thirty years, people from all civilised countries of the earth have consulted me ... Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain this religious outlook.

—(Modern Man in Search of a Soul, p. 264.)

What Jung had said of the psychological religion is equally true of ethics and purity of character in the cure of diseases. We can safely say that the overwhelming majority of diseases, both organic and functional, nervous and psychic, are traceable to impurity of character. Thanks to the modern obscene advertisements, pornographic literature and magazines and the general sex-crazy atmosphere everywhere, modern man is ready to brush aside that esoteric wisdom and spiritual values which sustained the physical and mental health of our forbears, which gave creativity of spirit, longevity and radiant vigour to the wise generations of yore. It is that purity of character which fixed 100 years as the normal life-span of man, as the Isa Upanishad and other Indian Scriptures testify. Patanjali Yoga

simply says : 'Attainment of energy through the observance of continence'—*Brahmacharya-pratishthayam viryalabhah* (Yoga. II, 38). Indian Vedic, Upanishadic and Darsanic scriptures are full of this insistence on chastity, *Brahmacharya* as the fountain of physical health and spiritual salvation. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'. Blessed are also the chaste souls for they shall preserve or regain health of body and mind. Tom Mann said : 'The future is for nations that are chaste'. We can add : perfect health is for those who are pure.

Mahatma Gandhi, who was an accurate research experimentalist of the science of life, said :

The maintenance of perfect health should be considered almost an utter impossibility without the *brahmacharya* leading to the conservation of the sexual secretions.

(Key to Health, p. 46.)

No amount of tonics, drugs, injections, Neurovitamins and B Complex tablets can cure a man if his mental attitudes and habits of life are not pure. Apart from the physical weakness and nervous breakdown which often follow unrestrained sexual indulgence, few people take note of the psychic wastage and ravages which are working deeper down the psyche and soul of man. Even a few months—and not years of prodigal life—are enough for the libertines to lose that innocent look, that retentive power and idealistic ventures. In my own experience I have come across young promising boys, who, after two or three years of dissipated life in the prostitute quarters of Calcutta, have wrecked their health, sapped their mental vigour and were reduced to life-long invalids and imbeciles. No amount of injections and treatments have restored them back to life. Yet, a few of them, who, through good fortune or God's grace, have amended their ways and learnt the science of chastity, continence and self-restraint, have regained their health, even without chemical drugs and injections.

The Indian Government has instituted a network of birth control clinics in our land. But have they instituted a ministry for the moral rearmament of the Indian Youth? When our boys and girls are taught that they can indulge in sex without shouldering the responsibility of bearing and rearing children through contraceptives and birth controls, animal passions, otherwise so imperious in the thoughtless crowd, are fanned and pampered. The ancient discipline of *Brahmacharya* is today thrown overboard. Film industry has put a premium on vice and exhibits what is sickening as healthy, deadly as life-giving, sinful as virtuous. Yet, where is the film censorship operating? Hundreds of Delhi mothers appealed to the Government to save their children from sexy films which poisons the imagination, hearts and minds of the teenagers. Yet, the world rolls on down the hill.

If our film magnates would copy Hollywood stars, why cannot they also follow the example of the great educational, historical and cultural films which were produced in the U.S.? India has still to produce a counterpart to Cecil de Mello's *Ten Commandments*. We are imitating the West by copying their worst, not their best in the history of human civilization. How quickly we have broadcast and diffused throughout the length and breadth of our country the 'true love stories', detectives, love songs and comics from the west, that skin-deep sexy features of western life, ignoring almost completely the great social institutions of the West, their cultural and spiritual achievements of the past and the present?

Many of our Indian journals and films are now depicting to our youth that sex instinct is unconquerable, that sexual indulgence is a necessity for self-expression, that marriage is

no more a sacrament, but 'the grave of love' etc.

Sir Lionel Beale, Professor at the Royal College in London, says :

The example of the best and noblest men has at all times proved that the most imperious of instincts can be effectively resisted by a strong and serious will, and by sufficient care as to manner of life and occupation. Sexual abstinence has never yet hurt any man when it has been observed, not only through exterior restrictive causes, but as a voluntary rule of conduct. Virginity, in fine, is not too hard to observe provided that it is the physical expression of a certain state of mind... Chastity implies not only continence, but also purity of sentiments, the energy which is the result of deep convictions.

Speaking of the beneficent effects of chastity, Professor Montegazza, has this to say :

All men, and young men in particular, can experience the immediate benefit of chastity. The memory is quiet and tenacious, the brain lively and fertile, the will energetic, the whole character gains a strength of which libertines have no conception. No prism shows us our surroundings under such heavenly colours as that of chastity, which lights up with its rays the least objects in the universe, and transports us into the purest joys of an abiding happiness that knows neither shadow nor decline.

From among great Indians we can marshal great authorities like Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Rabindranath, Sri Aurobindo and others to corroborate the thesis that in the majority of cases diseases are the offspring of sexual dissipation and that the way to regain health and happiness is through chastity or *brahmacharya*. Once this fundamental law of life is realised and lived up to, then medical science can hasten recovery of patients and lead them to realms of happiness, peace and bliss.

The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent, and this is what gave them power.

Chastity in thought, word, and deed, always, and in all conditions, is what is called *Brahmacharya*.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Dr Srinath S. Hasurkar, M.A., Ph.D., Sahitya-charya is from the Institute of Languages and Research, Jabbalpur.

Srimati K. Savithri, M.A., is from Madras.

Sri Hemanta Kumar Sen from Jabbalpur is writer of a book on Acharya Sankara.

Swami Nikhilananda is the Head of The Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, New York.

Dr V. P. Varma, M.A. (Patna), M.A. (Columbia), Ph.D. (Chicago), is Professor of Politics, Patna University, and a former research scholar in Buddhist Philosophy.

Sri S. N. Rao of Ootacamund is a retired Deputy Collector.

Sri S. P. Bhattacharji is the Lucknow Editor of the United Press of India Limited.

Sri Anthony Elenjittam of Bombay is a writer of several books.

LIBERALIZING RELIGIONS

India is a vast country. Variety in food, dress, language and habits, is there among the people of different areas. But not only politically, but culturally too, India is one. Madras to Assam is a long way. One has to travel for a whole week by train if one wants to go from Kanyakumari to Kamrup, both being old places of pilgrimage. But the trouble is worth taking, if only to discover the basic Indian mind with the same religious moorings. Even the deities people worship are the same. The same Mother Goddess reigns supreme as Kumari or Kamakhya. There are innumerable other common characteristics too. But still there is a tendency among certain people to come to the conclusion that Indian unity is not possible unless the Indian people are freed from the old habits of religious outlook, as also of food, dress etc. Assam poses a peculiar problem before them, which strengthens their contention. The aggressive conversion policy of the Churches with the idea of getting the whole tribal groups under them is the root cause of this trouble. No trace of the original religion, worship etc., will be left. That is their idea. But what is the effect? First of all, disunity among different groups. Secondly, in the process of mobilizing the faithful, irreligious methods are frequently adopted, thereby undoing the basis of religion itself. Moreover,

the main stress is not on religion at all but on financial gain and political favours. The strangest of rights flouting all conceptions of equality and democracy are freely claimed in the tribal areas. The basis of unity in tribal areas of Assam is not religious, nor racial, nor linguistic, nor even cultural, though all of them are cited. Dialects, tribes and their cultures are too many. The only thing that binds them is the idea of gain from the plains. Many of them are Christians and the Churches are anxious to bring all the people under them. This will not only kill tradition and cultural peculiarities, but will estrange the people in the neighbourhood. Already some of the clans have been taught to be unfriendly to the country. The tendency will increase if it is not checked in the proper time. While political and economic affairs may be left to the administrators, religious and cultural things are to be looked after by the people. The growth of religious intolerance and the desire of the Churches for the unrivalled sway over the people are not good omens. A remedy must be found out. Is there a remedy? Yes, there is. We know it but must seriously apply it. We may know a truth which is useful.

But it impinges on us with a double force when we are faced with a situation, the way out of which is the way of truth only. All of

us know that for peace and harmony in society it is necessary to have unity. So causes of friction must be lessened. There is no meaning in keeping up the old quarrels alive, specially on the idea front. Many people want to solve the problem by abolishing all religions, thereby abolishing the chance of all quarrels based on religion. But religion is a useful thing for humanizing the human animal. So some people, even if they do not believe in it, want to preserve it. But they stumble on the rock of intolerance which is characteristic of sectarian outlook. The sectarians were once described by Swami Vivekananda as "those sweet people who wrap themselves up in their mantle of charity and say, 'we are right; you are wrong.'" (*New Discoveries*, p. 586).

Now that is the way in which the different sectarian religions developed. To foster unity,

they must be liberalised. That surely is a great problem. The acceptance of the Vedantic idea of considering different religions as several pathways to the Supreme, is the only solution. This has been supported by all the saints and mystics. The development of this attitude is the remedy, the true remedy, for all sectarian quarrels. Would to God, the leaders of these aggressive religious bodies stopped presenting religion as the fomentor of bitterness and rivalry, of competition and conversion! This is imperative. Otherwise the fate will be gloomy for all the religious groups, for members of unorganised religions may seek the help of non-religious groups and probably bring about the religious ruin of all. In the recent past, Kerala gave us some glimpses of it. Let us beware of the danger and learn our lesson in time.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE THRONE OF TRANSCENDENTAL WISDOM: Sri Sankaracharya's Sarada Pitha in Sringeri. By K. R. Venkataraman, 3, Varadaraja Perumal Koil St., Kothawal Chavadi, Tiruchirapalli-8. Pages 176. Price Rs. 5.

The Throne of Transcendental Wisdom is to happy phrasing in terms of which the author Sri K. R. Venkataraman presents the history of Sringeri Sarada Pitha from the date of its inception at about 820 A.D. to the present day.

The author who is well known to the educational world as a scholar of eminence in the field of archaeological research, has traced in this monograph, the evolution and development of Sringeri Samsthanam from the idyllic monastic centre established by Bhagavatpada Shankara in the heart of a forest some eleven hundred years ago. As an integral part of the treatment of his theme he furnishes also interesting biographical sketches of the lives and achievements of the Sanyasins of the Advaita parampara, who have preceded over the Pitha during these spacious centuries.

As the author has planned it, the book consists of eleven chapters well-proportioned to the sequence of events and the importance of the

spiritual personalities that come into the picture. Chapters V and IX dealing with 'Three Great Seers' and 'The Re-descent of Shankara' respectively are masterpieces of vivid and lucid writing in this portrait gallery.

Besides its obvious value as a piece of historical writing, the book contains a mine of knowledge regarding the deeper meaning of life, of Sadhana and of the attainment of spiritual perfection as taught by illustrious Acharyas like Vidyashankara, Vidyaranya and Satchidananda, Sivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati who figured during the post-Shankara period.

The invocatory Sanskrit verses introducing the spiritual atmosphere of each chapter are a special distinction—and the pictures and art-illustrations included in the book add to its artistic format.

The appreciative Foreword, Introduction and messages from distinguished saints and scholars, prefixed to the contents bear true witnesses to the excellence and quality of the author's production which deserves the grateful attention of the reading public interested in the study of our ancient philosophical heritage with special reference to Acharya Shankara's Advaita Darsana.

Shankara's Adwaita as Swami Vivekananda rightly observes, has saved the world twice from the crisis of a materialistic civilization during a most critical epoch of India's medieval history. And the story of the practice and propagation of this saving gospel by a premier, spiritual institution of the status of Sarada Pitha, Sringeri, is bound to command the interest of all seekers of Truth who seek the inner world of consciousness through religion and philosophy.

K. PANCHAPAGESAN.

THE BUILDING OF THE HOME: By B. P. Wadia. (Pp. 56. Price Re. 1. The Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore-4.)

This is no engineering treatise as the title is apt to suggest, but seeks to bring back the ancient ideals set out in sacerdotal literature, like the Manu Smriti, Gita, etc., as well as by St. Paul, Confucius and H. P. B. and build up the home, as a temple where minds worship, hearts feel peace and bliss and hands create beauty, and amity energises all to better and nobler living. The focal point is the Grihasthrama, the preserver and progenitor of all the other asramas. Various ways are suggested, which far from idealistic, are eminently practical. Man and woman should live on the basis of duties rather than rights and be inter-dependent like spirit and matter. Elders should be respected and guests honoured. Employees should be treated generously and made to feel pleasure in serving. Physical cleanliness, choosing of sattvic food, solemnity whilst eating, cultivation of frugality with a view to generous sharing with others, individual discipline and study, silence, conversation that entertains and discussion that elevates, —all these in a psycho-spiritual atmosphere surcharged with truth, contentment and joy, make the ideal home, not its architectural grandeur or its luxurious furnishings.

One hopes that this admirable treatise from the pen of one of our distinguished nation builders, will find its way into every home.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

MATERIALISM AND SPIRITUALISM: By Koteswar. (Vora & Co., Publishers, 3, Round Building, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay-2. Pp. 111. Price Rs. 3.)

The author of this thought-provoking publication, critically examines the tenets of materialism and spiritualism in the wake of the latest scientific conclusions; and his summing up at p. 111 that only Sanatana Dharma can provide the basis of

a true religion is unexceptionable. But it is difficult to understand his castigation of Hinduism (p. 39) as 'offering nothing for economic and political integration', or that it has (p. 40) 'not only neglected the poor and down-trodden and their suffering but has positively allied against their interests'. Hinduism, however, is different from the Hindus, especially of the acquisitive sort: in fact, no religion lays so much stress on moral values and philanthropy, as it does. Even the ascetic is required to promote the welfare of both man and bird and beast. 'Suhridam Sarva Bhutanam'. And Sankara, its most eminent protagonist, asks us daily to contemplate that riches 'Artham' are hindrances 'Anartham'. Still less is it true of Buddhism, which far from prizing cessation of all activities, has helped to forge two of the mightiest world nations, viz., Japan and China.

His remarks against the Caste System are somewhat overdrawn. The Caste System is specifically mentioned in the Rigveda and the Gita: his statements at p. 108 need revision. It is not an arbitrary division on the 'basis of skin pigmentation' (p. 109) but is based on certain tendencies and inhibitions both inherited and acquired. The various blood groups and tests which medical science has discovered and systematized in recent times, afford perhaps the strongest proof for the differentiation it makes between individual and individual. As for its impact on the political field, one has to reckon with the fact that even in the modern classless states, a wide gulf exists between the thinker and the worker and the ruler and the ruled. And it would not be fantastic to suggest that if only the European nations had observed such a classification, when warriors would not be rulers or advisers to rulers, with knowledge of military science and weapons resting with 'Brahmavadins', two world wars would have been prevented; and a cold war that almost threatens a third, could be nipped in the bud.

His thesis (p. 73) that the latest scientific conclusions have abrogated 'the age-old concept of the world and human nature in the Vedas, Upanishad, the Gita and the Brahma Sutras', cannot also be accepted, since the researches of eminent scientists like Sir James Jeans and Eddington, have confirmed even the maya vada of Sri Sankara about the transitoriness of the Universe.

Sri Rama worshipped Shiva Linga at Rameshwar after vanquishing Ravana (p. 53) and not 'before he crossed the seas'.

R. RAJAGOPALAN

THE SECRETS OF PRANA, PRANAYAMA AND YOGA ASANAS: By Swami Narayananda. Published by M/s. N. K. Prasad & Co., P.O. Rishikesh (U.P.), India. Pp. 120. Price Rs. 4.50 nP.

Swami Narayananda is a well known author on Mind, Kundalini Shakti, Yoga Asanas and Samadhi. By his practical experience and keen observation, he tries to guide the people towards simple, contented and happy living. In the book under review, he talks about Prana which he calls the Supreme Force and eulogises the importance of Kundalini Shakti. Later on, he speaks about Pranayama and Yoga Asanas with illustrative photographs of the author. A very practical book on preserving one's health for the sake of one's own welfare, it will prove its value and worth if it reaches the masses.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

EAST AND WEST SERIES: By T. L. Vaswani:

No. 48 *The Voice of Vivekananda*: This book deals with the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, the lion hearted disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who preached man-making religion.

No. 49 *Paper Boats*: Herein is presented the wise utterings of saints of Wisdom and Truth. The collection inspires us and takes us to a place wherein we may not have any thought of returning back to this world.

No. 50 *Friends of God*: This one brings out the life and teachings of the two mystics of Islam—Hatim Hashim and Parasi. The unity of all religions aimed at the second chapter is very well borne by clarity of thought and expression.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA,

KANPUR

The above centre runs a Higher Secondary School, a Library and Reading Room, a Hospital (having two departments, General and Eye), and two Vyayamshalas. Weekly classes were held on Sunday evenings and birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated with great eclat. There were 515 boys in the High School. An Assembly Hall costing Rs. 44,000 was constructed in 1958. High School results for the years 1957 and 1958 were 87% and 94% respectively. In December 1958 there were in all 5,149 books and 2,820 and 3,331 books were issued during the years 1957 and 1958 respectively. The Reading Room was attended daily by an average of 105 persons. The total number of patients treated in the Hospital during 1957 was 1,11,736. Flu in epidemic form was partly responsible for this rise. In 1958 the figure came down to 97,405. During the year under review two public feasts and two Dangals were organised by the Vivekanand Vyayamshalas, and they were appreciated very much. Milk was distributed to poor patients and under-nourished children. The average number of daily recipients was 300. While thanking the sympathisers and donors the management appeal for funds for paying off loans and the extension of the school and other activities.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, MANGALORE

REPORT FOR 1958

This branch of the Mission runs a Boys' Home and a Charitable Dispensary. During the year under report 41 students were maintained free, 9 of them studying in Higher Elementary School, 29 in High School and 3 in College. In the Bala-kashrama an attempt is made to impart integral education through the inculcation of spiritual values in their widest sense, along with physical and intellectual training. The dispensary treated 31,919 patients in 1958 of which 8,226 were new cases. The management thank the supporters and appeal for funds for the extension and running of the Boys' Home and for a permanent fund for the dispensary.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA

REPORT FOR 1958

Started in 1922 the Mission is rendering service in medical, educational, religious and cultural fields. The Homoeopathic Dispensary treated 70,362 patients including 8,438 new cases. The Allopathic Department treated 49,491 cases including 7,249 new cases. The Adbhutananda Upper Primary School had 169 boys on the roll. There were 14 free students in the Students' Home. The Mission runs a Library (with a reading room and lecture hall). The library issued 5,762 books

during the year. Religious and cultural activities consisted of scriptural classes, lectures, worship and celebration of birthdays. The total receipts in all departments amounted to Rs. 1,80,268.55 and the total expenditure was Rs. 97,795.58. While thanking the subscribers, donors and friends, the management appeal for a fund of Rs. 2 lakhs for acquisition of a plot of land and construction of building for the Charitable Dispensary and for Endowment for Reserve Fund.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, RANCHI REPORT FOR 1958

This Ashrama maintains a Charitable Outdoor Homoeopathic Dispensary including a good stock of Biochemic and essential Allopathic medicines and accessories. Medicine was served to 8,378 and diet to 170 patients free in 1958. Powdered milk was distributed fortnightly among 900 poor people of the locality and adjoining 14 villages. Similarly Multi-purpose Food was distributed among 100 people. A building for the free library and reading room was opened. 171 indoor and 44 outdoor scriptural classes were arranged. The total general income and expenditure of this Ashrama in 1958 were Rs. 7,202.24 nP., and Rs. 5,605.85 nP. respectively.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS-4

BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

The ninety-seventh tithipuja of Swami Ramakrishnananda was observed on the 2nd Aug. '59 in the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-4. The function started with Arati in the Shrine followed by singing and chanting of the select portions from Gita and Upanishads by the boys of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, and Durga-saptasati and Gita by the sadhus. In the Shrine elaborate worship was performed along with Arati and Homa. Nearly 900 devotees attended the function and took food prasad. About 800 poor people were also fed.

In the evening after service in the Shrine, Swami Suddhasattwananda and Swami Gaurananda spoke in English and Swami Paramatmananda in Tamil on the life of Swami Ramakrishnananda to the gathered devotees.

On 9th August '59 the Public Celebration started with Harikatha on Prahlada by Sukha Brahman Ramaswamy Sastrigal. The meeting started at 5-30 p.m. with Swami Madhavanandaji, the Gene-

ral Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in the chair. Sri K. Balasubramania Iyer welcomed the president and the speaker and also recalled to his memory his contact with Swami Ramakrishnanandaji during his boyhood days.

Prof. Raghava Sastry, the Principal of the Vivekananda College, read out his thoughtful speech on Swami Ramakrishnananda, with parallel quotations from the Bhagavatam.

Swami Chidbhavananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, during the course of his eloquent Tamil lecture narrated in a beautiful way about the unique position of Swami Ramakrishnananda among the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and particularised his unparalleled Guru Bhakti. He also told that how he and his cousin Sarat, who later became Swami Saradananda, were the pillars of the Math.

He concluded that what we see now in South India of Swami Ramakrishnananda's work for the propagation of the higher values of life is just the beginning and much more is yet to be seen. Many more dedicated souls will come forward to fulfil his ambition.

Swami Madhavanandaji in course of his presidential address recalled to his memory of the eight blessed days he spent in the Swami's company in the year 1909 at this Math. He also told how the Swami treated him kindly and gave him valuable advice.

Professor P. Sankaranarayanan proposed a vote of thanks.

After the evening service in the Shrine, there was Bhajan for an hour in the spacious hall by the Bhajan-Party of Sri Ramakrishna Kripa Amateurs.

SRI KRISHNA JAYANTI

Sri Krishna Jayanti celebration was observed in the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, on 26th August. Sukha Brahman Ramaswamy Sastrigal gave his impressive discourse in Tamil on 'The birth of Sri Krishna' from 7 to 9 p.m. and shortly after there was elaborate puja to Sri Krishna in the spacious Hall. Gathered devotees were served with prasad.

On Sunday the 30th August evening Sri K. Panchapagesa Iyer, delivered his learned lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Krishna.

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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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HOW EVEN THE GREAT ONES SURRENDER

Tota Puri, the 'Naked One' as Sri Ramakrishna called him, was a wanderer on the face of the earth; the sky was his roof, the grass his bed, his food what chance might bring. He came to Dakshineswar, and as soon as his eyes fell on Sri Ramakrishna's face, radiant with tapas and beaming with surge of devotion, Tota felt that he was not an ordinary person and that there were few so fit for Vedantic sadhana.

Sri Ramakrishna received the consent of the Mother to be taught this highest wisdom, and gained it in three days after initiation from his teacher. Tota Puri could not account for this and doubted his own senses, as he had taken forty years to master the Advaita-consciousness. And then the teacher in his turn became the disciple.

Since Tota Puri, an austere man of renunciation, had the impression that the path of devotion to God was a fantastic one, there often took place a loving conflict between him and Sri Ramakrishna.

Once Tota Puri had a severe attack of blood dysentery. On account of the painful wringing of his intestines, his mind, though tranquil and accustomed to samadhi, came again and again down to the body. Terribly annoyed, Tota Puri thought, 'Away with this nuisance of a body!' At dead of night he got down into the Ganga and gradually went further on. But he could not find water deep enough for drowning himself. Surprised, Tota thought, 'What strange Divine Maya is this?' Immediately his mind was dazzled with a bright light and he saw Mother. Mother! Mother! Mother in land, and Mother in water! And all the quarters of the heavens were reverberating with the cries of 'Mother'! Tota began to return. With his heart full of devotion he completely offered himself as an oblation to Her Feet.

In the morning Sri Ramakrishna found him a different person altogether, — his face beaming with bliss, lips blooming with a smile, his body free from all illness! When they heard the morning tune from the Nahabat, both the great souls went to the temple and prostrated themselves before the holy Image of the Divine Mother.

THE SOCIAL NECESSITY OF RELIGION

In the present days a question is often asked in India, especially by young men and that is: What is the necessity of religion? An attitude of questioning regarding this fundamental institution of man is natural because questioning everything is the order of the day. Moreover, religion has been attacked in the West by the humanists, scientists and the materialistic philosophers. The special reason now of asking the question is the vehement propaganda made by some political parties, especially the Communists who accept this attack as a cardinal doctrine. The desire of regarding India as secular and some of the comments of the popular Prime Minister of India have added to this doubt. Hence the opinions of other great leaders such as the President, the Vice-President, Rajaji and Vinoba Bhave have probably less currency among the youth. Of course, the natural tendency of young minds to be free from all restraints adds to this questioning. To face this question, we must see to their mental background. Mostly, these young men are socially aware also. And this is a good sign that they are not nihilists or pessimists. To them it is necessary to point out the social necessity of religion. We do not propose now to discuss this problem exhaustively. Let us discuss an evident but often forgotten social usefulness of religion.

Religion has two aspects: individual and social. The effect of religion also is in these two fields. First of all, if religion has some metaphysical validity it must stay on, for truth does not depend upon the opinions of some men. Even if they become aggressive and try to suppress it, it will reassert itself. This is the reaction of the generality of Indians

when faced with this problem. Religious hunger being the eternal urge of man will have its expression in some way or other. And unless the political theories take cognisance of this fact they will fail to impress the mature minds in India.

Politically speaking, India fortunately has inherited a democratic mind. Spontaneously people feel that the other man should have his way regarding his ways of life. This is the result of centuries of freedom in thinking. That is why even in dress, food and other habits there is not that dull uniformity which is noticeable in many countries. Hence it easily appeals to Indians when you say that every man must have the freedom of views as long as it is not harmful to the society. So if at least some people feel the urge, religion must remain. It need not be directly useful to every man in the society for we build up the theatre and the stadium from the State exchequer knowing full well that they will be useful only to a section of the society. Then why should we not allow religious institutions to continue and flourish? If temples are useful for a section of the people then, if we are democratic and not manifestly secular or anti-religious, why should we not support them from the same exchequer? To grant concessions to the political pilgrims and to levy taxes on the religious ones is manifestly a discrimination, nay a coercion. And if you accept coercion in these politically and socially harmless affairs, on what ground can you object to the doctrine of suppressing religious and other freedoms altogether?

As for the Communist doctrine of forcibly suppressing religion, well, it is a question of strength. And might is right is the law of the jungle. It is no more a

question of discussion, understanding and persuasion.

Now, these are all from the negative standpoint. But what are the positive services given by religion? There are many. Let us mention only the most obvious one. It is an admitted fact that man is not fully cultured when born. A regular course of acculturation is provided by nature as well as by human institutions like the family and the society. To run the society it is necessary to inculcate the higher virtues in the individuals constituting the society. The necessity of higher virtues is an obvious fact. Take for instance, unselfishness. If every member in a family is selfish, can that family remain together? The joint family system will provide us with a clear example. It is possible to keep the family together if only one or two members are selfish but when all or majority of them are self-seeking the bonds of family crack. As long as the main cementing factor, the all-renouncing, all-loving mother is alive, the joint family goes on but it is sure to disintegrate after her. Hundreds of such cases may be seen in our society. It is true of the larger society too. If all the members of the society are selfish the society will crack. Similar is the case with the other virtues. Can a family or a society go on if all its members are given to lying or dishonesty? This is true of all the higher qualities. Some amount of latitude may be allowed till the saturation point is reached and then the decline begins. The study of the fall of some nations and empires may give us that understanding. So it is clear that the society must have these virtues.

How to have them? They must be inculcated in man by regular training from childhood. Of all the agencies working for this purpose it is religion

that boldly proclaims the ideal and its necessity. No other agency directly propagates it. When a thing is wanted it is better to point it out clearly. Indirect methods may be followed but why should we stop with them? Moreover, religion gives the greatest stress on the virtues and provides a philosophical perspective which becomes convincing. It has been found from experience that mere intellectual understanding is not enough, a belief in a higher Being and in a divine Order of things is more useful. Otherwise in weaker moments, in times of temptation people forget the higher considerations and revert to the baser nature.

Some people argue that higher virtues and morality are possible without any religious belief. True, it is possible, but it is because of the centuries of religious training that man has inherited the ideas of a high standard of virtues. If religion is abolished, in a few hundred years the law of the jungle will again prevail. The very fact that man recognizes good as good and virtues as virtues is due to this training. If instead, evil and vice, selfishness and hatred are preached and accepted for some time as preferable even the present standard of at least intellectually and intuitively recognizing good as good will cease. What will then hold the society together? The mere scientific temper or humanism will not be able to stem the tide. It is true in these days tremendous impression can be made by propaganda. But it can do both ways. And who are the people to do that? They themselves have been freed from the idea of recognizing these virtues. Hence it is clear that to keep the society going higher virtues are essential and to inculcate these higher virtues in man religion is the greatest and best agency and so is an imperative necessity.

AT THE HOLY FEET OF M.

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI DHARMESHANANDA

Friday, Aug. 7, 1931. Shravan 22, 1336.

In the evening at about 6 p.m. I went to see M. and found him on the balcony of the top floor with his face eastward. He greeted me warmly and invited me to sit down but I was not in a pleasant frame of mind today. Having had some mental uneasiness on the previous day and not having reached any high stage of mental detachment I naturally felt indignant. I thought I might regain in the company of M. my mental composure; and an attraction for him was always there.

M. said: Satinath and others went to see off Sitapati Maharaj today. Sitapati Maharaj wants that he should live in solitude from now on and devote himself fully to spiritual meditation. He does not want to be roving about but would like to reside at one particular place. And he would like to have an attendant with him. I told him what the Master used to say, namely, 'the sadhus should live alone and worship God Who always takes care of His devotees; wherever there is a fire the moths go and burn themselves. Once you realise Him, you give Him all your love and you need nothing else. People used to come to me with all sorts of gifts but I would return them all, saying that I do not want all these. I want only the Blissful Mother.' You see, you should have a love for Him, you should weep for Him. But nowadays we see people do not long for Him, do not shed a drop of tear for Him but they think they are fit to renounce the world. I am glad that Sitapati Maharaj accepted my advice and did not take anybody with him. But tell me Dhiren, how do you like the Master's teachings?

I nodded and told him that it was wonderful.

M.: If you require an attendant you are no better than a rich man undertaking a jour-

ney. You employ a person and save yourself all the trouble. If I for instance go on a pilgrimage, a servant will go with me. But a sadhu goes on a pilgrimage to realise God and God will take care of him. He should not behave like a worldly man. A sadhu is not an ordinary person, he is a great soul.

Just then an old sadhu who was personally known to M. came with a stick in his hand. He had once invited and fed Swami Brahmananda Maharaj in his house while the latter was in Brindaban and he had been well acquainted with Swami Saradananda Maharaj while the latter was at Puri. He spoke about the loving reception he got from Swami Saradananda at Udbodhan office.

For the sadhu's delectation M. asked Satinath to read out the portion of *Adhyatma Ramayana* which describes Rama's stay at Chitrakut. M. said: Yesterday a monk of Belur Math read out some portion of *Adhyatma Ramayana* to Sitapati Maharaj. He was reading that portion where Valmiki tells Rama that He resides in every heart. This part of the *Ramayana* is wonderful. (To Satinath) Just come forward and read that portion, will you?

Satinath read it with great devotion. The following is the story: Ramachandra having taken leave of Guha came to Bharadwaja Ashrama. Before this he had never slept on the ground on a bed of withered leaves. At this Lakshmana was saying 'He was brought up amidst the pleasures of the palace and never had to undergo these hardships. A man reaps the fruit of his own actions; that is why this thing has come to pass.'

Sadhu: How wonderful!

M.: Lakshmana was too young to understand its implications and that is why he said like that. He was treating Rama as a common

man. He did not know that in the *Gita* Lord Krishna said: 'Work cannot bind Me and I have no desire for the fruits of work'.

Sadhu: Yes, Lakshmana was speaking in terms of the common man; just to serve as a lesson for humanity.

M.: No. The Master used to say that incarnations of God are not affected by the results of their actions as ordinary people are. When Ramachandra asked the sage Bharadwaja to fix an abode for Him, he told Him, 'Oh Rama, normally you are in every being and every being is in you. But your special abode is in the hearts of those only who have forsaken all worldly desires and only meditate on God, who are equally indifferent to pleasures and disappointments, and surrender themselves completely to the will of God'. He is thus describing the qualities that a sadhu should possess. In the pure heart of a sadhu resides Ramachandra but to attain that state it is not always necessary or essential to put on ochre clothes.

Then M. wanted to give some sweets to the sadhu which however the latter excused himself from taking. His companion then expressed a desire that Satinath should sing a song to entertain them. Satinath started to sing:

Unbounded is Your grace
You have made me supremely happy
And removed my sorrows by Your presence.
The nectar of Your love has solaced my heart,
O Lord of my heart,
There is no one to equal You.
Without You the entire world is a void
And the sun and the moon
Appear to be without lustre.

The sadhu was very much pleased to hear Satinath's song. He told him that he was very pure in heart and gentle in nature.

M.: And, do you know, he was studying for his B.A.

Sadhu: But all that has undergone a change and nowadays it seems to be a discredit to become religious-minded.

The old sadhu: If we realise God, we are blessed with two precious things. Firstly, we see God in every body and secondly, we become generous in heart.

He also quoted a few passages from the *Gita*, where Arjuna speaks to Krishna of his ignorance of what is right and what is wrong. The aged sadhu and his companion then departed. It was evening. M. sat down for meditation at one corner and we also followed to sit in the open balcony. We all sat there silently for an hour and then came back to our own places. M. then asked me to read out the *Ramayana* again to two other sadhus who had come in the meantime. I read out the same passage relating to Valmiki. M. liked it immensely and explained it from time to time. After finishing reading the story of Valmiki's past life I wanted to take leave of him when M. said:

You see, Valmiki realised his divine nature in the holy company of the sadhus; he became freed from all his sins. How do you like this? Remember what the Master used to tell us, 'You are always diseased, the only medicine is the company of holy men'. Nowadays those who join the Math always shun responsibility and avoid work. Is it good to shirk your duties? As for me, I do not feel at ease until and unless I do my daily work. Dhiren! how do you like Sitapati Maharaj's resolve to live in solitude and dedicate his life to the contemplation of the Master's life? Few people are there who are animated by this kind of desire to lead an austere life.

(To be continued.)

NATURE AND FUNCTION OF REASON IN VEDANTA

SWAMI ISWARANANDA

Of the many problems of interest discussed in philosophical circles in India at the present day, the question whether the highest Reality or Truth is realized by Reason or mysticism is coming into prominence. It is proposed in this article to set forth the nature and function of Reason in Vedanta, followed by the Rationalist school which claim that Advaita is the highest truth—as understood by the writer.

Those Advaitins and Pluralists who are mystics affirm that the highest truth cannot be known by Reason but only by mystic intuition. Mystics who deny that Advaita can be realized by Reason do not seem to make a distinction between it and logic and so take refuge in intuition or samadhi. Now, it is not the business of logic to ask for evidence or verification. It is not concerned with truth but only the correctness of its conclusions. It expounds the laws of thinking by which we arrive at conclusions which satisfies our sense of consistency. It is concerned with the 'correctness' of conclusions as distinguished from their 'truth'. Logic does not enquire whether the conclusion can be verified by a reference to facts of experience, but is satisfied when the conclusion follows from the given premises. Neither is it necessary for it to enquire into the truth of the premises. Even in inductive logic a correct generalisation is possible from a number of given particulars; the logic of the generalisation may be correct, without the generalisation being true, as when the particulars themselves are hypothetical cases. Inductive logic any more than deductive logic, does not guarantee truth. Reason is on the other hand more than logic; it demands not only that we think correctly, but think truthfully, that is, it asks to see whether our convictions and conclusions can be verified by a reference to facts of observation or experience, or whether they are only assumptions of logic.

And when they are not borne out by facts Reason refrains from making the assumption. What distinguishes Reason from logic is its demand for evidence or verification in experience. Neither facts alone, nor logic alone can determine truth, both are required to arrive at truth. Correct thinking is as much necessary as conformity to facts of observation and experience. That thinking which includes logic as well as experience is called Reason, so that reason is not mere correct form of thinking away from facts but demands that we keep close to verified facts.

Based on this distinction sciences have been roughly classified into two classes, the logical and the rational. Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, etc., that is, mathematical sciences in general fall into the logical group. They demand only that we arrive at conclusions which would logically follow from the given propositions. Mathematical problems require correct answers, but do not ask for the truth of their propositions or deductions by reference to the world of experience. On the other hand, the sciences such as chemistry, physics, biology, astronomy, etc., demand verification and so form a group by themselves. It is these that employ Reason. Now it is a fact that these second group of sciences also do employ some assumptions, have made logical deductions and constructed logical theories to explain facts of experiment and observation. For example they have taken the world of sense experience as real; space, time, causation, matter, force, etc., are basic assumptions of these sciences. The existence and continuity of a universe independent of its being intuited by any sentient witness is another of its big assumptions. Science starts to work by taking these as granted and the demand for evidence has been only within the framework of these accepted propositions. Till lately science has employed these conceptions

absolutely real categories, but recent investigations have forced them to enquire even into the nature of these. By the employment of the very Reason with which they have been working within the framework of these hypotheses demanding evidence for laws and theories—by employing Reason to the ascertainment of the ultimate nature of these basic categories, scientists have begun to suspect the validity of these assumptions. It is now becoming more and more clear to them that their basic assumptions are only working hypotheses and no more. Thus causation, matter, force, time, space, etc., are now doubted by one or other of the scientific thinkers. Though they have been employing these hypotheses as if they have been proved, when reason demanded an enquiry into the absolute truth of these they have begun to crumble. Laws are being re-cast and definitions are being modified. In other words Reason which helped to build up the sciences is now knocking down their basic categories. The scientist is becoming a philosopher, the physicist is becoming a metaphysician not by abandoning Reason but by still more determined and wider application of it to vaster and fundamental issues. Vedantic Reason, that is, the method of reasoning employed by Advaita Vedantins, is essentially the same as reason employed by scientists.

Now the function of Reason is in a sense negation. It does not prove any thing. It asks for proof and correct thinking and in the absence of these the suggested proposition is rejected. Any system of science is built up of a mass of observed data and a number of laws or statements of observed uniformities and theories constructed to explain these laws. Until a law is tested by what is known as an *experimentum crucis* it remains only a hypothesis. If a law is true certain consequences follow from it which can be verified by either observation or experiment. If the consequences do not follow when observed or experimented the hypothesis is not accepted as established. If on the other hand a certain fact can be adduced which contradicts a law

or hypothesis it is either disproved or modified. Thus science employs observation for facts, logic for constructing laws and theories and Reason for rejecting unverified hypothesis. It is Reason which sees inconsistencies in thinking and contradictions of propositions, laws, beliefs and convictions to facts and between themselves, and thereby eliminates errors and falsehoods. It does not invent a fact, create a law, or construct a theory. The fact is intuited or observed, the law is inducted or constructed or inferred or deduced; Reason rejects the false constructions and deductions of logic and unverified beliefs. The *experimentum crucis* in science is the application of Reason and its function is negative. It does not prove any of the theories of science. To quote Sir James Jeans :—'An *experimentum crucis* amounts in effect to asking a question of nature.' This question can never be—'Is hypothesis A true?' but 'Is hypothesis A tenable?' Nature may answer our question by shewing us a phenomenon which is inconsistent with our hypothesis or by shewing us a phenomenon which is not inconsistent with our hypothesis. She can never show us a phenomenon which proves it; one phenomenon is enough to disprove a hypothesis, but a million million do not suffice to prove it. For this the scientist can never claim to know anything for certain, except direct facts of observation. Beyond this he can only proceed by building up hypotheses, each of which covers more phenomena than its predecessor but each of which may have to give place to another hypothesis in due course. Strictly speaking the time for replacing a hypothesis by a claim to certainty never arrives. We can never say that any theory is final or corresponds to absolute truth because at any moment new facts may be discovered and compel us to abandon it. (Page 46, 'The New Background of Science'.) Thus Reason does not prove anything, it only disproves. It shows up fallacies, eliminates errors, and rejects falsehood. The Vedantic Reason discharges the same function in philosophy and arrives at Advaita by the well known method of 'Neti, Neti'.

'Neti Neti' method is the method of Reason. It is the method of science.

Adwaita Vedanta of the Rationalist School is the only philosophy in the world which has followed Reason consistently to the very end of it. It is the only philosophy which has not put forward any theory or hypothesis to explain the world. All other philosophies have built up systems after systems, some based on revelation which are mostly theologies, some are speculations with little or no foundation in experience, built on imagination and fancy. Modern philosophies are being built up on the conclusions of sciences that are being abandoned or re-cast every now and then. All of them suffer from uncertainty for the reason shown in the extract from Sir James Jeans. The scientist is slowly coming up to the conclusion arrived at by Vedantic Reason viz., *Anirvachaniyatva* or uncertainty of any picture of Reality put forward by any system, built either on imaginative speculation or the conclusions of science. *Anirvachaniyatva* is not in itself a theory but a denial of the claims of all theories to absolute truth. Philosophies contradict each other, none of them are reliable, hence says Vedanta, 'Neti, Neti' 'not thus, not thus'. The truth of Adwaita is not a system, not a philosophy though we have spoken of it as if it were one in the usual sense of the word and therefore does not stand in contradiction to other philosophies. Doubts and contradictions can exist only when there is ignorance and these being inherent and rooted in the sense of duality, duality is ignorance and dualism an error. Any system built on the basis of dualism is bound to be therefore defective and Reason accordingly is forced to eliminate all dualistic systems. Reason therefore pursued to its final end culminates in Adwaita and in Adwaita no doubts are possible, and no contradictions could exist, as contradiction is possible only where duality is perceived. It is not true that philosophers have agreed to resort to intuition when they disagree as Professor Mahendranath Sircar relieves. It is the method of the mystics. The philosopher does not abdicate his Reason in

the face of confusion and contradiction, but employs Reason itself to eliminate the contradictions and unfounded assumptions which have given rise to contradictions. This is the method employed by Bhagavan Goudapada in his *Mandukyakarika*, the best classical example of the employment of Vedantic Reason by which the truth of Adwaita is realized. Dualism says, 'Duality is a fact of experience and therefore dualism is the truth'. Goudapada has shown that duality is not always experienced, the duality of the waking state is not experienced in dream and sleep, the duality of the dream state is not experienced in waking and sleep. Duality is thus sublated along with time, space and thought in deep sleep. That which is sublated is not real; the witness to these three states alone remains unsublated and is the only reality. Duality is therefore a superimposition on the witness, a delusion and an error. If duality is the absolute truth then it ought to be there always; by employing the principle of *experimentum crucis*, we deduce that it is sublated, as in experience in deep sleep it is not found. Hence the hypothesis of dualism is rejected.

Philosophies other than Rationalist Vedanta have built up their systems solely on the experience of the waking state. They have not taken into account the other two states of dream and sleep and therefore their verdict being based on partial data cannot be valid. At best their conclusions can be held valid only for the experience of the waking state; conclusions of sciences which deal only with the phenomena of the waking state cannot hold good for the totality of experience. Vedanta enquires into the whole of experience and employs the rationalistic method of enquiry as well. It does not leave out any experience intuited by the witness whether the experience be with objects or without objects, whether internal or external, whether intuited through the instrumentality of the senses or directly as in the case of ideas. Reason which is no other than the Witness itself and which therefore encompasses the totality of *Avasthatraya*,

alone can pronounce a final valid judgment on the sumtotal of experience and that pronouncement is 'Neha Nana asti Kiñchana'. (There are no two here.) Experience of duality does not contradict non-duality; the experience of duality in dream does not contradict the Non-dual Witness which was all that appeared as the multiple subjects and objects of the dream.

Adwaita is implicit in experience. What Reason does, is to make it explicit by removing or eliminating all superimpositions of duality on the Witness which is non-dual. It does not require a special faculty other than the Witness to eliminate the error of dual experience which it intuitively. In all experience whether physical or sensual, ideational or imaginative, whether supersensuous or superconscious, unconscious or subconscious, the Witness is the same. Whether the experience be the grossest or subtlest, ethical, aesthetic, or spiritual, concrete or abstract, yogic or undisciplined, it occurs to the non-dual Witness. And it is the same Witness that enquires into the truth of the convictions, beliefs, conclusions, assumptions and logical constructions of the intellect. In the former aspect of experiencing or witnessing it is Intuition and in its latter aspect of discriminating and eliminating of errors and misjudgments it is known as Reason. The Sanskrit word *Buddhi* connotes both these aspects, though emphasis is on the aspect of discrimination; when the emphasis is on the function of intuition it is known as *Sakshi* or witness. There is no intuition whether partial, 'integral' or 'incandescent' which does not come under its purview. There is no Yogic or samadhi experience which falls outside the intuition of the witness and so outside the purview of Reason. It is said that Reason cannot realize Adwaita, for Reasoning implies conceptual thinking and that implies duality. This is true when Reason is thought of as the process of reasoning, but it is Reason that sees the errors and contradictions that gives rise to reasoning as a process which it sees as inherent in dualism and so abandoning the process of reasoning remains as Reason. When contra-

dictions of dualism cease Reason is silent, *San-tam Adwaitam*. Reason cannot be abandoned or eliminated for that which eliminates all else viz., Reason must remain after the process of elimination is over. The silence of Reason is *Samadhi*, the perfect poise of Dhi or Reason. It is the Silence of reason that realizes Adwaita. It is not mystic silence. *Samadhi* is rational silence or better still, Reason in silence. It is not meant here that the practice of yoga is unnecessary. It is very necessary to make the mind calm, tranquil, clear, steady and concentrated. The mind must be freed from distractions, anxieties, worries, attachments and aversions so that it may acquire the subtle power of discrimination and disentangle itself from the deceptions of ignorance. Ethical discipline forms a part of yogic sadhana without which the mind can never be clear and concentrated. *Samadhi* is not a special faculty or instrument newly brought into existence, but the mind itself in its purified state purged of delusions through discrimination which is then recognised to be no other than the Atman, the Witness-Reason.

When it is said that inspiration, intuition, or samadhi is something superior to reason the word reason is understood and has to be understood in its narrow connotation of logic or intellect. And the superiority of intuition to logic goes only to the extent that it brings in fresh material for Reason to verify the conclusions and constructions of logic arrived at from a too narrow field of experience or to verify the deductions of inductive logic. In this respect the process is not dissimilar to the *experimentum crucis* of the scientist, and is only resorted to, to satisfy the demands of Reason. But not un-often it so happens that what are called inspirations and intuitions are nothing but bold guesses and daring imaginative generalizations. In this aspect intuitions are akin to the hypothetical generalizations of great scientists such as a Newton, a Darwin, or an Einstein. It is now recognised that scientific discoveries require great imaginative powers which have been described by the scientists as 'inspirations'. The theories of gravitation,

of evolution and of Relativity were all the products of such inspirations. But it has to be specially noted that the scientist is always on guard lest he may mistake his inspiration for truth. Until the inspired hypothesis is verified he does not trot it out as an accepted law or theory of science.

That yogic inspirations and intuitions are not infallible is admitted by no less an authority on the subject than Swami Vivekananda. In chapter VII of his 'Raja Yoga' he has warned thus against the deceptions of inspirations, 'when a man says, "I am inspired" and then talk irrationally, reject it . . . Real inspiration never contradicts reason but fulfils it.' (When the Swami says that inspiration is something higher than reason he has used the word reason in the sense of intellect or logic.) The distinction made here between inspiration 'real' and 'false' are significant, for what is it that judges between the two unless it be Reason? The final court of appeal when intuition clashes with intuition is Reason.

Contemporary philosophical thinking in India seems to be passing through a wave of mysticism. Disparagement of Reason is almost becoming a fashion. It is being considered a sign of spirituality and is the pride of piety. It was merely accidental that the first influx of Reason in modern Europe in the wake of scientific discoveries found its expression in the disparagement of religious faith and spiritual quest and gave its support to materialism and hedonism. The unpopularity which it thus earned has survived to this day in the heart of the religious-minded. It is high time that the misconception that Reason stands for any 'ism', whether materialism, realism, atheism, or socialism or any other 'ism' is given up. That Rationalism has come to recognise this is evident from the following extract. Professor Harold J. Laski writing in the Rationalist Annual, 1934 says: 'I am not one of those who argue that he (the rationalist) has an obligation to serve any special creed. The

rationalist is concerned to vindicate the claim of reason to be heard as against the title of any conflicting interest to consideration. His business is to insist that, whatever may be the doctrine which claims acceptance, its value is precisely the value of the facts it can adduce in its support and his duty so far as his outlook is concerned, is simply the acceptance of what his instructed judgment leads him to infer as to the meaning of the facts, after he has sought their critical evaluation. He may be conservative, individualist or collectivist, deist or atheist. So long as his view is built upon an admission that the claims of reason are paramount; so long further, as he is prepared to submit his will and interest to the scrutiny of scientific examination, Rationalism does not demand from him any particular outlook. *Credo quia possible* is the watchword of the Rationalist.' Contemporary scientist thinkers in the West are themselves rejecting materialism. Sir James Jeans opines that matter has dropped out of physics, and ideas and matter are all mind (mentalism). Advaita Vedanta long ago rejected materialism and realism (also idealism) by the application of Reason and found that the only Real entity is the spirit or Atman and all this is that. Mysticism is not essentially spiritual. It may be materialistic. It is possible to get behests and inspirations, intuitions or revelations to hate, rob and kill your fellow-men, and to eat, drink and be merry in utter disregard of the claims of spirit. We have already plenty of superstitions, mystery-mongering and occultisms. Is not the world as it is enough and more of mystery? Where is the need to add mystery to mystery? When there is the greatest superstition that 'I am the body', 'I am so and so', etc., lying immediately upon us, why go in for other superstitions? Unless we listen to the voice of the Witness-Reason we cannot divest ourselves of materiality and realize that we are the spirit. Consciousness pure, free, and blissful.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, THE REJUVENATOR OF MODERN INDIA

SHARADA

The making of modern India is the consummation of tremendous strivings of many great people and of mighty forces. To appreciate fully the value of these great strivings a clear idea of the conditions of India during the last century is very essential.

India, particularly in the later half of the 19th century was facing one of her greatest cultural crises. Not merely politically or economically but socially and also culturally India had become a slave to the foreigners. Under the glamour of the Western civilization the Indians looked down upon all that was indigenous, and that led to an utter disruption of both her spiritual as well as material life. The degeneration was so thorough and complete a crash seemed inevitable. But this irresistible doom was avoided, because of the birth of a galaxy of great men and women, who in different fields worked out the salvation of India. Among them Swami Vivekananda and his endeavours to regenerate India on a spiritual basis are the most noteworthy.

The mission of Swamiji had two aspects, one the world moving, the other nation making. Swamiji was the eminent exponent of Hindu scriptures to the Western world, through his new interpretation of Vedanta and inspired thousands of people all over the world, giving them spiritual rebirth. Nation-making though secondary, his ideas and ideals on regeneration of India were so beneficial and brought such permanent good that Swamiji had been given a foremost place among the workers of modern India.

It was during his parivrajaka days, when he wandered all alone on foot from Himalayas to Kanyakumari that Swamiji saw and understood India thoroughly. He mixed with one and all, today sleeping with the pariahs and sharing their bread, and tomorrow sleeping in the

palaces enjoying all regal comforts, thus he was able to realise the joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations of all classes of people.

It was the pitiable condition of the Indian masses which moved him most. Their ignorance and poverty, added to that the sight of pettiness, jealousy and disunion that existed among the Hindus, the wretched condition of the women, all these caused him immeasurable anguish. His ambition of attaining Nirvikalpa Samadhi and other spiritual attainments were gone for ever. May I be born again and again and suffer a thousand miseries, if only I may worship the only god in whom I believe—the sum total of all souls, and above all, my god the wicked, my god the afflicted, and my god the poor of all races—thus wrote he later describing his mental condition of those days. The monk had become a patriot and a prophet in one. His going to America also had the same idea of serving the Indians by getting material and other technical help from the prosperous Western countries in exchange of Indian spiritual Ideas.

Swamiji's going over to America, and his triumph at the Parliament of Religions, indeed opened a new chapter in the history of India. Destroying the misconceptions of the Westerners about India, it raised their esteem of India highly—with that, it also destroyed the inertia of the Indians and roused them to a sense of glory of their country and its culture. As Swamiji himself said, 'Our field is India, the value of Western appreciation lies only in rousing India up'. In India Swamiji had to deal with two groups of people, quite opposed to each other. The one representing the rank materialism, the other the arrant superstition. At one side there was the ultra modern English educated Indian, who laughed at all that was ancient, and at the other end was the rigid

orthodox Hindu, to whom every village superstition was a Vedic mandate and on carrying out which depended the nation's progress. Swamiji with his deep and clear understanding noticed the strength and weakness of these groups. And it was to his highest credit that he was able to bring about a harmonious blending of these two. He did it by correcting the first and broadening the second.

Now let us take up the first group and see how he corrected them. The urgent need of these English educated Indians was to develop and instil faith in them towards their country, their culture and in themselves. Sister Nivedita in her introduction to the complete works of Swamiji writes: 'The Shastras, the guru and the motherland are the three notes that mingle themselves to form the music of the works of Vivekananda'. How very correct is this interpretation, one can understand by going through any one of his works. His lectures, speeches, talks and conversations all have the one aim of explaining the greatness of his country, his culture and the grace of his guru.

His first lecture in India starts with these lines: 'If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed punyabhumi, to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for karma, the land to which every soul that is wending its way godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all the land of introspection and of spirituality, — it is India'.

Swamiji's aim in preaching the glory of his country was to rouse the self-confidence of the nation. The Indians had lost utterly, confidence and faith in themselves and that had made them weak physically as well as mentally and that weakness was the cause of all their pettiness, jealousy, disunion and other natural sins. So to root out this weakness, to arouse 'Shraddha' in them, Swamiji made them realise the greatness of their heritage first. He said: 'Have faith in yourselves, have faith

that each and every one of you are born to do great things . . . your country needs heroes. Be heroes . . . What we need is infinite courage, infinite faith and infinite zeal then only great things would come'. Swamiji revived the Upanishadic word *Abhiih*: Fearlessness. The Indians being a conquered race had lost all their manliness and had become afraid of every one and of every thing. To such a nation Swamiji preached a new gospel of strength and fearlessness. He called each and every Indian as the 'Son of immortality' and preached the glory of the Atman which resides in one and all. What he desired among the Indians was a harmonious development of physical, mental, intellectual as well as spiritual characters. He said: 'What I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel, inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, Kshatriya-virya plus Brahma-teja'.

The other defect of these English educated Indians was their lack of faith in their religion and the growing materialism. Those were the days when the educated Indians felt ashamed to call themselves Hindus; either they would join the reformed religions like Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Theosophy, or would even become Christians willingly. And they pointed out their religion as the cause of all their miseries.

The main reason for such misconception was their ignorance of the essentials of Hindu Religion. Therefore Swamiji first of all explained clearly the Religion of the Vedas and Upanishads and interpreted correctly the meaning of them which was indeed a revelation to those modern Indians. Then he pointed out how Religion is the life centre of India. As politics in England, as social life in America, in India, Religion is her vitality, and the foundation of the national life. Thus purification of religion, the life blood of the nation, would solve all her problems.

He warned those reformers, who, imitating the Westerners, were trying to give up religion as the natural ideal and to instil something else in its place. He said: 'If religion goes, India

would die in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children'. Here we should not misunderstand Swamiji. It is not that he did not want either politics or social reforms or material comforts for Indians, but what he stressed most was that all these are secondary factors. The most essential and primary factor was the revival of her spiritual life and religious awakening which would ensure the national regeneration. In these ways he tried to reform the ideas and ideals of this group.

Now let us take up the second group. In fact this group had done one great service of preserving Indian culture from the attacks of foreign influences. But because of their narrow outlook, perverted religious ideas and of their rigidity they had brought about stagnation not only in the religious life but also in the social as well as the intellectual life of India.

Swamiji endeavoured to broaden their outlook and expand their ideas. Showing the evil effects of narrowness he said: 'No nation or individual has ever become great by holding itself apart from others and whenever such an attempt has been done under the false idea of holiness, policy or greatness, the result has always been disastrous for the secluding one'. He stressed very often that because Hindus narrowed themselves, because they did not go out to compare themselves with others that the degeneration of their nation had come. Expansion is life and contraction is death. Thus the remedy was to expand, to broaden and to destroy all the social and other barriers which were obstructing the path of progress.

The other important shortcoming of this group was their perverted religious ideas. Leaving out the kernel, the essence of their religion, they had clung on to the husk, to the non-essentials. Swamiji was intensely angry against this. With great sorrow he pointed out how these people had degraded that glorious religion into a bundle of superstitions. 'Our religion is in the kitchen, our God is in the cooking pot,' he said with great regret.

By his correct interpretation of Hindu religion he tried to destroy all their foolish superstitions. He pointed out to them that the real god is not confined only to their shrine rooms, but he is among the poor, among the ignorant, and among the oppressed. To serve them, to feed them, to educate them is indeed the real worship. For the next 50 years let all other *vān* gods disappear from our minds. This is the only god that is awake, our own race, our own countrymen, the first of all worship is the worship of virat — he declared.

In these ways, by broadening their minds and expanding their hearts he brought about the rejuvenation of the group.

Two other evils which were eating into the very vitals of the nation were the suppression of the masses and the women. In fact Swamiji summed up the entire material problem in two words 'women and masses'. He knew that the spreading of education would solve the problem of both, and therefore stressed this factor very much. But what kind of education he wanted? 'By education I do not mean the present system, but something in the line of positive teaching, mere book-learning, won't do. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.'

By spreading this correct type of education he wanted to raise the lower classes to the level of the higher, the chandala to the Brahmana. The spiritual and the moral degradation of the masses was much more depressing. From centuries they were suppressed and were told that they were nothing and were treated not even as human beings. This had frightened them so much they were nearly leading the life of the beasts. What they needed most was something which could give them strength and arouse confidence and make them realise their potential greatness. This was exactly what Swamiji's message gave them. His preaching of the glory of the Atman and of the divinity which is the birthright of one and all — all these destroyed

their hypnotism of weakness and aroused their hidden strength and confidence. Swamiji declared: 'Aye, let every man and woman and child without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind every one there is the infinite soul, who is all pure, all powerful, immortal, omnipotent and omnipresent'.

This preaching of Vedanta, this proclamation of the glory of the Atman was not indeed Swamiji's discovery. They were in India from the very beginning of the history. But they were confined in big books, or in the monasteries or in the courts of pundits and professors or in the class room discussion. It was Swamiji who scattered these Ideas and broadcast them all over the land and thus made them the possession of one and all.

Regarding the emancipation of women Swamiji was definite on another point that was Freedom. 'Give them education and leave them to themselves to solve their own problems', he said. After seeing the great advance of the Western women he had understood clearly that this neglect of the downtrodden and woman was the main reason for the nation's degeneration. Thus often he spoke and urged the nation to wipe away this natural sin. His ideal of Indian women was a synthesis of the best of the East and West. 'Modern sciences Indian women should learn but not at the cost of spirituality', he said. The spiritual foundation should by no means be slackened. To develop it he even planned a 'math' for women before he thought one for men.

These are some of the points on which Swamiji attempted to rejuvenate India. Of course today when we see modern India we feel satisfied that most of Swamiji's Ideas have fructified. But is indeed the India of ours the India of Swamiji's dreams? If that is the case, there would not have been this distur-

bance, this restlessness prevalent all over the country. We are true to his ideas of reform and progress but we have ignored the way, the method on which he wanted us to carry out those reforms. Again and again he had said that renunciation and service are the ideals of India and it was under the banner of spirituality that all progress should take place. Here all our ideals are essentially spiritual. Man is born to advance spiritually and therefore all our reforms, social, political or economical should have only this goal.

5,000 years ago India put forth this challenge 'Na dhanena na prajaya tyagenaike amritatwamanashuh'. Not by wealth, not by progeny, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached. If we turn over the pages of world history we see how race after race, country after country took up this challenge and tried to solve the world-riddle by all other material ways but all had failed. India alone exists even today, just to proclaim to the world once again: 'Not by wealth, not by progeny but by renunciation alone immortality is reached'.

History is repeating itself. After reaching the highest pinnacle of material prosperity man finds no peace, no happiness. So he is retracing his steps and in his search of peace he is looking towards India; the entire world is looking towards India to give peace, to give blessedness.

When once India forgetting her national Ideal was trodding on the wrong path, Swami Vivekananda showing the correct Ideal had put her on the right path. Now the present day India is almost repeating the same mistake, we are looking for our path amidst the bewildering welter of crossroads. Therefore now his words alone must enlighten and guide us, and lead us from unreal to real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

THE SPIRIT OF OUR DHARMASTRAS

U. VENKATAKRISHNA RAO

Misrepresentations of Indian philosophy have been unfortunately very frequent and proceeding from interested quarters. But the actual fact is that they have been conceived with the best considerations towards our all-round welfare, though here and there, one or two facts which were enunciated in the centuries they lived might require small readjustments in view of the changed conditions in the present set up of our society. We must remember that the final prayer of our Smritis is the welfare of the largest possible number, not only in the human sphere, but also in the sub-human species around us. Ahimsa or Non-violence in thought, word and deed animated the Indian right from the beginning of the Vedic period and ideas of aggrandisement never polluted his mind at all. Asoka's mission never carried sword and fire, but only spread the message of love and harmony among the brother nations. On the other hand, many of the nations of the Western world have viewed with alarm their declining birth rates and their weakening man-power, because they are apprehensive of the expanding races of the Orient; the 'Yellow Peril' weighs heavily with them in all their walks of life. But the Indian always thinks less and less of this world which he thinks is almost a curse and naturally thoughts of over-population and aggrandisement rarely ever enter his mind. The Dharmasastras hold out the definite promise that if a benevolent king rules the country protecting the subjects as though they were his own sons, famines and similar national disasters will never stalk the land, rains will always come in good time, and national prosperity will always be assured.

Census estimates have revealed that the population of the Asian Continent has increased from 545 millions in 1650 to more than 2,145 millions in 1938; in Europe for the same period the increase was from 100 millions

to nearly 528 millions only. These statistics are taken from Population Problems by Paul H. Landis (American Book Company, copyright 1948 & 1943, Chapter II, p. 17). This increase holds out an object lesson for us to deeply ponder over. China and India have between themselves the largest population of the world and the population of India even after partition is nearly one-sixth of the total population of the whole world, as Dr Huxley remarks in his learned foreword to Dr Chandrasekhar's Population and Planned Parenthood in India. The latter has calculated that the increase in population amounts to nearly five million a year and has concluded that our density in agricultural as well as in the poorer strata of urban society is too great to permit an attitude of *laissez-faire*. True, the Dharmasastra writers never looked at such problems, and much less bothered about them. Both in India and China, the belief has struck strong root that the son alone, not the daughter, can perform the necessary obsequial rites and this naturally results in the universal prayer for the birth of a son rather than the daughter. The Great Saint of China, Confucius married a second wife in his 70th year as he had no son by his first wife who had borne him 9 daughters and the desired son was born of this unequal union with a young girl in her teens and that son later became the uncrowned King of China!

Now let us try to understand what the possible reaction of our Dharmasastras might have been towards birth control, supposing for a moment that such a question was posed before them. Dr Chandrasekhar has, on page 64 of his book 'Population and Planned Parenthood in India' referred us to Mahatmaji's answer to this pertinent question. In fine, self-control according to Gandhiji is the sovereign remedy and I prefer to agree with Mahatmaji in the

matter in spite of the arguments posed against. Here again, I would urge that the spirit of our Sastras deserves to be interpreted and understood from their viewpoint rather than ours coloured with our Western ideals of education. Kalidasa, in the opening verses of the Raghu-vamsa, summing up the qualities of the scions of the Raghu race, spotlighted one of them in the memorable words — '*Prajāyai grhaṇē-dhinām*'. The Kings of the Raghu race were householders for the sake of raising up only *one* son. Here the word used for son is peculiarly characteristic, it is *prajā*. The word in Sanskrit grammar is always feminine and always plural and the reason seems to be obvious: the subjects are to be regarded as the wife of the king; another point to be noted here is a king can never be a king if he has only *one* subject. Now under the circumstances, why should Kalidasa, our representative poet, use the grammatically plural word in the singular, despite the strong exception taken to it in grammatical circles? He was voicing forth the sastraic dislike for over-indulgence in sexual passions. The ordinary man, truly immersed in sastraic principles, never allowed himself to be a slave of his senses after the birth of a son to cater to his spiritual needs after death. Some may demur to this, saying that a Utopian society alone could boast of such an achievement. But we persist in our conviction that Kalidasa's times did produce such a society. Kalidasa went to the extent of saying in the same canto that cases of theft could be traced only in the Criminal Procedure Codes of the times — '*Śrutau tas-karatā sthitā*' — and Megasthenes, the Greek historian who visited India under Chandragupta Maurya, testifies to the fact that houses could be kept unlocked in any part of the day or night and that cases of theft, even if detected in the big army of nearly five or six millions, were even less than six or seven drachmae, the smallest unit of coin, perhaps corresponding to our pie or Naya paisa! It is true that such a society does not exist at the present moment, but the remedy for the same cannot be at all effective if the real spirit

that pervades our sastras is not appreciated in the right spirit! The axe must be laid at the real source, the social canker that has permeated all round!

The same Mahatma steeped in the spirit of our benevolent Dharmasastras made another astounding statement about the Bihar Earthquake saying that it was the just retribution of an indignant God for the sin of untouchability. Perhaps if the Mahatma had not made such an audacious statement, the Sanatanists might not have opened their eyes towards this growing canker on Hinduism. Such bomb-shells are required off and on to resuscitate this growing and fertile plant of Hinduism and enable it to flower in all its richest tints and fragrance.

The humane spirit that pervades our Dharmasastras can be gleaned from another angle also. They might state that the crippled or the blind ones are so because of their sins in a former existence but they insist that such people should be protected by the parental care of the king. The latter, again, arranged that such people should be appointed in their harems, — very often they had too many particularly young and beautiful wives who might naturally be prone to misbehave. Such servants who were nearly 90, or crippled or blind, eunuchs or dwarfish or even hunchbacked, were really unfit for any kind of manual labour, but could easily be trusted to spy on the activities that might be nefariously carried on around them — and even prevent them. The sixth act of the Sakuntala provides us with a typical instance of how the king issued a proclamation that if perchance the bread-winner in any family died leaving the dependent members destitute, money would be unstintingly poured from out of the king's private coffers to provide ample food for the members left so destitute until such time as the younger children could take upon themselves this burden! Is not such a king the real father of his subjects? Death by starvation, reported in the daily press very frequently, was unknown in Ancient India.

Nowadays, we hear so much about the abolition of the capital sentence in Criminal Law.

Modern nations are clamouring for introducing enactments in their legislatures towards this end, but in India this was placed on our statute book even as early as in the 5th or 6th Century A.D. when Kamandaka legislated that the king should never inflict a capital sentence — *pranantika danda* as it was then called — except in cases of treason to the king himself — *Mahatsvapyaparadhesu dandam pranantikam tyajet rte rajyapaharattu Yukta-dandah Prasasyate*. The Chinese pilgrim actually records that Vikramaditya ruled without inflicting capital sentence. The sastras are never tired of repeating that the sins of the subjects are visited upon the kings, that famines or absence of rain and similar national calamities are the results of excessive tyrannical rule! Asoka even suggested that periodical revisions of sentences already passed should be arranged by the judges in his High Court who should institute an inquiry into the family's poor circumstances consequent on the sentence being passed on the delinquent. The judges were required to look into the past, the present and the future of the guilty — without the necessity of court fees and *Mandamus Writs* — and temperate the sentences! Such a legislation must be considered doubly blessed, 'blessing him that gives and him that receives it' also! Crimes would naturally tend to slowly disappear under such benevolent dispensation. The rules of the road, again, were so strict that even the king had to allow precedence to pregnant women on the road and should submit himself to the highest sentences even if he might happen to ill-treat or injure even a dumb animal like a calf! The king was particularly instructed to stalk about, disguised at night and find out by himself whether there

were any opprobrious comments against his own rule.

Modern critics are never tired of repeating *ad nauseum* that our Sastrins were all Brahmins and as such were critical, even unjust to women, and more particularly the sudras in the lower rungs of society. Such a criticism can never hold water. Of course, Brahmahatyā or killing a Brahmin was considered a *mahā-pātaka*, heinous sin, and a Brahmin who might have committed a crime, might in some cases, be let off with a lenient sentence. But the social ostracism which was inflicted on him was reformatory and never recriminative. He was disgraced by being made to sit on an ass with his hands and legs bound and his sins would be broadcast in every street by tom tom. He was shaved bald or his hair was disfigured in such a way that he was forced to think of this disgrace only for the rest of his life! The wife, again, who had misbehaved was never denied the protection of the husband's protecting roof, she might be directed to sleep on the bare floor and might even be deprived of her power on the servants in the house. Opportunity was thus provided for every delinquent to repent and slowly turn a new page in his or her life. One of the Smritis directs that persons who were past eighty or less than sixteen, who were disabled or who were sick should be awarded less punishments in consequence. More than this, they were even taught some new crafts in the prison, so that after their reprieve, they could lead honest lives and earn their living by honest means. If perchance such reforms were not enunciated by the kings, the Smritis loudly proclaimed that such kings would earn the displeasure of heaven and would pass their days in hell after death.

Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels that it runs smoothly; it is a continuous friction otherwise. How else could parents do their duties to their children, husbands to their wives and vice versa? Do we not meet with cases of friction every day in our lives? Duty is sweet only through love.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

A STUDY IN ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY

R. S. N. RAMAKRISHNAN

The highly learned Shri Appaya Dikshit, in his famous work, *Siddhanta-lesa-sangraha*, has expounded four vadas or theories with reference to a topic *Jiva-ekatwa-anekatwa-vichara*. Of these four theories one is *Aneka-sarira-aneke-jiva-vada* in which it is admitted that there exist innumerable Jivas. Shri Dikshit in the same grantha or work has briefly exhibited the different explanations given by the different advaitins of this *Aneka-sarira-aneke-jiva-vada*, about one man's mukti and another man's bandha in the following manner.

Some of the siddhantins of this theory hold the view that the bandha or bondage depends for its being upon the existence of the avidya while the mukti or release is consequent on the cessation of it.

Further, on the explicit authority of the srutis, they admit that the avidya is one. As such one may advance an objection that they will be driven to the unpalatable admittance of the fact that the vision of these worldly things should not now occur at all since the only avidya which is the cause for such vision could have been rendered null and void long ago — even at the time of the sage Suka's mukti. But it should be borne in mind that they admit in the avidya as many amsas or parts — as there are Jivas and that all of them are capable of concealing the Chaitanya-swarupa from any individual. Any amsa cannot conceal the swarupa from any individual. There is assigned a separate amsa for every one of the individuals in shadowing the swarupa. Accordingly when a particular soul like the sage Suka realises the supreme, only that portion of the avidya that had been till then hiding the nature of the Brahman from him will be sublated and all the rest will be existing as before.

They also contend that it is nothing strange or new that they admit amsas in the ajnana or avidya; for there is the accepted view that when a soul realises the supreme, avidya-lesa will persist till his dehapata or shuffling off of his mortal coils. That is to say, when a soul, in his life perceives the paramatma-swarupa, the vikshepa-amsa will persist, though the avarana-amsa vanishes immediately after the perception of the supreme.

Here the unlimited chaitanya is both the object and substratum of the avidya. It is observed that neither God nor Jiva can be the substratum of the avidya which is held to be the necessary prerequisite for admitting their satta or being.

Some others hold the view that the avidya is one; but they don't relish in admitting amsas in it. So they give out a different explanation citing a simile from the *Nyaya-eka-desha-system*.

The followers of the *Nyaya-eka-desha-system* believe that in the case of Devadatta who perceives no pot on a particular spot of ground or bhutala, the object perceived by him is the *Ghata-atyanta-abhava* or absolute negation of pot. This *atyanta-abhava* exists in all times. It exists on the bhutala even when a pot is placed there.

As such one may be given to think that the knowledge that 'there exists the negation of pot on the bhutala' should be unpalatably admitted to be true and valid even at the time of the pot being brought to the spot.

But the advocates of the *Nyaya-eka-desha-system* maintain that the knowledge that 'there exists the negation of pot on the bhutala' should be considered to be true and valid only if there is contact or relation between *atyanta-abhava* and the bhutala. And in

accordance with the distinct apprehension or pratiti they admit that the sambandha or relation between the *Ghata-atyanta-abhava* and the bhutala is preceded by either the antecedent-negation or the consequent negation of pot's contact with the spot and that it is destroyed when the negation of pot's contact with the bhutala is made to give up the spot by the pot's presence there. Similarly the absolutists who maintain that the bandha is subject to avidya's sambandha and the mukti is consequent on avidya's severance with the same, hold the view that the avidya's sambandha with the Chaitanya, is dependent upon the existence of the antah-karana and that it is destroyed when the antah-karana is reduced to nothing by the acquisition of the supreme knowledge. What it comes to mean is this: When a soul like the sage Suka perceives the supreme the antah-karana belonging to him alone perishes and as a consequence of it the avidya gets disconnected only from the region of Chaitanya that is alienated under the limitation of his antah-karana. And hence he attains Eternal Bliss.

Advaitins belonging to a third view maintain a different explanation which is as follows:

'Jati' or 'common essential characteristic' which dwells in many individuals or vyaktis continues to have its relationship with all those vyaktis as long as they live, e.g., the jati 'cowness' or 'gotwam' has its relationship with all the individuals, i.e., cows that live. But when a cow ceases to live, the cowness loses its sambandha in that particular cow. Similarly the ajnana which is one and the same of its kind and which is related to every Jiva,

gets disconnected from those Jivas who by acquiring the supreme knowledge cease to be the Jivas.

In accordance with the direct cognition that 'I am ignorant' Jiva is held to be the asraya or support of the ajnana. Here bandha is to be conceived as avidya's sambandha with Jiva and mukti as its severance with him.

Advaitins of the fourth type hold that if mukti is stated as avidya's severance with the Chaitanya and not as avidya's destruction then it would be a statement contradicting the doctrines that declare avidya as being subject to destruction. So they admit that bandha is the existence of the avidya and mukti is the destruction of the same. They also view that it would be improper to admit that one and the same avidya has many amsas and that the destruction of amsa is mukti, for they believe that the supreme knowledge will not leave out even a small portion of the avidya undestroyed just as the fire when it is in contact with a lump of cotton does not allow even a little of it to remain unburnt.

If amsas are not admitted one may oppose that it would run counter to the accepted view that avidya-lesa persists when a soul in his life perceives the supreme. But these absolutists silence this opposition by explaining the term 'avidya-lesa' as having reference to 'avidya-vasana' — and not to 'avidya-amsa' — which they explain as a thing left behind in the Jivan-mukta after the complete destruction of the avidya, like the mere smell (of garlies) left behind in the well-cleansed garlic-vessel.

MELT MY HEART

I cast my cares on Thee and trust
That thou would take corruptions core,
My soul with all its sins and melt
Its stoniness and more and more,

By power of Grace, soften
It, and become its Refuge sure,
Compassionate fill holy hands
Of prayer are mine, and tear drops pure.

— THAYUMANAVAR: Tr. by Sri K. R. R. SASTRY.

SAINT THAYUMANAVAR

K. R. R. SASTRY

Jesus of Nazareth invited the followers, 'Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'. Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa mounted up the terrace near the temple of Mother Kali and started in ecstasy, 'Come in ye, all my children dear'. Saint Thayumanavar invites us all in 'deep silence':

This is true knowledge.
Here is Bliss Eternal Flowing Nectar,
Ye all come in, in unfailing camaraderie
Ye, of all faiths in one faith.
Taste deep this food heap.

Long after the age of the Upanishads one finds in the sweet songs and ecstatic pourings of Saint Thayumanavar, a powerful version of these undying Upanishads.

Life and Times: Of the three dates given of his rest in peace, 1659, 1742, and 1805, the second may be taken to be the most probable. His father, Kedilya Pillai was a steward under the Chola prince of Trichinopoly, Vijayaranga Chockalinga Naikkar (1704-1731). His only son was given in adoption to his elder brother and Kedilya Pillai performed severe penances at Trichirapuram to propitiate Thayumanavar, the presiding deity. The baby born was named after the deity. The boy was taught the rare works of wisdom in Sanskrit and Tamil. His mind was never satisfied with dry learning. His father passed away. He was installed in his father's post by the prince. He witnessed the state intrigues, hated the ease of enjoyment and pined for *yoga-sadhana*. In the service of a chief, his thoughts turned towards sifting the truth. He pined for a true guru.

Quest after Guru: Thayumanavar ascended the steps of the temple to have a darsan of Lord Thayumanavar. A Siva Raja Yogi was sitting in the shrine of Dakshinamurti. He was the Mauna-guru, in the line of Thirumula. Thayumanavar stood before the yogi in deep respect. The devotee was initiated into deep

knowledge. 'Dear one, stay for a while in the householder's path. I shall reach you again. This is certain. Rest in deep quiet'.

Now started the thirst for deep knowledge in the aspirant:

Oh, Mauna-guru of the line of Thirumula,
Giver of Mantra, adept in yoga,
Guru who initiated me into silence.
Can this slave wrestle through?
Spurning the bundle of desires,
Rousing the primal energy,
Mad in Advaita,
Devouring the waves of vacillating mind
You trained me as an elephant wise,
Away from world, riches, women and luxury.
Taught me the word mystic.
Quieting me in steadfast silence,
And alike in plenty and poverty,
Thy grace led me to solace.

Pouring thus in silence over his guru's word rested Thayumanavar.

Re-birth and Travel: Can ever service under state, appeal to a true Jnani with the fickleness of Kings and worldly pleasures and joys?

It was winter; the king presented him a valuable carpet: Thayumanavar got it smiling and presented it to a shivering Harijan old woman. The king got upset at this defiant attitude. Chockanatha Nayak died in 1731.

Minakshi the queen, who succeeded him loved Thayumanavar. The queen lost all sense of modesty — Thayumanavar persuaded her to the contrary. He left the place for good, quietly one night to Rameswaram.

His Marriage: Persuaded by his elder brother he married. Giving birth to a child his wife passed away.

Maunaguru again appeared and initiated him into Siva Raja Yoga.

Thayumanavar met Sadashiva Brahmendra and passed along to Rameswaram.

A dreadful draught struck Rameswaram — the distressed hearkened to him — Saint Thayumanavar sang a song:

If Saivism is a religion great
And its Lord has moon in the Crest,
If Bliss after conquest of the senses is *mukti*,
Oh, ye clouds pour down in spate.

And rains poured down in torrents!

His Blissful End: His pupils Arulayar and Kodikkarai Jnani worked devotedly under him.

Thayumanavar preached to his pupils:

'Dear ones — He is a *mahayogi* who controls his mind while a householder; ascetic though if he be ruled by the senses, he is an ignoramus'.

Rest in quiet: Such a deep quiet is higher than the eight *Siddhis*; in all our hearts is one dancing ecstatically.

There is no one but Thee whom I can call my own. Live in His Grace.

Day and Night know Thyself — Pray, develop these virtues, peace, truth, mercy, charity, steadfastness as an unflickering flame.

In deep trance, passed away on the purnima of *makara*, into the Eternal, our Siddhanta-Saint Thayumanavar, the trusted guide, mercy unbounded, and ever-helpful to seekers on the path.

Mysticism of Thayumanavar: The psalms of the poet Thayumanavar reveal him passing 'from a severe analysis of feelings into that healthy discontent out of which is born a God-ward craving'.

He struggled, and when he got illuminated by a God-form and 'sustained by strength which was not his', he strove to reach the end of all quests.

Visions associated with specific revelations are not found in his career.

Love-imagery is used, as found in the compositions of many mystics, to express the soul's relationship with God.

Upanishads of Thayumanavar: 1,452 songs and psalms are ascribed to him, 'It is a Tamil Upanishad. Ten songs a day deeply meditated will purify the mind. Light will dawn on the path — In short he is an ocean reconciling *Vedanta* and *Siddhanta*'. (Suddhananda Bharati).

In him is a marvellous combination of the householder radiating into a *Maharishi*.

Worship the Indweller

I cannot in Thy temples worship
Or there before Thy symbols bow,
Or pluck Thee dew-kissed flowers of offering
For in the flowers' heart art Thou,
How can I press my palms together
My body bend to worship Thee,
Since it is all imperfect service,
For Thou indweldest Lord in me?
Thou art the vastness of the ether,
The elements, the primal sound,
The Vedas four, the goal of Vedas,
The quest beyond all seeking found,
The quest sublime, its key, its secret,
Thou of all-seeing, art the sight,
And of all-knowing, art the knowledge,
Of sight and sense, the inner light.
The word and its interpretation,
Form of the silent saving call.
O, Source of Grace in joy past thinking
That dancest in High Wisdom's Hall.

(Tr. by T. I. Tambayah.)

Experience

Of Thine own Self Thou knowest nothing
Thou doest nothing. Thou spakest Thou,
What time Thou camest, silent Teacher,
And claimest me Thine own — So now
My body, being soul Thou keepest
Thy captive, captive from that day,
When I became Thy willing bondman
And false things all have passed away,
Here is no continuing city,
False is the faith in now and here.
False is the love of wealth all fleeting
False is the sight that blinds the seer
To all the falseness of the body,
Of kith and kindred bond and tie,
False is the faith in false attachments
And of all has the greatest lie
Is truly that of Self-assertion
And darkness is no longer night,
Soul-ignorance the primal darkness;
Now nor for me the pathway lie
Of good and ill to re-births leading
Thy mind is still, in peace is stayed,
And it has lost its old attachments,
Uncoming and ungoing made.
And time is not for all transcendent
Transfigured are, O, Amplitude,
That all things in its vastness holdest,
All-filling Bliss, Beatitude.

TO PURI, BY THE SEA

SARASWATI GAURISHANKAR

A book placed in my hands by a kindly friend makes all the difference. Does not all that we value come to us just so? — A glance, a murmured phrase, a fleeting touch, do not these — when the time is right — unlock the door to a vista of endless beauty, of priceless treasures, of haunting memories held captive for the eternal delight of the mind?

The book is entitled 'Chaitanya-Charitamrita'. I read from it.

Sachi, the Mother of the World, answered 'I shall be happy if He stays here, but if He is blamed, it will grieve me. This plan strikes me as a happy solution: let Him live on the Nilachal (Puri) which is as it were a next door house from Navadwip' . . . so the Master went to the Nilachal, with his four companions absorbed in the Kirtan of Krishna.

And thus, for me begins a journey filled with enchantment, thrilling with emotion to the music sung by the Lord Gauranga many, many years ago as he walked the streets of Puri — the abode of Jagannath.

Sakhi Gopal: It is a tiny hamlet, a few miles outside Puri, bathed as it were, in perpetual sunlight. The smiling fields of green paddy lend a tender glow to the scene. I walk on sand — for the ocean is not far off — towards a little temple, and, as by magic, the doors open for darshan. The Lord is known here as Sakhi Gopal — 'Gopal who bore witness'.

My little book tells me:

To Katak, He (Chaitanya) went to see the Sakshi Gopal, whose beauty threw Him into a rapture. That night, during His halt there with His disciples, He heard the legend of Gopal.

It is a fascinating story, of the smiling Gopala who bore witness to the truthfulness of His devotee. Out of love for His youthful followers, Krishna who resided in Brindaban, consented to walk to the distant Nilachal to bear

witness against an aged Brahmin who had vowed before the same Krishna to bestow upon the younger man the hand of his daughter and had now taken back his word.

Krishna had protested against this journey. 'Nobody ever heard of an idol travelling', he had said. His Bhakta replied, 'Why do you speak of being an idol? You are not a mere image but the darling of Brindaban'. Laughingly, Gopal had agreed, 'I shall travel after you, but do not look behind, or else I shall stop there. You will hear (on the way) only the jingling of my *Nupur* and thus know that I am going on'.

So they travelled, this strange pair, the young man rejoicing in the music of the *Nupur* behind him. But as they entered his village, was it now pardonable? — his great love for Gopal persuaded him to turn back just once that his eyes might — before the gaze of the many fell on Him — take their fill of the glory of Gopala's countenance. And Gopal stopped there, but smilingly — and the marvellous beauty of His form was sufficient witness to win his young follower his bride.

And so, Sakshi Gopal stands before me even now, an image of a smiling boy, the peacock-feather proudly fluttering on his forehead, his flute poised at his lips, whose entrancing music will lead those who love Him into those glorious pastures where there is no fear.

Let me go on.

The Master went in an ecstatic mood to the temple of Jagannath, and was beside Himself with love at the sight of the God. He rushed to embrace the image but fell down on the temple-floor, senseless with devotion. Happily, Sarvabhauma noticed Him, and stopped the door-keeper who was about to beat the Master. Later, when He had recovered, the Bhattacharya requested Him never again to go to the temple alone and the Master replied, 'I shall not enter the shrine, but gaze from the Garuda in the quadrangle

I 'gaze from the Garuda in the quadrangle' into the inner sanctum, and even as I do so. I am propelled by the crowd around me, closer towards the shrine, towards the deepening darkness. I stumble over a step and would fall but for the inexorable pressure of those behind. What do *they* see — that I cannot — in this black darkness, seemingly impenetrable? And even as the anguished doubt assails me, the darkness lifts and from the encircling gloom, I seem to see in the dim light, Jagannath. His arms outstretched — to uplift? to protect? In a minute, I am borne out of the shrine on the edge of the tumultuous wave that guided me in.

But the words ring in my ears — written, it is true, by an Englishman many years ago to His God, but is not Divinity the same everywhere?

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity,
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpses turrets slowly wash again:

But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen. . . .
Is my gloom after all,
Shade of His hand outstretched caressingly?
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, I am He
Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me!

Where else shall I wander in this city by the sea? Down at the beach — all blue and pink, now black, yet again gold and silver — I read.

The Master one night suddenly caught a sight of the sea from *Ai-tola*. The moon-light silvered the heaving billows — 'they sparkled like the water of the Jamuna'. Dreaming all the time of Krishna sporting in the Jamuna, the Master went to the sea and leaped into it — the waves now sank Him, now floated Him; on the waves He was carried about like a dry tree trunk. On the waves He drifted towards Konarak, now under water, now above it.

In the deepening twilight, the fishermen on the beach drag in their nets. They exult, for

it is a big haul, and as I walk away, I think of that fisherman on the coast of Konarak, who, on just such a day as this, drew up in his net the figure of a man — God-like in repose — and thought of death and spirit and ghost, but not of the Lord Chaitanya, who in truth, it was!

Let me walk down this little crooked path, picking my way through the brambles and bushes, to the little shrine they call Siddha-Bakul. It is entirely hollow, the trunk of this ancient tree and has stood there all these hundreds of years, just so, its twisted top crowned with fresh green leaves. Does it live on, nourished by the faith of the simple man who lived under it?

Haridas was devoted to Krishna whose name he would sing in rapture. He came to Lord Chaitanya but cried, 'Touch me not, Master, I am a low untouchable wretch'. But the Master answered, 'I touch you to be purified myself, because I lack your pure religion'. So saying, He took Haridas into the garden and added, 'Live here, chanting His name. Daily will I come and join thee. Bow to the discus on the top of the temple of Jagannath (which you can see from here)'. And, we are told, the Lord came to him every day with a little Prasada and his love grew stronger year by year.

It is true that from the shade of the tree, Haridas could have caught a daily glimpse of the top of the temple of Jagannath, which he was forbidden to enter — and who am I to disbelieve the story, of how, long after, when Haridas was ordered to move away so that the tree could be cut down, his living faith in Gauranga stood by him and the tree, silent witness to his love for God, turned in a flash into the twisted, hollow trunk I see before me?

History fades into legend — but no less fascinating — as, my book closed, I wend my way through the bazaar. The road curves and twists on its tracks, slowly I leave the crowds behind, until a sudden turn past a hillock of sand, brings me into a small grove

of Punnag trees. I see a temple set amid the trees; it is closed. But no matter, for I have heard the legend of this shrine of Govinda, 'Govinda who lives in the woods'. Lord Chaitanya found His way here at last and stood enraptured; for He could see here—as not even in the temple, through His tears—the vision of Krishna dancing in the company of His cowherd playmates of Brindaban. Legend has it, that, as He stood there gazing, He vanished forever from sight of mortal man.

'The temple is closed; and this is but a legend I have recounted; let it pass. Shall we walk a little, thinking of Gauranga?' says my kindly guide.

We walk a while in the grove, richly carpeted with fallen leaves. The trees are not yet in bloom, but soon, I know, the fragrance of the Punnag flowers will fill the air with sweetness. In the distance is the murmur of the sea, eternal witness to the play of God on earth.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE BHAGAVADGITA FOR BEGINNERS

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

Long ago our motherland was ruled by righteous kings who were guided by wise and benevolent Preceptors. The deeds of royal heroes of action and thought are recorded in the sacred books compiled many centuries ago. The epic Mahabharata belong to this class of literature. It is a mine of wisdom. The narrative part of this national treasury is overlaid with numerous dialogues, moral precepts and philosophical poems. The great sage Vyasa is believed to be the author of this stupendous work. The Mahabharata is constructed in eighteen Books called Parvans. Each Parvan is named after a great hero or some outstanding event described in it. Bhishma-parvan is the seventh book of the Great Epic of which the Bhagavad Gita constitutes chapters twenty-five to forty-two.

In order to understand the relationship which this famous philosophic poem has with the rest of the epic it is necessary to make a brief and rapid survey of the theme of the entire work in so far as it pertains to our purpose here.

Bharata the son of Dushyanta was a great hero whose glory is immortalised in the first Book of the Mahabharata. Hasti who laid the city known as Hastinapura was the son of Bharata's grandson. Hasti's great grandson had a

son called Kuru who tilled and matured the region outlying Hastinapura and performed penance there. That place is subsequently known as Kurukshetra. Pratipa who had three sons Devapi, Santanu and Balhika was the grandson of Kuru's great grandson. Devapi turned a recluse in his boyhood and so Santanu his next brother became the ruler of the Kuru kingdom. The epic tells us that Santanu was called so because his touch was so miraculous that the person on whom he laid his hand immediately became happy and if he happened to be a dotard he was transformed into a healthy and charming youth. Through Ganga Bhagirathi, Devavrata Bhishma was born to Santanu, who by his strength, chastity, heroism, self-abnegation, erudition, firmness, and unflinching devotion to God stood above all his contemporaries. Besides Bhishma the great Santanu was the sire of two other sons called Chitrangada and Vichitravirya through Satyawati the foster daughter of a fisherman chief. Although Bhishma was entitled to the paternal kingdom by the law of primogeniture he had gladly waived that right in favour of Satyawati's offsprings at the time of his negotiations with her guardian for marrying her to Santanu who

vati. Had Bhishma clung to his rights Santanu could not have married a second time. But his solicitude for his father outweighed all other considerations. The paternal devotion of Bhishma was reciprocated by his gifted father. Santanu conferred on Bhishma the power of death at his own wish even though he was naturally rendered unfit to live by extrinsic causes. It is believed that a person of outstanding virtue is often endowed with the power of miracles, and Santanu was great in every way except that he was passionately fond of the Yojanagandha or powerfully fragrant Satyawati in his old age. This out-of-the-way marriage however foredoomed the history of the Kuru race.

Devavrata Bhishma kept his pledge in spirit and to the last letter. He did all that he could for securing the happiness of Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. By his prowess the two daughters of the King of Kasi were won for Vichitravirya for marriage. The two sisters Ambika and Ambalika bore no children to Vichitravirya as he was removed by early death. In the absence of a possible rival Bhishma could have assumed undisputed rulership; but he was so great that such a thought could not be entertained in a mind of settled resolve. Satyawati thought out a plan to avert the extinction of Santanu's line. She ordered her eldest son Dvaipayana Vyasa to raise children in Ambika and Ambalika by the law of levirate. In piety, penance, and wisdom Vyasa was surpassed by none. But he was bound to obey her in his infancy that he would carry out her behest any time she commanded him. And this was the first and only wish of a great mother. Thus by an *ad hoc* relationship of Vyasa, Pandu was born through Ambika and Dhritarashtra through Ambalika. But by some confusion in the arrangement Vidura was also born from Vyasa through their chamber maid. Pandu was married to Prthā first and then to Mādri, the former being a sister of Vasudeva the father of Sri Krishna. By some indiscretion on the part of Pandu during a hunting excursion, he incurred the curse of a hermit

which hastened his untimely death. His widows however were lucky to merit the grace of Regents of the world viz. Dharma, Vayu, Indra and Asvins and so Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna and Nakula and Sahadeva were born. The first three were the children of Prthā and the last two of Mādri. The five brothers are called the Pandavas—the descendents of Pandu. Dhritarashtra was married to Gandhari who bore him one hundred sons and a daughter headed by Duryodhana. The scene of the Gita is the battle field into which the opposing cousins entered when they found it impossible to settle their disputes by agreement.

The Mahabharata is a Sastra Kavya composed with a plan and motive. It is a Book University that could count among its alumni men and women who have discovered the genuine values of life and strove to embody them in conduct by the light of the knowledge gained by constant study of this great book. The four values of life stressed in this great epic are Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The concepts underlying the whole body of ancient Vedic lore was proclaimed and re-emphasised by Vyasa. It is believed that the Bhagavad Gita is the flame that throws light on all the rest of the Mahabharata, and this sublime poem passes under view the relative status of all the four values and pronounces Moksha as the crowning value. The Song of God—Bhagavad Gita literally means that—is a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna reported in the words of Sanjaya, a bard and minister to the blind King Dhritarashtra. The Song of God forms part of the great epic narrated by the sage Vaisampayana to Janmejaya the great grandson of Arjuna, the hero of the book and is traditionally believed to be recorded by Vyasa.

The four Sanskrit terms noted above deserve some explanation by the way. Kama denotes the enjoyment of lawful pleasures. Moksha is the name for the state of liberation from the imperfections, sufferings, delusions and limitations of mundane existence and continuous enjoyment of bliss. These are goals sought by human beings consciously or unconsciously at

one time or other during the course of life. Wealth is a necessary condition for the enjoyment of pleasures. Proper acquisition of wealth is therefore implied by the term Artha; for unless the pursuit of wealth is blameless, enjoyment of pleasures will be poisoned or imperilled during the process. Acquisition of wealth must therefore be necessarily in a righteous manner. Further the path to Moksha lies through Dharma. While Kama and Moksha are ends, Artha and Dharma are means to their attainment. These four are the Purusharthas or the human goals. In fact Moksha alone is the goal par excellence, for it is eternal and so cannot be a means to something else that is higher or better or more enduring. Although Kama also may be considered an end in itself, it cannot be an ultimate end as it is fleeting, changing and shot with misery. The satisfaction of desires is advised as a human goal only to lead man to a state in which desires no more torment man. Viewed thus, Kama too deserves to be considered only as a means. Thus the one central theme running

throughout the Mahabharata behind the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, defeats and victories of all the heroes described therein is the ideal of Moksha and hence the Epic is described as a Mokshasāstra. The Supremacy of Dharma again and again is restated because that serves both the ends, Kama and Moksha directly and indirectly in order. Excessive attachment to Kama and Artha have ruined men and women who were noted for many virtues. This is made clear from the events described in the earlier paragraphs. In a society in which Kama and Artha yield no place for Dharma total ruin is inevitable. The whole Mahabharata is a testimony to this moral fact. The great Vyasa, undaunted by the periodic obscuration of Dharma by Artha and Kama calls back straying humanity to the path of Dharma, the sole and eternal refuge of human society. The Bhagavad Gita, which is the core of the great epic, has for its central theme Dharma and Moksha, the former being the foundation of the latter. Vyasa was the greatest champion of this new wisdom in his time.

THE CRISIS IN INDIAN RELIGIOUS THINKING

N. C. ZAMINDAR

In one way every period of time is a transition and every transition has its own crisis but then there are times when we face a complete change of centuries of old habits, customs etc. An eminent historian has remarked about such times that 'In times of such cosmic disturbance the historic process attains suddenly an enormous speed: developments that otherwise need ages seem to proceed in months, even in weeks.' Indeed, the changes are beyond ordinary comprehension. All our previous theories and dogmas seem out of date and we stand so to say almost bewildered on the shores of the new world.

The nature of this crisis in Indian thinking has far deeper meaning. The tidal waves of new thoughts and ideologies have broken the

dykes of thought and the waters are rushing in.

In such a situation when all our methodologies appear inadequate we can only attempt some exploration of the area of religious thought.

What was the religious background? It has been a fashion to dub social reformers and pundits as men of religion. To start philosophical clubs and societies is regarded as religious reform. Both these attitudes are incorrect.

Religious reform, if at all any, can only be based on revelation. Revelation is not mere abstraction or logical category. It is the confrontation of the Reality which moves the man of God. India did have such men but then they were singularly away from the market place of the learned.

So may we conclude that India did not even experience a Reformation in religion? Certainly, social transformation is not reformation. Changes in outward living are hardly indicative of the inward changes.

Religion has very little to do with the outward. It begins and ends with the inward. Such inward changes have been neglected in the recent past and totally rejected in the present times.

Naturally the whole tendency of Indian religious thinking became focussed on speechifying and popularizing religion without real attempts at real personal transformations. New jargon and bombast took the field. Obviously it could hardly affect the inner crisis.

In every age men have been prompted by the essential human cravings of money power and sex. Human beings in their pursuit of these ends naturally come across difficulties and sometime face crushing defeats in their efforts and attempts. When these outward troubles and blows of circumstances become too much they seem to seek refuge in religion. They want the Supreme to come and help them in the achievement of their material ends. They seek a psychological escape and begin a search for an out of the way experience. To be still more exact they crave for miracles and magical tricks of many types. This they consider to be religion. This is what they expect from saints and men of God. It is true that frustrations and these hocus pocus devices also sometime lead to a profound transformation and realization of the self. But these are rare exceptions.

One need not disagree with that magnificent defence of Browning's Bishop Blougram by Chesterton. 'A vain, ill mannered and untrustworthy egotist defending his own sordid doings with his own cheap and weather beaten philosophy. . . . That is what Blougram was. Yet even he confesses about 'the grand Perhaps'. India can boast of hundreds of Blougrams and even more degraded 'spiritual masters'. These pseudo-saints provide material for bitter attacks on Religion itself.

Of course these masters have their irrational followers. Some of them acted as their amanuenses and wrote out a vast amount of what passes as 'religious literature'.

It will not be proper to name such persons but still it must be said that this has definitely popularised the craze for the supernatural. When this craze spends itself, we find a complex ridden human personality hardly curable from the psychological point of view.

When such instances multiply, persons who disbelieve in religion do get ample material as evidence for their conclusions.

The stresses and strains of modern life have made it impossible for the normal pattern of human and social life to continue. The Hindus who are castigated by our new fangled social analysis as anti-social, individualistic, intolerant persons had their own society known as caste. That is vanishing, leaving them without mental and social haven. They look completely lost.

It is true that adaptation should be there. One must move with the times. It will all happen in due course. But we cannot expect wholesale adaptations.

The crisis in Indian religious thinking therefore boils down to the fact that at present it is unable to give a ringing message to be full of courage and face the world.

It means that there are few men with an inner transformation and initiation in the regions of bliss. Religious thinking is application of the eternal verities in the new situations and crises. Indian religious thinking is unfortunately not mustering courage of the ancient teachings to utter its solutions for the riddles of the present transition.

All over the world the situation for revelatory religions is not very happy. India which boasted of ancient wisdom seems to be bordering on scepticism.

It is not striking a pose of superiority but it has been a fact that this ancient land has had the privilege of having larger number of reli-

gious men, in spite of the Indian Blougrams, who have met the challenge and found ways and means to tide it over.

In utter humility one has to make an earnest attempt to find solution to this crisis. Perhaps we may be again fortunate to receive the grace of the All merciful. It is high time now and we must get out of the false thinking that we can

tide the crisis willy nilly. Our heritage is all there. Nobody can brush it aside but to think that without our realization of those inspiring messages and teachings in our lives, howsoever humble they may be, we will get and spread peace, is self-delusion. Let us hope that the nature of the crisis will be appreciated and attempts made to tide it over.

THE PROBLEM OF GOD AND MAN

(In the Light of Indian Thought)

M. HAFIZ SYED

Of all the problems, the problem of the idea of God, His nature, His mystery, and His relation to man, have baffled the mind of the earnest thinkers of all ages. In every country and in every nation there have been daring thinkers who have speculated about the nature of God and how to understand Him; but they have returned crest-fallen from their search after this Truth. They have confessed their inability to probe into the mystery of the divine nature. They have speculated much but have come to no satisfactory solution. Their fruitless quest of God has turned the minds of many earnest seekers after Truth away from any possibility of knowing Him. Some of these thinkers who have failed to get any light through their mental speculation have avowedly become sceptic or agnostic.

This is what has happened in the West. In the East the story has been somewhat different. Some of the foremost thinkers in Eastern countries have frankly confessed the limitations of minds and their inability through mental process to acquire any knowledge of That which is believed to be beyond the range of mind.

Many of the earnest seekers in ancient India have thrown valuable light on the problem, which still serves as a beacon-light to those who persist in their desire to get some glimpse

of the Reality. The ancient sages in India have held a theory about this problem different from their Western compeers. They hold that mind is made of matter, and, as such it cannot grasp That which is beyond mind. The only way to have a direct experience of the Reality is to still the mind's activities, to subdue and to control it, before the divine vision is vouchsafed to man. They say that God manifests Himself in every earthly form, higher or lower; the one abode where He dwells constantly and reveals Himself is man's own heart. All the mystics and God-men have borne testimony to this statement. In order to realize Him, it is necessary that one should search one's own heart and try to seek Him there.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna has laid this down in clear and unmistakable language: 'I, O Guda-kesa, am the Self, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings.' (Gita, X. 20). This is the clearest exposition of the divine nature of man, ever given to the world. The divinity of man was proclaimed by the author of Christianity in these words, 'Man was made after the image of God.'

Hazrat Ali, the leader of the Muslim mystics, has declared that one who knows his own Self can alone know God.

The fact is that man has a great link with God not only as the creature of God but also as the revealer of God. Indeed, all that humanity knows of God is known because of man. All the highest concepts which we have today concerning God's nature came to us from man. All through we have that supreme fact; we know of God because of man.

We have the striking fact that man has revealed God, but he has done so only because he has divinity within him. It is because man is not simply a thing of clay which God has breathed into and made a living thing, but because he contains within himself the divine. Man has revealed God and can always reveal Him.

The doctrine of the divinity of man is known in the clearest fashion in India; for it is a doctrine of Indian Philosophy that man is not only man but the embodiment of divinity that resides in him.

So, then, it is not at all surprising, when we enquire into the problem of man, to find that what we call 'man' is not merely a clod of earth or a brute, but that there is in him something wonderful and stupendous. In the past God has revealed Himself as man. It is an integral part of the Christian faith that Christ, born of woman, who lived as we do, revealed God. In Hinduism they say of Sri Krishna, born of woman, the best man among men, that he revealed divinity, nay, he was divinity itself.

God was revealed to man by a few great leaders of humanity, the founders of the great religions. We accept that they were the sons of God, that they were God incarnate. In the past history of humanity, we find that the divine nature was not confined in just those few saviours. The divine nature was found in all men and women such as most of us are.

The ancient traditions of India say that through purification a man born of woman puts on the robe of the Guru. To all who look to him, to his disciples, he, the Guru or the teacher, is God, and they reverence him not merely because of his goodness, but because

in him divinity stands more revealed. Every day, when the pious Hindu begins his meditation and thinks of his human teacher, he recites the Sanskrit verse which means; 'Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Siva, Guru is Para-Brahma Itself.'

There is a new way of seeing God in man, and that is to see God in the child. We have not as yet thought of the child as a mirror of the Godhead. But we find that every country is now discussing child-welfare. A new interest has been found in children, not merely because they are to build up the State as citizens, but because there is something fascinating, beautiful, attractive, inspiring, and spiritualizing in children. When we look into a child's face, we may hear God's whisper. For children are slowly becoming to us the mirror of the Godhead in the coming civilization.

How shall we find the God in man? It has to be done by our understanding man by watching what it is in man that inspires us. We will find, then, that what inspires us in man are the emanations, the flushes of the divinity which are in him. Let us consider the hero for a moment. Why is a person heroic? Because he has released the hidden power of the God in him, and because he has released that hidden divinity. We salute the divine as the hero. The hero is to be saluted, admired, imitated because the hero is God. When men give their lives for honour, then the sparks of divinity manifest in them. It is the divine in man which contemplates such a death and says, 'I cannot die, the only death is when I do not serve.' It is in the people round us, in the hero, in the martyr, in the sacrificing man that we shall see something of the nature of God.

There are certain things in our civilization today which can prevent our discovering God in our brother man, and one of them is the prejudice of race and colour. Every one of us, when thinking in general of the principles of life, must know that God is no respecter of persons, that God is not the God of the white race, that God is not the God of this,

that or other nation only. He is the God of all mankind. If there is one God, then there is only one humanity, and the distinctions of race and creed mean nothing at all to God. We must, step by step, break down all such barriers that seek to limit the Infinite.

Let us not think that God will only reveal Himself to us in what we think are the great and glorious and inspiring deeds of humanity. Sometimes, thinking thus we turn our back on scenes of suffering and degradation. Let nothing repel us; for even in suffering and degradation too there is something of the divine nature. Let us contemplate the sufferings of mankind, let our heart go out in pity all the time; for 'pity is the touch of God in the human heart, and from that way he ever trod, he never departs.' Let us enlarge our heart so that it is compassionate to all that lives, so that there is no suffering we are not willing to share. In suffering there awaits us the lesson of pity, and pity is a power which helps us to sacrifice in a larger way. Let us not turn our back, therefore, on life in any of its phases.

God has manifested Himself through all the phenomenal world—mineral, vegetable, and animal. But His highest manifestation is

revealed in man, who is essentially a spiritual being, although he has forgotten, for the time being, his essential nature and has identified himself with perishing forms. It is this identification with ephemeral bodies in which he is encased that leads him to believe that he is weak, sinful, and degraded. But the moment he analyses his own constitution he begins to realize that he is not the body, nor his senses and mind, but something far higher than these. To quote the words of Sri Krishna in the *Gita*, 'It is said the senses are great; greater than these senses is the mind; greater than the mind is reason; but what is greater than reason is He, the Self.' This spiritual soul of man is ever existent; for it is not born nor doth it die; nor having been ceaseth he any more to be. It is *Sat, Chit, Ananda* (existence, consciousness, bliss). When a man learns to bear in mind his divine nature, in spite of all kinds of sorrows and sufferings which he may have to undergo in the outer world, inwardly he remains calm, serene, and dignified in his attitude to the happenings of the world. He knows that the outer physical life is subject to change, decay, and death. The real man in him is above all sorrow and suffering, and with Him he should identify himself.

THE NON-VIOLENCE OF THE MAHATMA

CHUNILAL MITRA

It is now conclusively established that the political history of India for thirty years (1917-'47) at least is the life history of Gandhiji, and our Independence is greatly the result of the Mahatma's sacrifice and leadership. For, he headed not only political revolts of the Indian people but also led a crusade against the mechanistic and urban civilization of the West. As such, he was the voice of the sunken millions for three decades, inasmuch as it is he who transformed the Congress from a debating body of the politicians drawn mainly

from the upper middle class into a powerful combative organization of the masses.

Gandhiji was an exception in his uncommon claim of a common fact that his whole life was an experiment, an experiment with no other thing than Truth itself. The claim is uncommon because it is made by rare persons. He not only equated Truth with God but also occasionally construed the former as even wider than the latter. Truth is not only varied but also all-absorbing. In his words: 'My uniform experience has convinced me that

there is no other God than Truth, no religion higher than Righteousness.' Hence, he was confirmed that 'religion and morality were synonymous'.

Tagore pointed out that our greatest fortune is when 'others' become our own, while the greatest misfortune is when our own men become 'others'. Gandhiji believed in this truth and acted likewise. Because of his love for Truth he loved all, friends and foes alike. In fact, none was an enemy to him. To quote him further: 'To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life'. He launched so many political, social, educational and cultural movements and even worked for the salvation of the spirit. He achieved tremendous success in politics. Yet, politics was not the be-all and end-all of his life. All these activities were inspired by his search for Truth. 'My devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics', and yet he made politics and religion no discrete subjects, no two separate studies. 'I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.'

The history of human civilization is the history of the evolution of our being, which, in its turn, is our advance from brutality to humanity, from humanity to morality, from morality to divinity. Accordingly, the technique and the philosophy of the Gandhian way of life were based on some fundamental principles, which to him, were almost like postulates. He was always outspoken in pronouncing them unequivocally. If those postulates were not construed properly, the greater part of what Gandhiji told or stood for is left unexplained as obscure or false, fictitious or vicious.

The postulates are in the forms of some pointers. To a weak or tyrannical Government, national or foreign, Gandhiji's pointer was: 'A government which is weak or which

allows itself to be led into courses which its reason does not approve of, is not fit to rule. It ought to step aside and make way for a better rule.' One other postulate is: 'To err is human, but to own up one's error and so to act to be proof against it is manly.' He opined that confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before. Perhaps the greatest of the axioms is: 'The life of a nation like that of an individual is an indivisible whole'. Consistently, he felt and believed that what is good for the one is good for the multitude. Nay, more: The good of the individual is contained in the good of all. As a corollary he argued that 'the lawyer's work has the same value as the labourer's inasmuch as all have the right of earning their livelihood from their work.'

The sole object of the Mahatma was to establish truth, justice and righteousness on a sound pedestal throughout the length and breadth of India first, and in the world next. In his words: 'My ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts.' In the words of Romain Rolland: 'Unlike our European revolutionists Gandhi came not to make laws and ordinances, but to create a new Human Society based on Truth, Love and Non-violence.' In fact, his non-violence was the basic principle of all his activities. It was never a cloak, a policy with him. It was the creed of his life, the key to his success, the cardinal principle of his politics and economics, morality and religion. It was at once the foundation and the culmination of his philosophy, the basis and fruition of his life.

On the Indian soil at least, in its tradition and civilization, non-violence is never a new thing. But the way Gandhiji approached it and the modes of its universal application were absolutely new. As such, he re-innovated politics, rejuvenated morality and religion for the first time in two thousand years by his unique introduction of non-violence in them. His non-violence is everything, all else are elucidations, auxiliaries or deductions. Unless

it is understood in its entire connotation, his politics and economics, Ethics and Theology cannot be understood. For, they are nothing unless non-violent. Minus Non-violence his policies and programmes sink, and Gandhism becomes a cypher.

It is simple and yet strange. Its nature and conditions for its observance must have to be closely followed, if we at all endeavour to profit ourselves by the acceptance of his philosophy and to fulfil his mission simultaneously. For, to attempt to fulfil a man's mission and not to accept his philosophy of life are contradictory.

As the first condition he asked us to be pure at heart. 'Without self purification the observance of the Law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream'. (Autobiography, p. 615). This purity is based on humility. It is ourselves to be humble and lowly. 'The seeker after Truth should be humbler than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after Truth should be humble himself that even the dust could crush him.' (*Ibid.*, p. 14). This humility must not be thrust from without, but evolved from within. In Gandhiji's words: 'So long as a man does not of his own freewill put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. . . . Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility.' (*Ibid.*, p. 616).

In Non-violence there is no scope either for pride or for jealousy. A votary of Truth, or a non-violent Satyagrahi does not only not find fault with other, but also does not speak ill of him. He takes 'other' as his equal or even more dignified than himself. In the words of the Mahatma again: 'It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honoured by the humiliation of their fellow-beings.' (Auto: p. 192). 'To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world.' (p. 337).

The Mahatma warned us against all possible pitfalls consequent on the concept of Non-violence misunderstood. For instance, non-violence is never flattery, and he told us: 'Non-

violence very easily takes the form of hypocrisy. But love and fear are self-contradictory. Love never hesitates to sacrifice. It is disinterested to have anything in return.' So, his mission was to win over hatred by love, violence by non-violence. He marched on and on, and did not wait for others. For, the hidden treasure, spirituality, must be earned by one's own endeavour, personal hardship and meditation. He opined that, if one man gains spiritually the whole world gains with him, and if one fails, the whole world fails to that extent.

To be truly non-violent we are to cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing. 'It is the Law', said Gandhiji, 'of our species, as violence is the Law of the brute. Nevertheless, he would risk violence a thousand times rather than (welcome) the emasculation of the race.' For, he believed that to do wrong and to suffer wrong are equally unjust. Consistently, he argued that, the people that do not fight for their rights are like slaves, and that 'every nation and every individual have the right and it is their duty to rise against an intolerable wrong.'

Without non-violence knowledge of the Truth is impossible. For it is not the weapon of the poor and the fearful, the meek and the weak, but the greatest arms of the brave, the powerful and the fearless. Truth can only be explored by fearlessness. The nature and conditions of Non-violence may be summed up in the Mahatma's own: 'To kill and to be killed by the enemy in a battle field is bravery; but to forbear the attack of an enemy without retaliation is a greater bravery.'

His is a genius though not born or gifted, at least earned and acquired and yet how surprisingly perfected! To a polluted and unjust politics, untrue and violent civilization power-sick and militant world, to the misled statesmen and politicians, may the Mahatma's message of the identity of morality and religion on the one hand and the harmony and synthesis of religion and politics on the other, and his life of non-violence in thought, words and deeds

GOODNESS AT THE SOURCE

Yajurveda, Vs. 34. 1-6.

Metre: Trishtup.

ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE

May the Divine Essence that goes far away
from the waking and likewise from the sleeping,
and that far-travelling Light of lights,—
may that my Mind resolve on what is good. (1)

May that by which wise men, skilful in rituals
and steady in assemblies, perform their duties,
that peerless Spirit lying in living beings,—
may that my Mind resolve on what is good. (2)

May that which is deep knowledge, intellect, memory,
that which is the deathless Flame in living things,
without which nothing whatever is done,—
may that my Mind resolve on what is good. (3)

May that immortal Essence by which all
the past and present world is comprehended,
by which the ritual spreads with the Seven Priests,—
may that my Mind resolve on what is good. (4)

May that in which Riks and Sāmas and Yajus are held firm
like spokes in the nave of a chariot wheel,
in which all thoughts of the living are interwoven,—
may that my Mind resolve on what is good. (5)

May that which guides men like the good charioteer
who controls fleet-footed horses with the reins,
that which abides in the heart, most swift, agile,—
may that my Mind resolve on what is good. (6)

NOTES:

The Veda takes goodness as a motive in the mind before it can become a part of conduct.

St. 1—*Essence*—signifies the spirit (in later language, *jivatma*) in man. The Veda holds man as essentially divine.

St. 2—*assembly*—*vidatha*, the centre of public religious activity in the Vedic age. *living beings*—All living beings are grouped together by the Veda as possessing the Mind.

St. 3—*deep knowledge*—*prajna*.

St. 5—*Riks* etc.—The three Vedas are preserved in memory. (The fourth, Atharva Veda, is not named here). This refers to the oral tradition of the Veda from the most ancient times. *like spokes* etc.—implies the fundamental unity of the Vedas. *all thoughts* etc.—This essential unity of all minds has been declared by the great mystics of all ages and climes.

St. 6—The comparison of the charioteer has been used in later religious literature, too.

UNITY OF ENLIGHTENMENT

(Vedanta and Zen)

VAJRABODHI

1

'Bliss consists in cessation of all thought,
In the quiescence of plurality.'

Vedanta, 'End of the Vedas', first of all, represents their youngest section which are the Upanishads. Moreover Vedanta is the common foundation of all orthodox Indian systems of philosophy. Although they may mutually differ, at bottom, they do not conflict one another rather they complete themselves. While the logical structure is the first concern and criterion of every system of thought (*darshana*), their source, the Upanishads each *ime* can only indicate and hint at that which is in the ultimate sense inconceivable. For revelations are in the habit of coming forward spontaneously and directly without discursive thought or ratiocination.

If generally we speak of Vedanta we think of the Advaita-Vedanta, the great teaching of the One without-a-second, accomplished and systematized by Sri Sankaracharya. The true revelation, i.e. the living, direct experience of perfect Truth always goes beyond, 'transcends' the intellect and its narrow egohood, while a philosophical system, just because it works logically, is forced to stick to the limits of thinking. This means that no way of thinking, ever so ingenious, can lead to that experience of perfect Truth of which it wishes to convince. No Sage can make a bridge across the abyss between thinking and Enlightenment, simply because revelation or illumination do not manifest in the confusion of our dualistically-trained mind, the prison of rationality. Pure Consciousness identical with Ultimate Reality (*Brahman*) is Consciousness *per se*,

undifferentiated, not consciousness of something.

All true mystics use this faculty of intuitive awareness, of immediate perception, and all alike are unable to make their knowledge known. Therefore the Buddha too refused to speak of that which is experienced beyond mind in a thought-free state which is devoid of all attributes (*sunya*). That does not make it void or vacuum; it is void that is already full, a Plenum-Void. Vedanta in point of fact can only make out a practical way of making oneself alive to receive that Truth, it is a state of inner readiness, of spiritual receptivity which has nothing to do with intellectual coercion. The 'clearing' and finally the liquidation of the mind is the *sine qua non* on the Short Path.

Indian thinking is liberal and has found in Sri Sankara its masterly advocate. The whole mystery is to convince the thinking mind that it cannot reach Ultimate Truth, and to persuade it to give up all its efforts in this direction. For the practical purpose of living the intellect is an excellent contrivance but as a means of revealing 'the whole' it is useless as the constable's bull's eye lantern in revealing the world. The Advaita-Vedanta of Sankara without doubt is an ingenious way to lead the working of the mind to its own limits and thereby, seen from its spiritual height, '*ad absurdum*'. It is only regrettable that on its way most 'thinkers' are brought to bag, i.e. succumb or give up before they reach the limit, —or do not perceive it. They are frightened to let go their hold and resolutely to loosen the tie of the ego, they startle to risk the decisive jump which the mind must make in full self-consciousness from self-illusion to Self-

Enlightenment into the Great Void (*Sunya*), the immeasurable, primeval abyss of our own true Being—*Tat tvam asi*.

II

'The aim of spiritual life is how to stop the working of the mind.'

Moreover, there is another kindred method to withdraw from the slavery of the logical or automatical thinking, i.e. to reach the clear, purified Consciousness without contents, without thoughts and ideas. It is 'Zen', an old but yet so living and modern form and Short or Sudden Path of Buddhism (*Mahayana*) in the Far-East which recommends another Way or access, apparently opposed to Vedanta yet finally achieving the same end. It is a reformed return to the original Buddha-teaching, so different from its far later Pali-scriptures. In short, it is the direct assault upon the citadel of Truth without reliance upon beliefs, ideas and scriptures, the perishable creations of learned ignorance which hides from man the splendour of the Radiance of the Real, our True State from the first beginning.

Directly from the first Zen deprives the thinker of every hold or support to break down the bars of intellect. The seeker after truth receives to his many questions such answers with which his logical thinking does not know what to do,—while an awake inmost pre-sentiment tells him that this odd answer is not only 'right' but true, more true than any other thinking can ever find. The discipline on the Short Path is for ever to avoid imagining things.

Question: 'Where my mind can find a point, on which it can rest?' Answer: 'There where it does no more find any rest'. The solution: Every thought gets a footing on an object. If the footing is withdrawn, then it sinks down and is making way for another thought. That is, the mind grasps another hold upon which it fastens. It rests only, if every support is denied. That you can do by fixing your attention exclusively on the task in hand, the one thing perfectly you do here and

now with the whole of your personality, being fully absorbed in the present moment (eating or washing, or meditating), which might be summed up in the maxim of Lao-tze: 'To be a whole in the fragment'. To meditate is not to think, it does not mean pondering over deep problems. Meditation consists in the profound absorption and resting within oneself, in the final slipping of the consciousness into the waveless Great Silence of Cosmic Consciousness.

'What is the Buddha?' Answer: 'The cypress-tree in the court-yard'. Perfection or Enlightenment are no intellectual products. The cypress is no theoretical but, that is to say, a practical experience of Perfection, of the unquestionable resting-in-onself, of pure Being (*Be-ness*). Nothing else is the essence of the Buddha, nothing else is the essential of all Being—the *one* without-a-second. And *that* you are already ever since.

Another monk entered a room where a Master was alone. 'What is the Buddha?'—'Just now He has gone'. The monk has with his learned question driven away the great Silence which is the expression of Perfection, of the Absolute or the Divine Being *per se*. Such is Pure Consciousness beyond the automatical and logical intellect; it is together a Consciousness free from any self-centred relations making us restless and discontented.

In this form of rapid question-answer a lightning answer may suffice, thrusting the question back into the questioner's mind—and suddenly arouse the receptive, latent intuition. 'How shall I escape from the wheel of birth and death?' Asked the Master in reply, 'Who puts you under restraint?'

'Earnestly I am trying but I do not know, where and how to find the Buddha'—Answer: 'You are looking out for an ox, while in fact you are riding on him'.

In truth, as we have seen, Freedom and Peace are calling from nowhere but from the beyond of mere thinking and philosophizing, the State of our True Awakening or pure Con-

ciousness transcendent over differentiation and separateness. Vedanta and Zen are two equally valuable, bold Ways and means of realizing the essential Oneness of Life, of Samsara and Nirvana, Atman and Brahman now and here. It is the aim and the end of the Dharma, as it is of all systems of Yoga

and of all schools of Buddhism and Hinduism, —the condition in which 'I and my Father are one'.

'Abstaining from the dialectics
And the discussion of dogmas,
Let us only be occupied with
A living Realization'!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Iswarananda is President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur.

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THE WORSHIP OF THE FOREFATHERS AND THE MOTHER SUPREME

Shortly is arriving the Pitripaksha followed by the Navaratri. The dark fortnight before the Navaratri is holy, for we offer our oblations to the forefathers with appropriate ceremonies and the latter is holy because we worship the Mother Goddess at this time.

The Pitris or deceased ancestors according to the Indian tradition are of two classes, viz. the fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers of any person, and the progenitors of mankind generally. In honour of both these classes rites called Sraddhas or the obsequial rites are performed and oblations called Pindas or round balls of food are offered. The Tarpana is done for refreshing the Pitris offering water, etc. along with appropriate mantras. It is

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Dr A. C. Bose's translation of several Vedic hymns with scholarly notes have already been published in this journal.

Sri Vajrabodhi, Thera (J. Pistor) is a Buddhist monk of Akimmana, Ceylon.

done on the day of the new moon. The Pitripaksha, the dark half of the Asvina month, is especially sacred to the Pitris. According to the scriptures the Pitris live in the Pitriloka inbetween the earth and the heaven. All the creatures have to pass through this sphere after death.

This worship of the personal and social ancestors is an important rite performed by all the Hindus. The reason of this worship is not far to seek. There is in every civilization a provision for paying homage to the departed elders, especially the tallest ones among them. Men who built up the society and civilization the fruits of which are enjoyed by posterity naturally merit recognition. Out

of gratitude man worships them. The very fact of their being ancient renders a halo of respect around them. When they were really great, and were the cause in turning the points of history, or made a significant contribution to the national culture, they command a hundredfold more reverence and love. By thinking of them man tries to get a glimpse of their spirit and hopes to imbibe it. Whatever you think you become is a well-recognized truth. Moreover whatever is great, ancient or beautiful attracts man even without his knowing. Reflecting on them, meditating on their glories and singing praises to them, man's mind becomes filled with mellowed emotion charged with a high moral tone. This emotion is the motive force by which man forgets his limitations and feels his innate greatness and strives for excellence in life. Thus by the worship of the Pitris during this season we grow in stature by associating ourselves with the great departed ones. This practice is very ancient and was current even from the days of the Vedas.

Ancient also is the worship of God as the Mother which is especially done during the Devipaksha, the fortnight following the Pitripaksha. During this time the Goddess is worshipped especially in Her three aspects, as Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati.

The Mother worship in India was also Vedic in origin though it may be true that many tributaries of local and popular female deities from different sources including Tibetan and Chinese and various modes of worshipping them, mingled in the main current. Looking upon the gods as mother is often met with in the Rigveda. It says 'Agni sustains every one like one's mother' (Rv. V. 15. 4). The devotee prays to Ushas, 'Let us be dear to you like sons to a mother' (Rv. VII. 81. 4). Earth and Heaven were considered by the Vedic seers as mother and father respectively. They saved from sin and upheld the moral standards. The most important Mother Goddess fully developed in the Rigveda was Aditi who figures there no less than eighty times. She is often men-

In a whole hymn (Rv. X. 100), the refrain prays to Aditi for all-round welfare. Her concept is quite abstract and is comparable to the all-comprehensive Sakti of later times. 'Aditi is heaven; Aditi is sky; Aditi is mother, father and son; all the gods are Aditi; even so all men, and what is and what will be, is all Aditi' (Rv. I. 89. 10). Aditi is specially invoked for condoning the sin. Aditi originally meant the abstract divine quality of freedom. Her conception in one verse is similar to Durga-sukta in Taittiriya Aranyaka (X. 1). It is out of the coalescence of varied deities of plenty and riches such as Dhichana, Ila, Purandhri and Raka, that the full Goddess of abundance and beauty Sri-Lakshmi emerges.

The river goddess Saraswati and the goddess of speech 'Vak' are mentioned in the Rigveda and identified in the Brahmanas. The Rigvedic Devi-sukta and the Atharvavedic Ratri-sukta deals with the Goddess. Perhaps in Ratri-sukta is the identification of the darkness and cessation of activity marking the night with Devi in her destructive aspect, Kalaratri.

Devapatnis or Gnas like Agnaya, Indrani and Varunani later became the aspects of the Supreme Mother. Indrani or Sachi in the sense of Sakti, power has been used. Taittiriya Brahmana (II. 4. 2) describes her as winning battles for her husband and in this she is comparable to Devi in the *Chandi*.

A wholly abstract and philosophical conception of a power residing in what is considered as the Supreme Being or that which was before all else is met with in the Vedic references, such as 'Innate power' as the root of creation (Rv. X. 129. 20) and 'May I become many, may I grow forth' (Tai. II. 6, Ch. VI. II. 3).

In the Rigveda, Maya is found in the sense of Sakti or mystic power in divinity. It (V. 85. 5, III. 61. 7) mentions the great Maya of Varuna. The Svetasvatara Upanishad (IV. 10) points to Maheswara as the possessor of the power, Maya. In later Puranas and Itihasas, of course, the Mother Goddess

lize in Devi-worship. The Devi-Bhagavata, the Devi-Mahatmya and a few other Tantras are the highly honoured holy books of the Mother-worshippers. A fully developed philosophy is woven round Mother-worship in these scriptures.

Thus we see that both the worship of the Father and that of the Mother Goddess were very ancient. To minds endowed with the

power of imagination, this very fact of unbroken worship for thousands of years will create a faith, a love, a devotion for this function and free them from indifference, callousness and irreverence. Let us think of the worshippers down the centuries, then will we be able easily to get the proper mood and spirit of worship that will give us tangible results, material as well as spiritual.

PASSING AWAY OF SWAMI ATMABODHANANDA

With deep sorrow we have to announce that Swami Atmabodhananda, a trustee of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur (and a member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission) and the President of the Ramakrishna Math (Udbodhan Office), Baghbar, Calcutta, passed away at 11.48 a.m. on Wednesday the 9th September. He was 68. For some years past he had been suffering from high blood-pressure and diabetes, and during the last few months had developed kidney trouble. Though at intervals he felt better as a result of careful medical treatment, his condition suddenly became very grave shortly before noon of the 9th. His consciousness did not fail him almost till the end, nor did ill health deter him from paying the closest attention, as ever, to the daily affairs of the institution under his care.

Known as Sri Satyendra Chandra Chowdhury in his pre-monastic life, Swami Atmabodhananda was born in the district of Mymensingh, East Bengal in the year 1891. Even in his boyhood he was devoted to the service of the poor and needy. Foreign domination of his country also pained his heart and attracted him towards ameliorating her condition. And a sense of the evanescence of life once drew him away to Hardwar. In the year 1914 he joined the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Varanasi, and next year he was posted to the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.

During these years he had the privilege of coming in close contact with the direct disciples

of Sri Ramakrishna. He was ordained into Sannyasa in 1920 by his guru Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. In the same year, the Advaita Ashrama Publication Department was opened in Calcutta and was entrusted to his charge. In 1926 he was made an Assistant Secretary of the newly formed Working Committee of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at its headquarters, Belur. In 1929 he became Manager of the Udbodhan Office, and in the following year he was appointed President of that centre. Since then till the day of his passing away he was shouldering this onerous task. Concurrently, he was the Secretary of the Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta from 1929 to 1945. He was also prominently associated with Sarada Pitha and several other institutions inside and outside the Order and greatly benefited them by his sound counsel. Incidentally, he was a trustee of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, from 1923 till the last.

Swami Atmabodhananda's devotion to duty, sense of responsibility, and administrative talent are worthy of emulation. He had an artistic taste in matters concerning publication. His kind and sympathetic treatment of all who came in contact with him, particularly his neighbours, will be long remembered with gratitude by them.

The void created in the Ramakrishna Order by his departure will be difficult to fill up. May his soul rest in peace!

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

GREAT THOUGHTS OF GREAT MEN or IDEAS AND IDEALS: By SRI SAIN DAS, (Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur. Pp. 208. Price Rs. 3.50.)

This meritorious publication was designed by its eminent author Lal Sain Das of revered memory to 'counteract the indiscipline and frivolity of youth' in the post Independence era in our country, and it needs hardly pointing out that that objective has very largely been fulfilled. The book is full of the choicest and most pregnant sayings from world literature, philosophy and religion. And typical amongst the priceless extracts, which are packed into 208 pages of solid matter, is the exhortation, 'to centre your attention always, not on noisy things or spectacular events of gigantic magnitude, but on the quiet, the unobtrusive, the inconspicuous and the vital, if despair is to be avoided.'

S. RAJAGOPALAN

THE RELIGION OF THE BUDDHA AND ITS RELATION TO UPANISHADIC THOUGHT: By SRI BAHADUR MAL, M.A. (Vishveshvaranand Institute Publications. Hoshiarpur. Pp. 203. Price Rs. 4.50.)

This book represents the result of studious research into the history, the tenets and the schools of Buddhism with a view to bring out their close affinity to the Upanishadic thought in Hinduism. The author rightly says that the Upanishadic theory of the integration of the individual soul with the Ultimate Reality, had also been accepted by the later Mahayana school of Buddhism. What could be more striking than the description of 'Arhat' and his thirty qualities (p. 124) which is identical with that of a Sthitaprajna of the Gita (Ch. II).

Buddhism was not conceived to be a separate religion. Rather it was a movement, a revolt within the folds of Hinduism itself, pleading for reason in lieu of authority and placing philosophy on a rational basis. Buddha did no more than inveigh against the vain pursuit of pleasures as well as philosophical discussions, which could not eradicate sorrow or suffering (p. 162). He had inculcated a discipline or a way of life, which would usher in wisdom which in turn make for bliss.

Some of the ideas which have been brought out by the author from a survey of the Buddhist literature are worth noting:

Desire unsatisfied leads to births (p. 112).

All are masters of their actions and their slaves as well (p. 118).

The wheel of life stops, when desire is extinguished for ever (p. 119).

If one kills, he goes downwards into hell; or if reborn, becomes short lived.

Altogether, a most rewarding study, which has quite ably placed one of the world's oldest religions in its true perspective.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

THE MIRAGE OF A CLASS-LESS SOCIETY: By SRI M. V. PATWARDHAN. (Pp. 335. Price Rs. 12.50. Chetana, Rampart Row, Bombay 1).

Amidst much ill-informed criticisms and gratuitous assumptions, it is refreshing to come across this book which is obviously the result of a lifelong study and research, justifying the Hindu Caste system, which the author rightly remarks (p. 331) is 'fool proof, having had a perpetual and continuous existence for 3,000 years'. The idea of a casteless society which is talked about so vehemently in these days, is also examined by him with particular reference to its reported working in the U.S.S.R.; and he has succeeded in showing, after piercing into the innermost core of the Marxian doctrines, that his dogmas are complementary, not antagonistic to the theories of Manu and of our Dharma Sastras. No doubt the caste system had not been able to withstand foreign invasions and rule, but a classless society is worse placed in this respect, since expropriation and violence permeate all activity.

Few will be disposed to disagree with the author when he posits that equality and liberty in democracy can be perpetuated only by a division into groups where each group is afforded fullest liberty of economic, political and religious activities; and that the only system which had approximated to this ideal was the Hindu social structure formulated by Manu.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION,

RAJAHMUNDRY

With a branch centre in the town Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission maintain two Shrine Rooms for the worship of Sri Ramakrishna, and conduct two free Libraries and two Reading Rooms, and a free Homeopathy Dispensary for the poor and the needy, and a Students' Home constructed at a cost of Rs. 25,000 specially contributed, provides for poor and meritorious College-going boys mainly. A few seats are allotted for paying boarders too. Daily lecture classes are conducted at the Town Centre attracting a good gathering in the evenings and on Sundays at the Main Centre. To meet the current expenditure, and to consolidate and improve the work of the local branches, general public and devotees have been requested by the Management to contribute liberally and selflessly.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAM, AJMER

There was no Ramakrishna centre in the Rajputana or Rajasthan, and this Ashrama was started in 1944. It was being run in rented premises up to February, 1950, when it was shifted to its own land at the New Colony called Adarshnagar. The Main Building with a small Temple, a Dispensary Building and a Library Building has been constructed at a cost of about Rs. 42,000. A marble statue of Sri Guru Maharaj was installed in the Temple in 1954. A Marble Statue (meditation posture) of Swami Vivekananda has been installed in the Hall of the Library. Another Statue of Swamiji (Chicago Posture) has been installed in front of the Dispensary Building. The total number of books is 3,739, that of papers and periodicals, 27. The number of books issued in 1958-59 was 5,384. The number of new patients treated was 1,507. Two students stayed in the Home. The Birth-anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swamiji, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Christ were also celebrated.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, TRICHUR

REPORT FOR 1958

In 1958 the Gurukul and Orphanage had 82 boys and 28 girls of whom 6 boys and 4 girls were

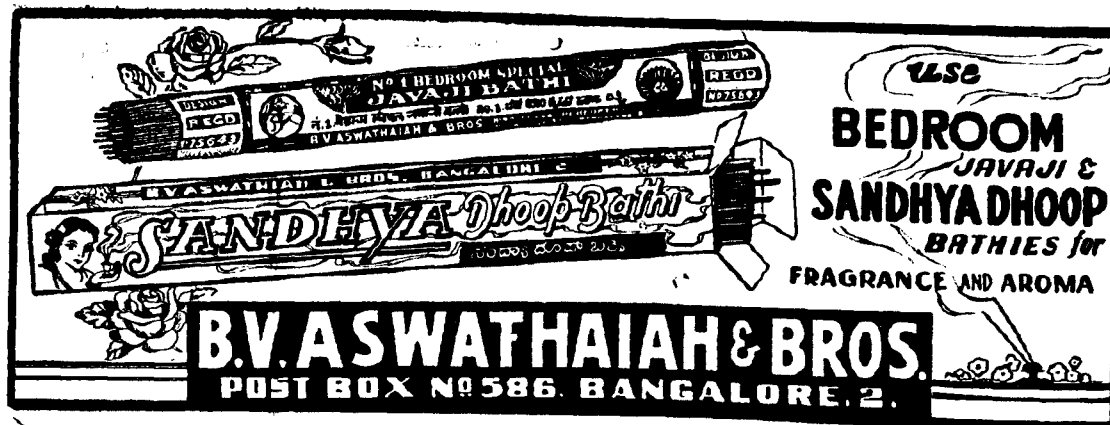
part free, 16 boys and 16 girls full free and 80 boys and 8 girls full paying. The Vidyamandir had in 1958, 715 boys and 530 girls. In the Secondary section there were 141 fee concession holders. The school celebrated the Youth Festival with great eclat in the month of December. The weaving and needle work section had 38 trainees. The trainees were paid for their work. Two Harijan welfare centres were run in the nearby colonies. The total number of patients in 1958 in the charitable dispensary was 25,001 of which 10,853 were new cases and 14,148 repeated ones. 146 minor surgical operations also were conducted during the year. The construction of a 12 bedded hospital attached to the dispensary with equipments is yet to be completed. An average of 250 poor school-going children were fed free at noon on all school days. The Sisuvihar or Creche took care of 30 children. The Pankunnam Centre in the town maintains a library and reading room and organises religious classes and birthday celebrations. Spiritual Retreat and other spiritual functions took place in the well furnished community hall. While thanking the supporters, the management appeal for more funds for improvement and maintenance of the centre.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA,

VISAKHAPATNAM

REPORT FOR 1958

The Ashrama runs a free reading room and library. There were 1,881 books and 20 magazines and 6 newspapers. Books were issued to 204 persons and 30 readers utilised the reading section. 10 students took advantage of the Students' Retreat. There were 92 boys and 30 girls in the Middle School. Every Sunday morning classes are held for children. The Children's Library consists of mostly illustrated books and journals. On Sunday evenings Film Shows are arranged to provide intense audio-visual instruction to children. Sarada Bala Vihara (Preparatory School for Children) consists of 41 children and 3 teachers. The Ashrama stocks books published by other centres for sale. The Centre has programmed to build shortly a School Building-cum-Auditorium and Children's Park. The Managing Committee convey their grateful thanks to the contributors and appeal for more funds.



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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.*

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No. 7

HOW EVEN THE GREAT ONES SURRENDER

Pandit Narayan Sastri was known as a great scholar in the country even before he came to Bengal to study Nyaya. Living with his teachers like the orthodox Brahmacharins of ancient days, he had studied the various Sastras continuously for twenty-five years to acquire equal knowledge of and mastery over all the six systems of philosophy. But Narayan Sastri was not like ordinary pandits. He clearly understood that no one could have a real mastery of them by a mere study without sadhana.

At this auspicious moment of his life he met Sri Ramakrishna and felt immediately drawn towards him in a mysterious way. The more intimately he mixed with the Master, the more did love for him grow in his heart and a desire to know him deeper and deeper. Sri Sastri knew from his studies that while ascending to higher and higher mental planes, there came wonderful experiences and visions, followed at last by Nirvikalpa samadhi. Seeing that Sri Ramakrishna had that immediate knowledge of which he himself had merely read, Sastriji thought, 'Ah! how wonderful! Where else shall I have such a God-man to teach me the hidden meanings of the Sastras?' Living with him like a disciple in true humility and listening attentively to his nectar-like words, detachment and eagerness to know Truth grew in Sastriji day by day.

There came a day when Narayan Sastri, meeting Sri Ramakrishna in a secluded place, took the opportunity and insisted tenaciously on being initiated in sannyasa. Sri Ramakrishna agreed on account of his eagerness and initiated him on an auspicious day. No sooner had he been initiated, than Sri Sastri expressed to the Master the desire of his heart to make strenuous effort to realize Brahman at Vasishtasrama till his aim was fulfilled. Dissolved in tears, he asked for Sri Ramakrishna's blessings, worshipped his feet and left Dakshineswar. Thereafter no certain news was received anymore of Narayan Sastri.

LIFE AND RELIGION

How far does religion influence our life? Often is this question asked. With the increase of secularistic ideas, religion is on the defensive. It is of course natural that an older idea is attacked by a newer one and it must support its standpoint. Secularistic people are mainly of two types: egotistical and socialistic. The first group is satisfied with following the individual likes and dislikes, personal enjoyment and happiness. They do not care what happens to the other man. They however are denounced by the religious as well as the socialistic people. The second group thinks more in terms of society. They are not particular about their individual quality of life. But they are interested in social growth. This growth however must be tangible and material only. It is this group that actually can question the usefulness of religious pursuits, though while attacking the utility of religion or its metaphysical basis, it makes common cause with the first group.

Generally, the egotistic, individualistic or selfish secular people are not taken into consideration. They are self-condemned. But the vast majority of the secularists belong to this class. They want to be free from all restraints, all considerations for higher ideals or other people. But society cannot progress with such people. So they are to be trained in the tenets of citizenship and a police force also will have to be kept ready for the incorrigibles. This type of selfish nature will be seen among the followers of religion too. And often people ask: What then is the use of religion? What effect has it on life of the common people? As for the secularistic selfish people this question is not asked. It is taken

as a normal thing that man will be selfish. The theories of socialistic outlook, as well as secularism and materialism are not asked to explain why people are so. For have they not accepted man as an animal or almost a material thing? So there ends their responsibility. If religion speaks of higher values and higher virtues, it must show these virtues manifest in the society. That is the line of argument. If you say non-violence is the ideal, you will be shown immediately half a dozen failures of this principle. If you point out that violence is also untenable as a guide, it becomes only a negative answer!

What then is the balanced view? The point is to be thrust home that the more plausible theory is the correct theory, at least for the present, as we accept in the case of scientific truths. Religion as a theory and a way of life will be true and covetable, if compared to other theories and other ways of life, it can solve the problems of life better, and can influence life more deeply.

Following this line of argument, we can easily see that wherever religion fails to influence life, it is not so much its fault as of the 'normal' nature of man as described by the secularists themselves. Looked at from this angle, religion is freed from many of their charges. But still some substance remains in the argument that religion is not so useful unless it brings about a change in the 'normal' life of man. Religious virtues must be manifested in their life. That is also the behest of all religious teachers. 'Religion is realization', said Swami Vivekananda. Unless religious virtues are practicalized in the life of the votaries, they remain mere theories, only for arguing and talking. As

theories they may stand on equal grounds with other theories, but to be a thing intimately related to life practice and experience are essential.

It is of course recognized that men with a religious outlook develop the qualities of honesty and dutifulness, qualities that are essential for running the administration as well as the day-to-day affairs. Interpersonal relations require much patience, consideration and love. These qualities are generally imbibed by such people. Wherever there is a lack of these qualities, we must admit that religion has not penetrated the surface life. There may be still some necessity for it, but the social benefit is little. And people who judge any institution or outlook only from the standpoint of utility will naturally be dissatisfied.

India is often said to be the land of religion. Then why is it that so much of corruption and other evils are seen in this country, is the question often asked. It is a pertinent question too. In the pristine days of India when religion was a reality in the life of the people, a very high standard of higher virtues was visible in the society. This becomes clear when we study accounts of Indian society left by Megasthenes and others. We cannot say we maintain the same level even now. After the Independence the sacrificing quality seems to be still more lessened. The horizontal aspect of religion is surely less, though we still have the vertical one in the lives of rare individuals. If religion is less in the society, it is because we lack the conviction of the ancients. This may be because of the ideological conflict, conflict between materialism and spirituality, and the modern emphasis on enjoyment at any cost here and now. It is materialism that fixes man's attention on this life and on pleasure and as a result boosts up self-aggrandizement and other social evils. The way out is not

to banish religion, or declaring oneself to be non-religious but to try to be genuinely religious. By too much criticism more people will be scared to be called religious, thereby the standard of selflessness will go still more down. Already the rituals of religious life are being given up, criticism will push them out completely. But then religion will lose its power of growth, if completely dissociated from the externals, like rice removed of the husk. For a full growth both are necessary. Let us not banish religion and along with that the basis of unselfishness and higher virtues through our unkind criticism.

Moreover, it is the so-called externals on which depend the peculiarities of a culture. It is often said that a new world order is coming. As a result of the growth of communication and mutual contact between nations, habits, dresses etc. will be standardized and local peculiarities will be obliterated. What then will remain of the culture of a particular country? No nation we think will give way easily. In India we are not very particular about retaining our national characteristics but dresses etc. of other newly freed nations of Burma, Ghana and the like, will show how sensitive they are. Externals are the avenues through which culture expresses itself. Standardization is a great problem that the Unesco is facing and hence sufficient safeguard has been provided for the preservation of the national culture. Sri Baldoon Dhingra has recorded this problem in his *diary* in the *Aryan Path* (Oct. 1959). Mr. Dhingra questions Mr. Richard Cowell:

Is there a trend towards uniformity in cultural development today?

R.C.: What I have so briefly and inadequately said about the power of tradition shows, I think, that there have always been strong forces making for uniformity within settled communities. They are still there

and still active. The fear now is, of course, that these local, national and regional patterns may be ironed out into something much more uniform. It is fear which exists not only on the international level but on the national level also. In the relatively tiny British Isles there has been, over the past centuries, a very considerable variety in cultural life, which has been reflected in speech, dress, food and often in personal relations. Now we have a national radio and television, a national daily, periodical and magazine press, nationally provided educational and social-welfare services—all of which seem to threaten this variety.

Other forces at work on the national and international fronts also seem to threaten this variety. Political ideologies even when directed by worthy people to worthy ends, which have the effect of favouring the great mass of the people, can be culturally dangerous in this sense because the mass is always liable to be mainly composed of mediocrities. Perhaps it is the latent fear of just such a threatened cultural levelling-down process that has inspired a greater aversion to Socialism and particularly to Marxian Communism (and inspired an aversion to democracy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) than the distrust all these great movements aroused on purely political and economic grounds.

B.D. : Will the new internationalism of the United Nations lead to cultural uniformity?

R.C. : Fears of a different order arise from the growing influence of the United Nations and of its Specialized Agencies, particularly Unesco. Will they not, it is asked, become a menace to culture because they seek to diminish differences between the various nations of the earth? It was obviously with this fear in mind that those who wrote the Constitution of Unesco called special attention to the need to preserve what they happily called 'the fruitful diversity of cultures' in the Member States of the Organization.

Where that diversity is indeed fruitful, we should all agree that it should be preserved. But we all know also that there have been cultural practices, some hallowed by long observance from primitive times, that none of us would wish to preserve; human sacrifices and ritual murders, for example. The United Nations, by developing something in the nature of a collective conscience of mankind, may, and indeed must, exert some influence in the direction of cultural uniformity. As long as it involves a genuine levelling up of cultural life, and not a levelling down as Socialism and Marxian Communism inevitably tend to do (whatever their merits on economic grounds are supposed to be), there should be no cause for alarm.

With our too much anxiety for the results we forget that the means are also equally important. To get the kernel of the fruit the skin is also necessary. So devotion to externals, to dresses, habits, language and rituals, is essential. It takes generations for an idea to take root in a society and often it is mixed up with much of non-essentials. In common man you cannot expect an idea materialized in all its pristine glory. In the so called enlightened, to whom everything has been relativized, you cannot often get an idea suffusing his life, for he loses the capacity of taking anything as an article of faith.

Improvement of habits, manners and customs, if improvement at all you call it, must be done not by lowering the standard but by pointing out the higher ideal, the better method, and stressing on the essential. Then the transition will be less painful and more smooth. And in the process the fundamental, useful moorings will not be lost. It is because of this Swami Vivekananda repeatedly warned that while educating the backward the religious outlook should not be disturbed, for nothing

constructive can be implanted in the society in one generation. He said :

We have to give them secular education. We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion.

The fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the condition of the masses. 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, working energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very

backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it.

When we plead for retaining or going slow in changing the age-old customs and habits, we do not say that these externals are inviolables. They can be changed and they are changed. That was how the new Smritis giving new rules of conduct were promulgated. In this age of easy communication and huddling of men in industrial areas, much of the old habits will have to be changed. But let us not lose the higher moorings imbedded in them but adjust them to the new surroundings, by new interpretations and by evolving new habits. Otherwise the vacuum will be filled up by things that degrade men and society.

AT THE HOLY FEET OF M.

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI DHARMESHANANDA

Monday, September 14, 1931.

Place — 50 Amherst Street, on the roof of the four-storied school building.

I brought a portrait of the Master from Chinta Haran Maharaj of Advaita Ashrama, and visited M. in the evening.

He was seated on a chair facing north. He welcomed me and asked me to sit beside him. I was going to keep the portrait on the bench when M. expressed a desire to have a look at it.

M. : Let me see it; is it the Master's photograph or a printed picture?

He took it up and showed it to every one present there and told them that it was very good. 'They have also sent me one from Advaita Ashrama', said he. I said it was a photograph.

A visitor : Was this taken from an original photograph?

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Myself : Yes, Pramada Das Mitra of Banaras (with whom Swamiji had a running correspondence) had an original photograph from which copies have been made.

Q. : Was this portrait taken from life?

I replied in the affirmative and told him that the portrait of the Master which was now worshipped at Udbodhan in the Holy Mother's room was also original, but was now gradually fading. The photo was good but the printed copy was somewhat rough and lacked that softness which was found in the Master's appearance.

It was evening. Purnendu Babu lighted the lamp and burnt incense as usual. The room was filled with its sweet fragrance.

M. : Look at that picture of Lord Viswanath in deep meditation. Below it stands the picture of the bird hatching eggs with open eyes and with that inward look which the Master mentioned.

M. repeated the name of the Lord 'Hari' while offering salutation to all the pictures that were hanging on the wall. He beat the musical drum twice or thrice and then saluted the Tulsi plants from a distance. After making my obeisance I got one asana to sit down upon but M. asked some one present there to bring a better one for me. He inspected it before he gave it to me and said with affection: 'The ground is cold, you can sit here on the bench'.

I told him that the ground was dry. M. agreed and told me that the place was secluded and beautiful. I meditated for some time and then came and sat by him.

Looking to a householder devotee M. said: 'Worldly life is full of troubles and responsibilities. The daughter is married and lives with her husband's people but even then you are not free from anxiety about her. So it is very difficult to become like King Janaka who had passed before through intense spiritual discipline in deep solitude. And even after you gain supreme wisdom it is difficult to retain it in worldly life. Once in the court of King Janaka came one female hermit. The king did not look at her face but hung down his head. She said: 'Have you still got that idea of distinction between man and woman?' You see, it was for this reason that the Master wanted us to keep aloof from money and women in the course of our spiritual practices. A spiritual aspirant should live far away from worldly life; though of course, after Self-realisation, the sense of distinction fades away and he sees God in every created being. But this comes only after complete realisation. This worry on your daughter's account is mentioned in the *Bhagavata*. Prahlad said to his school mates: 'Do not marry, my friends. You have to worry about your daughter even when she goes to her father-in-law's place.'

A gentleman was amazed to hear this and said: 'So much wisdom even at that early age!' To this M. replied: 'Why not? He was not just an ordinary boy but had the supreme wisdom ingrained in him.'

A young boy (who had brought the asana for me) took the dust of M's feet, and then bent down to show the same respect to me.

I felt somewhat embarrassed and prevented him from doing it. But M. said: 'Why do you stop him? He will be blessed if he does it. But if you say that God resides in every heart, even then I will tell you that He manifests Himself more in the heart of a sadhu. Nobody goes on digging the earth for water when it is available nearby. A sadhu has a twofold duty to perform. Firstly, he will try to get salvation for himself and then encourage others in their spiritual practices. The Master used to say, 'In winter one collects dry wood and others burn them in street corners to warm themselves.' Similarly the sadhu realises God and other people get the benefit of his realisation. Do you know how ennobling the company of sadhus is? Worldly life is itself a malady for which the remedy is the company of sadhus. You are going for instance, with your friends to sympathise with a bereaved family but while on the road you are in a perfectly hilarious mood; when you go there and see others weeping, you also start shedding tears. It is just like that.

Well, Sukhlal Babu! you have spent a good lot of time in the company of sadhus today and now I suppose you can go. There is a lantern-show on the life of Sri Chaitanya, to be given by a devout speaker at Bellaghata today and tomorrow upto 11 p.m. You can go and see it. These things will give you a good inspiration.

In the meantime attorney Biren Babu (son-in-law of Paltu Kar) came with a certain gentleman. In introducing the gentleman to M. Biren Babu said that he was a devout Brahmin who worked in his office and had come to see him. M. received him with folded hands and stopped him when he was going to take the dust of his feet.

M. (to Himangshu): How often have you seen the exhibition?

Himangshu replied he would go very soon.

M.: Well, why not go today with Biren Babu?

Himangshu: But is he going?

M.: Of course he will go.

Then to the other gentleman he said: 'You also go there; it is good you are here. You

will get inspired if you see exhibitions of the lives of Sri Gauranga, Prahlada and Sri Krishna. Mukunda Babu, what brings you here so unexpectedly?'

Mukunda Babu said that he had come for two days on business connected with the school.

M.: Have you fixed up any programme as to the places you are going to visit?

Mukunda Babu said that he would go to the Math and also to the Holy Mother's residence at Baghbazar.

M.: I will request you to visit another place also. There is a theistic exhibition at Baghbazar. They are spending 30 to 40 thousand rupees over it. They have taken a good deal of trouble to collect all the materials; we have only to go and see it at the expense of only half an anna tram-fare towards the mid-day! Isn't it a great advantage?

Mukunda Babu: Yes, I saw it in the papers and read about a protest meeting also.

M.: But what is the use of protesting? Do men live by bread alone? We have got three bodies in us—the gross, the fine, and the causal. You are required to cater for all of them. You require food for your soul also and this exhibition provides it. Acharya Shankara explained what is meant by food by saying that it includes whatever we take in through our senses. So this is also a kind of food. Anyway the protest meeting will serve the purpose of effecting economy because they will be careful in the matter of expenses. I am told they are somewhat fanatical in regard to religion but I hope they will correct themselves. They are in Baghbazar which is the Master's place. Bigotry and fanaticism will soon be things of the past. You can already sense it.

Biren Babu: Many of them now-a-days respect the Master. Jagabandhu Babu, the big donor of the exhibition, a staunch Vaishnava, when visiting Dakshineswar never entered the temple of Kali. But now-a-days many of them are learning to respect the Master. I told them that the hard labour I have done is only because of the Master's grace. Am I not the grandson of the Master? You

must know that His grandson has done it (being the son-in-law of Paltu Kar, a devotee of the Master).

M.: Many of them (Vaishnavas) have renounced the world. And of course the Master will see that their mistakes are corrected. He comes only to help the sadhus. 'I come down to this world, whenever necessary to protect the sadhus.' (Gita) It is only through the sadhus that He is preserving the true religion and do you think He will not look after them? (Looking to Dhiren he said:) Listen, the Master used to say that hearing is better than reading and seeing is better than hearing.

I was told to go with Biren Babu in his car. He dropped a few of us at Udbodhan where he made his obeisance before the picture of the Holy Mother and of Sarat Maharaj and departed.

Tuesday, Sept. 22, 1931.

I was very eager to see M. to-day and so at about 7-30 a.m. I went to see him. I first went to Thakurbari and listened to Ramanama Kirtan. It was the 11th day of the moon and on this day the devotees sing Ramanama as in the Belur Math. After sometime I came to know from Dhiren that M. had gone to 50 Amherst Street and so I proceeded there. Dhiren accompanied me. It was at my suggestion that he had started going to M. about a year previous to this. He visits him daily and is now very happy. M. helps him like a father and gives him inspiration and advice.

At about 8-30 a.m. I reached there and found M. seated on a chair facing east on the balcony of the four-storied building. In front of him were seated Sukhlal Babu, Mr Guha, Purnendu and some devotees. Dhiren was also there.

M. said to Dhiren: Where are you coming from now? Have you been to that other place?

Dhiren replied that he had just been at the Thakurbari listening to Ramanama Kirtan.

M.: You read the *Kathamrita* (Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) before me yesterday.

Looking at another devotee he said : ' Dhiren reads it very well.' Then he asked Dhiren to read. Dhiren started reading from the third part of *Kathamrita*. The portion dealt with Narendra Nath's straitened circumstances and the poverty of his people. Dhiren read : ' The Master (who was with Naren and other devotees) said : One has to realise God first and then to realise His manifestation in everything. One has to be firmly fixed in absolute monism and then live in the region of qualified monism.' That is what Sri Ramakrishna used to do.

I wanted to know whether the phenomenal could be accepted after the realisation of the Absolute.

M. said : Whatever the Guru has told us is correct and we have to accept it as such. Guru is God Himself in another form ; and He Himself descends in human form to teach this truth. He becomes Guru in order to provide salvation for mankind. The Master used to tell us to take the whole of the wood-apple (bel), but the Guru will advise you whether you should first seek for the kernel or otherwise. The wood-apple contains the crust, the kernel and the seeds which are here taken to represent the world, the Brahman and the created beings. Do you think realisation can come only through hearing ? You have by sadhana (practice) to see God to attain that blissful state and the proof of that is provided by the fact that you are still not free from doubts about so many things. But hearing is better than reading and seeing is better than hearing. If you see God, then only you are free from all doubts.

Dhiren continued to read : ' There are three kinds of devotees. The lowest in the scale is the one who says pointing to the sky that God lives there. The next higher type says that God resides in every heart. But the best devotee is one who says that God has manifested Himself in so many diverse forms and whatever we see around us is God in one form or another.'

M. said : Yes, we should have this firm

faith that He is in everybody, and that residing in every heart He directs everything. This is how the second type of devotee feels. And the devotee on the lowest scale thinks that He is beyond his reach and shows Him as living somewhere beyond the skies. But he is the real devotee who says that God has become everything and there is nothing without Him.

Dhiren continued reading : ' But doubts vanish when we realise God. And when we realise Him, Karma ceases.'

M. : There, you see, you are told how to test the genuineness of a person's claim to have realised God. Freedom from Karma is the one real test of God realisation.

Dhiren went on reading : ' The Master says : " One day while I was worshipping Shiva and putting Vajra (the earthen ball on top) on His head I was shown that this universe is Shiva Himself. And then I stopped worshipping clay images of Shiva. I was plucking flowers one day and woke up to the realisation that all the flower plants are nothing but bouquets of flowers." '

Now Dhiren wanted to know what ' Vajra ' was.

M. said : It is an emblem of Shiva ; Vajra is nothing but a ball of mud placed on the ' lingam ' during worship. To ardent devotees He appears in the form of this cosmos. And it is further mentioned that God is like the sea, on the waves of which (this is by Karma) all created beings are rising and falling, happiness and misery appearing alternately. All this is very difficult to comprehend. The Master Himself one day began to analyse the mechanism of the world and suddenly said : ' There, I have got into a labyrinth ; Oh Mother ! I shall never resort to arguments.' It is therefore, rightly said that Guru (the Preceptor) is the only hope for us. One day somebody came to the Master just at noon and with folded hands asked, ' What is the way to salvation ? ' The Master said, ' Faith in the words of the Guru is the only path to realisation.'

(To be continued.)

THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

P. SANKARANARAYANAN

The Ramakrishna Movement is an aspect of renascent Hinduism in the 20th century. It emphasises the integral character of Hinduism without deviating from any of its fundamental doctrines or accepting some features of it only and rejecting the others as the Arya Samaj Movement, for example, did. It is not eclectic in any sense of the term trying to accommodate all doctrines by a sort of an artificial combination. It is well to remember that Sri Ramakrishna and his illustrious disciple, Swami Vivekananda never intended to propagate a new religion or a new cult. They re-established the old Hindu faith in its fullness and rich variety both in the understanding of their disciples and in the allegiance of their hearts.

At the time when Sri Ramakrishna appeared, the religion of the Hindus was subjected to schisms within and to attacks from without. The Arya Samajist cry of ' Back to the Vedas ' was raised to save the religion from the hostility of the Mussalmans who waged war against the idols worshipped by its votaries. The Brahmo Samaj made compromises with Christianity in its zeal to make its religion look respectable to the foreigners. The educated youth of the day was dazzled by Western civilization and culture and was getting into an attitude of derision for everything Indian.

It was in this predicament that Sri Ramakrishna came to vindicate the integral unity and the comprehensiveness of the Hindu religion. Absolutely unlettered as he was, his was not a theologian's approach to religion. In the transition that he went through from an ultra-orthodox caste-bound Pujari to a Prophet transcending caste by his spiritual eminence (and by that only), the truth of the Vedic dictum that Reality is One, but sages speak of It variously, was brought home with the conviction that was born of its experience. Starting from the dualistic predicament of the

devotee and the Deity in his worship of the Divine Mother, he ended with the realisation of the Supreme Absolute in his periods of nirvikalpaka samadhi. In between, the way was paved with the processes of karma, bhakti and jnana each strengthening and being sustained by the rest. He saw in his experience that the several paths to Perfection detailed in the scriptures of Hindu religion were all oriented to an identical goal. His realisation of the confluence of religions and of religious paths preceded his declaration of it to his disciples and so, his utterance bore the certificate of certainty. At a time when the followers of each particular creed and sect of the Hindu religion claimed absolute superiority to their doctrines over those of the rest, when new movements were ' balkanising ' it, accepting some of its tenets and rejecting others, some of them making unnatural affiliations with other faiths and when alien religions decried the Hindu faith, alike in its tenets and in its practices, as barbarous and outlandish, it is remarkable that Sri Ramakrishna taught that there are many paths to the same goal, that Religion is one though religions may vary. If unity in variety is the plan of the physical universe, why should it be denied in the realm of the Spirit which is the field for the adventure of religion ? As Swami Vivekananda put it :

The truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways. The same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints and yet be the same thing.

That all these hundred thousand ways of expression and all the hundred different standpoints are not antagonistic to one another will be realised if one fixes his eye on the Truth and not on the forms of expression or the standpoints. That is the meaning of the dictum : Ekam Sat Viprah bahudha vadanti. The Vedic seers, the Upanishadic sages, the saints and prophets of diverse religions — all

bore witness, each in his particular manner, to the same eternal Truth, and conveyed it in diverse ways suited to the climate of their times and the temper of their people. The earnest votaries of the different religions are pilgrims to the Eternal. Their equipage may differ. They may tread different paths. They may speak different scriptures and they may be led by different Prophets. But, seeing that when once they reach the hill-top, the voice of the Preacher and the noise of the Scripture are hushed in the silence of mystic communion, there is no need, nor is it wise, to wrangle all along the route and waste our spiritual powers in wearisome and futile disputation. This is the great lesson that Sri Ramakrishna vouchsafed to the world, a lesson which, it is well to repeat, was not by any means an academic dogma, but was the mature result of the realisation in his own experience of the unity of all religions. His message had a two-fold significance. First, it reconciled the various sects within the Hindu religion itself showing that they are facets of the same integral whole. Second, it affirmed the common direction of all religions to the one supreme goal.

Swami Vivekananda speaks of Sri Ramakrishna's message as one of 'universal religion'. This universal religion does not mean one religion only for the whole world. Such a one religion is not necessary even if it were possible and it is not possible even if it were necessary. It means, on the other hand, the recognition of the fact, the need and the utility of a variety of religions in the spiritual economy, that the symbols of religion may vary, but that their significance is the same. This truth born of the realisation of Sri Ramakrishna is fundamental to the Ramakrishna Movement. It affirms the principle of co-existence among religions and tells a Hindu to be a true Hindu, a Christian to be a true Christian and a Mussalman to be a true Mussalman.

A consequence of this teaching is that it discountenances conversion from one religion into another. For, conversion will be both unnecessary and futile if all religions are paths to the same goal. No religion is atheistic. All religions affirm the fact of God and the duty

of man to strive for salvation by divinising himself. The means recommended may vary. But every religion, *qua* religion, is and must be acceptable to God. Then, it is a sacrilege to renounce one religion for another. The God of one religion is not different from the God of another religion. That the means recommended by each religion for its followers, if earnestly pursued, help to reach the Supreme has been vindicated by the sages and saints of that religion. And so, if every kind of means does lead to the same goal, there is no meaning in speaking of one type of means as better or truer than another. And, let it be marked, the mystics of every religion have had the same experience, and speak, if they speak at all, in the same language and to the same purpose. Thus, co-existence of all religions and non-interference in the faith and practices of alien religions are two corollaries from the message of Sri Ramakrishna which the movement has pledged itself to in all its activities.

The Ramakrishna Movement also believes that a universal religion bearing the connotation explained above can be significant only on the basis of a Vedantic philosophy which makes a distinction between the transcendental and the empirical, the Paramarthika and the Vyavaharika. Religion is the vehicle which carries the finite man in his journey to the Infinite. The finite man and his journey as also the vehicle are parts of the empirical world of space, time and causality, of distinctions and differences while the Infinite is beyond these distinctions and is unaffected by them. The Infinite has no name or form. What has no name and no form can be conceived of and worshipped by any name and in any form. It is only he who has risen to the supreme height of Advaitic anubhava that can see the vyavaharic religions as neither final nor exclusive. This is the reason why the Ramakrishna Movement carries the message of Vedanta to all thinking minds. It is only from that standpoint that the co-existence of religions can be appreciated. If the monks of the Ramakrishna Order preach the gospel of Vedanta in other countries and to other people,

it is not to convert other religionists to Hinduism, but to plead for harmony among religions and to stabilise the votary of each faith in the religion in which he is born. The monks have established centres of the Mission in several parts of the world with the sole purpose of propagating this message of Vedanta.

The present writer is aware that this approach to the subject of religion is absolutely at variance with that of the proselytising and converting religions like Islam and Christianity. He knows that every devout Christian feels it his obligation to declare — for he honestly believes it — that Christ is the only true incarnation of God, that His Gospel is the last and the only Truth, and that he must fulfil the charge that Christ laid on him to carry it to non-Christians and bring them into the Christian fold. This is so completely opposed to the main plank of the Ramakrishna Movement and so uncompromising in the compulsion of its faith, that there seems to be nothing else to do except to say 'let us agree to differ'. At the same time, it is necessary to observe that the follower of Sri Ramakrishna does not reject Christ and His Gospel. But he does not agree that He is the only incarnation of God and that His Gospel, as interpreted by the Christian missionary, is the only and final truth. He also begs leave to add that his accepting Christ as a luminary of the first magnitude in the firmament of religion does not lay on him the obligation to accept the Church and all that it means as a necessary implication of the personality of the Lord Jesus, as the vehicle of His message and as the sole agency which can guarantee his salvation.

And yet, may not one plead that it is high time that the men of the world cried halt to religious hostilities and learnt to recognise differences, understand them and respect them adopting an attitude of 'live and let live'? We are suffering actually from racial, national and ideological rivalries which only serve to rouse men's passions and to incite them to adharmic ways of life. They do not at all

make for Christian feelings 291
rity, they negate every possibility among men which 'Islam' could and should be a need, more urgent now than peace to combat the forces of atheism and them. For this purpose, people of all should combine in a united endeavour out wasting their energies in ridicule and rmination which, while wastefully sterile religious merit, is perniciously fertile of weeds of irreligion. Duty and prudence dictate that all religious minded people should close up their ranks internally and align themselves with men of other faiths on the basis of ideas common to all religions to resist the common foe. The great religions of the world are not mushroom growths of yesterday or today. They all have a great past. Each one of them has been vindicated in the lives of its votaries whom it has disciplined to intense moral and spiritual effort. Every one of them has brought strength, solace and succour to many an anguished heart, counselled every mind in its confusions and has guaranteed salvation to the earnest aspirant. Every religion has been vouched by its numerous saints, mystics who have lived *en rapport* with God. Judged by this pragmatic test, no great religion has failed its people who have striven to live by it sincerely and devoutly. That they all lead to the same Goal is what every pious Hindu reminds himself of when he says in his prayer three times a day :

Even as the waters that drop from the sky and flow through different beds ultimately reach the sea, so too do obeisances made to all deities reach the Supreme Godhead.

That is what Sri Krishna declared in the context of the Gita :

Whoever worships Me in any form, I make him steadfast in his devotion.

If Arjuna is the man of all times and lands, Sri Krishna is the God of all religions. The God of the Gita is not different in essence from the God of the Bible or of the Holy Quoran. The realisation of this truth is the bedrock of the Ramakrishna Movement.

THE IDEALS OF RELIGION

A. J. SRIVASTAVA

On 'What is religion?' is often attempted by philosophers from times immemorial. The man on the street is not a logician or philosopher enough to essay an answer to this question, nor like Richard Coeur de Lion can he settle it by taking up his sword. The days of the Crusades are no more, and the days of religious controversies are over, but a man must live like man, if he is to live

the toleration preached by all religions, and practised only by a few protagonists of each, teaches us to treat religions like language, and to make ourselves understood we must speak to each person in his own language. The modern analytical mind must be able to see the unity which pervades all religions.

To the Hindu sages of yore religion was realisation — an experience and an inspiration of morality. It could not be acquired through books, but through life. No true Hindu could afford to baulk at another and he set about to solve the problem of God, of Soul, of Creation and its purpose. To him it was 'a constitutional necessity of the human mind'. The belief which emerges from these sages embraces the highest ideals of metaphysics, of moral conduct, of ritualism, of mythology.

In his attempt to answer the question Swami Vivekananda confined himself to setting before the people the tenets of the Vedantic Faith. Speaking to an American audience, he almost bewildered his hearers when he said that Hinduism was a 'Religion of which Buddhism is but a rebel child, and Christianity, with all its idealisms, a far-fetched imitation.' His Hinduism embraced all religions; it tolerated all religions. Theologians who believed with Kipling that

'Oh, East is East, and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet.'

were compelled, as it were, to see the likeness between Christianity and Hinduism. Indeed, the similarity is so close that some went to the extent of seeing Krishna in the guise of Jesus. No doubt, there are a few equally vital differences and Dr S. Radhakrishnan cautions us against treading such delicate ground; for whilst a comparative study of religions may be interesting, 'To compare the sacred books of the East with the holy scriptures of the West is to ignore that feeling of warmth and reverence which each individual has for his own religion.'

The development of the idea of God in Hinduism is supported by Lucian's remark: 'What are men? Mortal Gods. What are Gods? Immortal men.' The same idea is to be found in the Vedas, and Yama's existence lends support to this view. Our philosopher Radhakrishnan says: 'There is a cordial harmony between God and man in Indian thought, while the opposition between the two is more marked in the West.' And he has placed before us an ideal of human conduct which is indeed worthy of emulation, when he says that 'To become like Gods is the goal of our endeavour.' In the Nirvana Shatka I, the great Shankara sets forth the concept of God in his own inimitable way when he says:

'I am neither the mind, nor the body, nor am I the organs; I am "Sat-chit-ananda" (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss absolute); I am He, I am He!'

'All religions teach the eternity of the soul and also that its lustre has been dimmed; and that its primitive purity is to be regained by the knowledge of God. To realise this God is the end of all religions.'

A school of Hindu thought preached that 'Man is a degradation of God'. The Hebrew scriptures say 'Adam fell'. But to the Vedantist 'Every man is a divinity in disguise, a God playing the fool'. Buddha, however, could not accept this position and he preached his gospel of Karma. Says the sage:

'I do not care to know your various theories about God. And what is the use of discussing all your subtle doctrines about the soul? Do good and be good. And this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is.'

George Bernard Shaw only echoed the Vedantist's view when he said: 'Life will always be beautiful to us; death will always be beautiful to us.' To Shaw, Life and Death were but the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin. The Bhagavad Gita preaches the doctrine of the eternal continuity and unity of life, of rebirth and transmigration of souls. The Holy Bible reiterates the same thought when it says that the spirit never dies and Jesus believed in 'past lives' for didn't he say 'Before Abraham was, I am' and yet in another place 'This is Elias, who is said to have come.'? Romain Rolland, inspired by the Vedantist ideology, gets his hero in 'Jean Christophe' to exclaim, in a moment of ecstasy:

'I have struggled, I have suffered, I have erred, I have created. Let me draw breath in thy father's arms. Some day I shall be born again for a new fight . . . Hosanna to life! Hosanna to death!'

For centuries sages have toiled to stress the place of Service to Humanity in daily life. In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna advises Arjuna that 'True piety is that which most removes earth-aches and ills'. This doctrine assumed a new meaning for our leaders in the present century when Bhagavan Ramakrishna averred: 'Work is the first chapter of human life. God is the conclusion.' The same message was carried across the seas by his noble disciple, Vivekananda and he said: 'We are the servants of that God, who, by the ignorant is called Man.' Swami Rama Tirtha preached the same ideal when he said: 'Better than any theology is Man. Better than any metaphysical idea of God is woman.' In another place he said: 'The hands that help are better far than the lips that pray.' Mahatma Gandhi lived this ideal and died for it, leaving behind not mere words of advice, but the solid foundations of our body politic on which we can build the great edifice of Free India, only if we will.

The ideal of renunciation has been preached by all prophets — renunciation, not asceticism, is one of the prerequisites of a truly religious man. The Chandogya Upanishad urges:

'The attainment of That (Brahman) comes through discrimination, control of passions, persistence, sacrificial work, purity, strength, and suppression of excessive joy.'

Janaka's is a name familiar to every Hindu, and it signifies a life of perfect renunciation amidst worldly cares. In a word, the Bhagavad Gita advises one to 'Give up', whereas every page of that sacred book advocates a life of intense activity, but amidst eternal calm. Rama Tirtha advised all householders to 'Enjoy all; possess nothing. Be yourself.' To Sannyasins he said: 'Be the witness of earthly joys and sorrows, sharing them not.' Vivekananda preached the highest philosophy when he said: 'You have the power to give. Give, and there it ends.'

Fraternity is acclaimed to be the bond of all the true religions. In the eyes of Islam all its followers are equals. 'That', says Vivekananda, 'is the peculiar excellence of Mahomedanism'. To Vivekananda, 'It matters not whether one is a Christian, or a Jew, or a Hindu. Are you unselfish? That is the question.' All religions are founded on the belief of God being the Creator, and hence the source of all beings. The brotherhood of man follows as a natural corollary of the fatherhood of God. This doctrine gives to all men an equal status, at least in the eyes of God. The Bhagavad Gita enjoins us to

'Look on all beings, friends, lovers, foes, aliens, strangers, as one and the same, with impartiality and with love.'

The scriptures advise:

'Judge not; for who are you to judge?'

The Manu Smriti avers:

'He who befriendeth all creatures, his name is Brahman.'

The Holy Quran says:

'Let not one people or nation scoff or laugh at another people or nation. . . . Assist any person oppressed, whether he be Muslim or non-Muslim.'

Again, on his last pilgrimage the Prophet said to his followers :

'Remember, you are all brothers. All men are equal in the eyes of God. . . . All men are sons of Adam.'

No intolerance, no persecution is ever sanctioned by any of the scriptures, yet untold persecution has been perpetrated in the name of religion. The Hindu is wont to regard every living creature down to the humblest insect as his brother and according to one of our philosophers, 'Perhaps this universal concept has diluted the spirit of brotherhood infinitely' but for this one may blame individuals, not the Hindu 'Weltanschauung'. For the Muslim, brotherhood is very intense and effective in the practical sense, but only within the Islamic fold and as Dr M. H. Syed avers : 'Anyone outside Islam, be he the most saintly and most highly evolved soul, is a Kafir.' The modern man shudders to think of the carnage of Medieval times and the misery which followed in the wake of the Crusades and well might he ask with Bernard Shaw : 'What is the use of being born if we have to decay into unnatural, heartless, loveless, joyless monsters ?'

The Hindu ideal of moral conduct is broad-based and enjoins us not to look back on the past but to 'Think of what you are going to do. Repentance is quite useless. Repentance means going back. And in good, as in evil, we must always go forward.' (Romain Rolland). The language here may be somewhat unconventional and may sound un-Christian, but to the Vedantist, sin is but an error, an aberration from the path of Truth, which can be rectified by the will never to leave that path again. The same thought is echoed by Sir Arthur Harrington who said that 'Our greatness lies not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.'

The concept of sin differs very widely in every religion. To the Vedantist there is nothing like sin—good and evil are but aspects of the same thing, may be, there is a certain difference of degree : a lie may be just 'less truth', or a moral lapse may be

just a 'weakness of the flesh'. We are often told that 'We are punished by our sins, not for them'. Weakness is the cause of all suffering, of all errors. The time has almost come when psychiatrists are inclined to say that sin is a deadly disease and that strength is the world's panacea. We are weak because we are ignorant. Says Swami Rama Tirtha : 'We commit sins only in the heart. Resist not evil, but overcome it by love.'

It is difficult to over-estimate the amount of evil which has accrued from a confusion of Morality with Religion. Abraham is commanded by God to sacrifice his son, and Saul is called upon to massacre his captives in cold blood. This lack of spiritual vigour cut Buddha to the quick, and the Compassionate One preached his gospel of Ahimsa. 'The great Buddha' says Radhakrishnan, 'typifies for all time the soul of the East with its intense repose, dreamy gentleness, tender calm and deep love'. Shaw, however, decried our White Tower morality, which for many only 'Consists in suspecting other people of not being legally married'.

Man is expected to earn money and thus support his dependents ; but he must not gamble ; he must not tell lies ; he must not keep wicked company ; and he must not cause trouble to others. All the scriptures enjoin us to lead a pure life. The Chandogya Upanishad enunciates that meditation, charity, right dealing, ahimsa and truthfulness constitute right conduct, as also humility and desirelessness. To Sister Nivedita 'All religions, Indian and others have called a halt in the quest for pleasure. All have sought to turn life into a battlefield rather than a ball-room' whereas Radhakrishnan believes that 'He who chooses the pleasant, misses the end (good)'. The watchword of the Christian prayer is 'Thy will be done upon earth, as it is Heaven !' The attempt is to kill the Ego so that the Self may reign. The central idea of Christian thought is 'Watch and pray, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'. This means that man is to keep himself in constant readiness to receive God : he is to purify his mind and be ever ready. Man is advised to 'Pray to

God that He may be with you'. Sakya Muni, like Jesus, 'Came to fulfill and not to destroy' and taught his followers to 'Do good and be good'. The Vedantist's ideal of 'Yoga' (Union) is all-comprehensive, for, to the worker it signified union between man and the rest of humanity ; for the mystic, between his lower and higher self ; for the 'Bhakta', between himself and the God of love ; and to the 'Jnani', the union of all existence. It is the eternal relation between the eternal soul and the eternal God.

Faith and the need for faith, pervades all religions. In this welter of confusion, amidst this sound and fury of mortal existence, with the danger of death always looming large before our eyes, we are kept up only by a faith in God. The faith of our sages teaches us to have faith in the potency of suffering.

'The Rishis of ancient India knew no fear and feared no death. Buddha walked out of his palace to suffer and recreate. Christ is the man of sorrows. None who has not suffered to the utmost gets to the foundations of reality.'

'Faith', says the scientist Sir Humphrey Davy, 'is true knowledge'. The faith, however, that stands on authority is no faith ; and faith induced by miracles is not faith, but persuasion. Faith like love, is blind, but the one can lead the other. To Sri Ramakrishna reason was weak, but faith, omnipotent. Christ healed the leper and said, 'Thy faith hath made thee whole'.

'The modern psychologist knows only too well the tremendous potentialities of faith. The man of religion knows that faith nursed by hope leads to Life Supreme. Seeing the record of mankind one would feel that it is not the 'age of reason', but the 'sage of faith' who carries the day and instead of asking (when one is about to die) 'Is life really its own reward?' a faithful man of religion would say with W. W. Landor 'I am ready to depart' and thus cross over to the Unknown, over the Valley of Death—Death, that Mona Lisa which still smiles its bewitching smile, leaving man in doubt whether even yet its secret has been completely fathomed.

WHAT IS BEAUTY ?

(From the *Golden Scripts*, 2nd ed., Chapt. 96. Soulcraft Chapels, Noblesville, Ind., 1951 ; Jesus speaking thro Medium Wm. Dudley Pelly.)

K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

1. Hear my words concerning Beauty.
2. When ye do possess a thing of beauty, it is strangely aligned with your spiritual natures, but beauty I tell you is not wholly spiritual.
3. Beauty is an esoteric (inner) valuation.
4. Things of beauty are things of perception.
5. Beauty is a perpetual valuation, I say, in that it requireth knowledge for its counterpart.
6. Beauty is product of knowledge, wedded to wisdom, thru human perception.
7. Wisdom is the wholesome recognition of values that are essence.
8. The making of the thing is art.
9. The transition of the symbol is the concretion of art.
10. This thing ye do : ye but pattern a symbol that rendereth concrete a form of sublimated wisdom that was first perception but which hath passed into realms of sublime intuition.

19. Beauty is the essence of perception flowering into exaltation.
22. A thing of beauty is a lasting joy ... because it performeth a symbolization that is for ever recurrent in the soul of the beholder.
23. Beauty is the transcendent qualification for human endeavoring : it is a Divine Ideal in process of revelation thru perception ; but beauty is more.
24. Beauty is the Divine Ideal in process of revelation through *spiritual perception*.
25. Or put it this way : Beauty is the sense of attraction which your spiritual natures have for Divine revelation on whatever plane of perception ye do elect to make contact.
26. The beauty of the African negress seemeth real to her lover, verily as beautiful as the sister of white flesh to him whose skin is fair.
29. Beauty, ye do say, must have appreciation ... I say beauty hath a quality within itself for attracting, appealing to, or drawing out, something within each spirit that is part of the Divine Harmony making for order in the universe.
30. Beauty is everyman's concept of Idealism based on the God Essence whereof he is created.
31. Beauty is born of consciousness, therefore it cannot be objective.
32. Whatever is born of consciousness is spiritual in value.
33. But I tell you with vehemence, whatever is beautiful is in degree harmonious.
34. Beauty is the transcendent qualification in human endeavor that maketh consciousness to realize what the eternal meaneth in manifestation.
35. Beauty, I tell you, is always action in that it is movement toward an appreciation of a logos.
40. Beauty is your coadjutor with Nature ; it assisteth you to perform your own spiritual functions.
41. Man is the instrument through which beauty is interpreted.
43. Beauty is your concept of the Divine Ideal in all which ye perceive ideal in the sense of crystallized intent.
44. Beauty is God expressing Himself in matter, *by* and *to* your spiritual consciousness.
59. Beauty is the fact of being able to perceive the cosmic intent behind the idea !
61. But beauty interpreteth for each soul his own gradations into the divine.

SURRENDER

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Lying in bed late at night O all-seeing God, I pray
That at dawn opening my eyes Thee I may remember ;
Sitting or moving about in the white light of the day,
Cheerfully I shall bow down at Thy feet and surrender.
As I do the day's work, flits through my mind the unsaid prayer ;
At dusk may we sit together when my work is over.
At cowdust hour I pray again that my tired mind be free
Of pain as peace-eyed slumber falls noiseless over my body.

THE RELATIVITY OF BHEDA (DIFFERENCE) AND ABHEDA (SAMENESS) AND OF TRUTH

A. NARASINGA RAO

1. INTRODUCTION

Vedantic thought, in its great quest for the One and Fundamental Reality which underlies and supports the world of sense and mind perception, is often obliged to raise questions regarding the sameness (*abheda*) or difference (*bheda*) of various entities. Is the clay from which the pot is made the same as the pot or is it different ? Is the rope different from the snake for which it is mistaken ? The arguments which are advanced on either side, while very clever, leave one with the feeling that the matter cannot be decided one way or the other. This situation is in sharp contrast to the questions raised in mathematics — is the sum of the angles of a triangle two right angles or is it different from it — where we have a categorical and universally acceptable answer, assuming that the assumptions on which the discussion proceeds are agreed upon as they must be in every fruitful discussion. One naturally asks ; is it due to the difference between the two subjects, or can it be due to the questions themselves not having been properly formulated in the former ? The object of this paper is to advance a plea that such questions of *bheda* and *abheda* are incomplete and not properly formulated, and that when the missing element, which has the dimension of 'purpose' is supplied, the answers become unambiguous. This seems to lead to a concept like the 'relativity of truth', taking 'truth' with a pragmatic colouring. The ideas advanced in the paper also enable a mode of presentation of Advaita which will not bring it into conflict with the realistic systems of Hindu philosophy.

2. OBJECTS AND THEIR ATTRIBUTES

Let us take a very simple case of a material object like a brass vessel. It has various attributes like brightness, shape, size, weight

which I obtain by sense perception or inference therefrom. It is the totality of these attributes that enable me to identify the vessel. If some of these attributes were removed and replaced by others, it becomes for me a different object since my only means of differentiating between different objects is by comparing their attributes, using this word in its widest sense. I can conceive mentally of other objects differing from the object in question in just one attribute, so that even a change in one attribute makes it a different object. Whether anything remains of an object when all its attributes, probably infinite in number, have been abstracted from it — an absolute residue — we need not consider at present since its existence or otherwise will not enable me to decide questions of *bheda* and *abheda* which we are considering. We shall therefore take as a working hypothesis which meets our needs :

HYPOTHESIS : *Any object is only the sum total of its attributes and may be identified with this totality.* (2.1)

The reader might object that this is an extreme view ; that microscopic differences in attributes are unperceived, and that even perceptible changes are tolerated in life without the object being considered as changed thereby, (for example a change of dress in a man). This important question of allowable changes is the very crux of this paper, but it is a convenient starting point to start with the absolute position given above and then consider what modifications are necessary therein.

From the extreme position we have taken, the problem of sameness or difference between two objects is easily answered.

No object is the same as any other object. All objects are different from one another. (2.2)

For, two books identical in every respect, will yet differ in their location as they cannot co-exist in the same place, and position in space and time is also an attribute. The same object thought of twice gives two different locations in time. The very question of difference or sameness can arise only when there is a dichotomy in our concept and since our concept of an object is to be considered one of its attributes (which cannot be easily separated from its attributes *per se*), we have created a difference in the very process of putting our question. The answer has become easy because of the extreme position we have taken.

This philosophy of all-otherness is the opposite number to Sri Sankara's philosophy of all-oneness, and stands equally with it outside the *vyavaharika* plane. In between these two absolutes, we have a continuous series of *vyavaharika* levels which span the gap between them. These will now engage our attention.

3. ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES AND IGNORABLE DIFFERENCES

In practical life, that is at the *vyavaharika* level, we do not consider two objects as different even if they differ in certain attributes because we regard these differences as minor or irrelevant. Thus if we lend an object or some money, we regard the *same* as returned even if the object be slight worn out or the money is in a different denomination. In other words,

out of the totality of attributes of an object we select some as essential and others as ignorable, and regard two objects as the same only when they have the same essential attributes even though they differ in the ignorable attributes. (3.1)

The selection of the essential attributes could be done in any arbitrary manner so as to lead to a consistent system, but usually this selection is related to a particular purpose or situation. So let us lay down that

the test of whether two objects are the same or different is, then, whether the

one object could be replaced by the other without the purpose we have in view being affected. (3.2)

Let us consider a few examples :

If the vessel I lent is returned to me with a hole in it I cannot accept it as the same, as I cannot use it in place of the one I lent for containing water. But if it has been used as a paper weight or was intended to be melted, the hole makes an ignorable difference relatively to these purposes, and I accept the vessel as the same as I lent.

Usually, (that is for most purposes) a change of dress is an unessential or ignorable difference, and we regard the man as the same whatever may be the dress he wears. But we could conceive of a case where the man must be considered different because he has changed his dress. Consider my friend the police inspector with his official dress. I requested him to accompany me in a crowd to attend a big function where his dress will secure for him and for me an easy passage and admission. If he comes in a civilian dress, I shall be justified in saying that he is not the man I invited, seeing that the purpose for which I wanted him is frustrated by the change, whereas even a different man in police dress, will for my purpose be the *same man*.

Similar remarks apply to the words 'equal', 'unequal' which are ambiguous except in relation to a particular purpose or situation. Are all the students in my class 'equal' in my eyes? The question is incomplete unless the purpose or situation is specified. For purposes of teaching they are equal, but if I want to select a son-in-law from among them their differences become essential and they are not at all equal. In a democracy all men are equal for purposes of voting, but not in regard to appointments.

A cricketer asks a physicist 'Is it true that a cricket ball is mostly emptiness with molecules here and there flying about?'. The physicist will be right in saying: there are several mutually contradictory descriptions of a cricket ball each relevant at its own level.

i.e. in relation to a particular situation. For you, the truth is that a cricket ball is a hard piece of matter of a certain density and elasticity, etc. For one who wishes to vaporise it and find its spectrum it consists of atoms with electrons at various energy levels and transition probabilities, etc.

If we mean by 'truth' a description of reality, we are confronted by the fact that there are different descriptions each valid at its own level, and that none of these has a claim to be the 'supreme truth', unless we agree on a conventional definition of this 'supreme truth'.

Thus it will be seen that

questions regarding sameness or otherness, equality or inequality, truth or untruth are by themselves incomplete and admit of definite answers only when considered relatively to a particular purpose or situation. (3.3)

Thus coming to the sameness or otherwise of clay and a pot made of clay, they are the same, that is can replace each other in any situation where the material is the relevant consideration, but are different for purposes like storing water. A cracked pot is the same as the original good pot if it is a question of storing rice, but are not the same for storing water. *It is the purpose which decides whether they are the same or different.*

4. A PARALLEL SITUATION IN MATHEMATICS

There is a situation in Mathematics which shows an exact parallelism and throws a flood of light on the distinctions we are thinking of.

In Euclid's Geometry, as taught in schools and colleges, we deal with points, lines, triangles, circles etc. A point is supposed to have no attribute except position. A circle, on the other hand, has besides its position, another attribute, namely size, represented by the length of the radius. A triangle has, besides position and orientation, three attributes—the lengths *a, b, c* of the sides or one length and two angles etc., which fix its size and shape. Euclid calls two figures 'congruent' if one can be moved about so as to coincide with the

other, i.e., if they can be placed one over the other so as to coincide. While moving one figure so as to place it over the other, we are supposed to change its position but not its shape or size. Let us now restate Euclid's theorems using the familiar words 'same' or 'equal' instead of 'congruent', since all these relations have the same logical properties of reflexivity, symmetry and transitivity. Thus two equal circles are 'the same' even if they occupy different positions; two triangles are the 'same' if their sizes and shapes (hence lengths and angles) are the same. Here we are obviously regarding differences in position as 'ignorable', but differences in size and shape as 'essential' differences. A rotation of a figure or a displacement leaves the figure the 'same'. *Thus Euclid's geometry is the study of those properties of a figure which remain unaltered by the group of translations and rotations. (4.1)*

A still wider group of transformations is one which allows also changes in size though not changes in shape. In this group one is allowed not only to move a figure, but also to expand it uniformly into a bigger or smaller size as we do in the cinema film to get the picture on the screen. Thus all squares are the 'same' in this Geometry, but a square is different from a rectangle. Hence in this 'Geometry of similarity transformations', differences in shape are essential differences, but differences of size are ignorable.

There is another geometry known as 'projective geometry' developed in the 19th century. Here we regard any plane figure and its projection (that is, the shadow cast by that figure on a plane screen when illuminated by a point source of light not lying on either plane) as belonging to the same class. Since a circle can be made to cast a circular shadow of any size, we have to regard all circles as 'equal' or the 'same'. But a circle can also be projected into an ellipse, or a hyperbola or a parabola. So in this geometry all conic sections, whatever their size, are indistinguishable from each other, i.e., their differences are 'ignorable'. But a straight line cannot cast a circular shadow, so a circle does not belong

to this class, and is 'different'. It can be shown that any triangle can be made to cast a shadow on any other triangle if we adjust the light and the screen properly. So all triangles, whatever be their sizes or shapes are indistinguishable in this geometry, but a quadrilateral is different from a triangle since it cannot cast a triangular shadow. Any quadrilateral can be made to cast a shadow which is a square. So all quadrilaterals belong to the same class. If we regard all members of the same class as 'equal' or 'indistinguishable' or 'the same', then we will have a consistent geometry (that is, one in which $A = A$, $A = B$ implies $B = A$, and $A = B$ and $B = C$ implies $A = C$) in which the difference between an equilateral and a non-equilateral triangle is an ignorable difference, though from the standpoint of Euclidean Geometry the distinction between them is an essential difference. But a circle is 'essentially different' from a triangle in both the geometries.

There is a still higher geometry,—higher in the sense that it allows the more drastic group of continuous transformations—called 'Topology'. Here all continuous changes of shape and size are allowed but discontinuous changes which carry infinitesimally near points to finitely distant points are barred. Thus I can start with a triangle of any shape and size, gradually round off the corners, bend the sides, and shape it into a circle or an ellipse. I can also create corners and gradually make it into a quadrilateral. So triangles, circles, quadrilaterals, polygons, ovals—all these belong to the same class. So we shall say they are 'the same', or that the differences between them are 'ignorable differences'. But we are not allowed to cut or join—the use of scissors or gum is prohibited—and so we cannot cut a circle and gradually knead it into an open semi-circle or convert a circle into a figure of 8. Thus the distinction between an open curve and a simple closed curve which does not cut itself survives all the drastic transformations of this group and is thus an essential difference in this geometry. Hence confining ourselves to the universe of curves which do not cut

themselves, all differences have become ignorable except the one difference between closed curves and open curves. We have thus reduced our universe into a Dvaita world of two categories.

Let us pass on to the final stage and allow not only continuous changes like bending and stretching but also discontinuous changes like cutting and joining. In other words we allow the use of scissors and gum also. We thus allow an open curve to be converted into a closed curve and *vice versa* and a figure of 8 curve to be converted into an oval by resolving the knot in the middle. We shall find now that all curves are reducible to the circle, so that all differences have been smoothed out, except the difference between existence (Sat) and non-existence (Asat), since we are allowed only to transform curves and not to create or destroy them. This is something like Advaita with a Nirguna Brahman as the sole reality, since all attributes except existence have been ironed out. If creation of one entity (say of a circle) or its destruction be also permitted, we can transform any curve into a circle and destroy it, or proceed the other way, so that even existence or otherwise of a figure ceases to be an attribute and we have a world of *Sunya*.

5. THE PHILOSOPHY OF BHEDA AND ABHEDA

In the course of the above mathematical approach we have met with a hierarchy of geometries, each consistent in itself, so that no proposition of any geometry contradicts another proposition of the same geometry. Each geometry has its own transformation group and objects which can be transformed into one another by the operations of the group are said to be in the same class, or conventionally defined as 'equal', or 'Abheda' and the difference between them are 'ignorable differences'. But objects which cannot be transformed into one another are said to belong to different classes, i.e., their differences are to be considered essential. The points to be noted are: (i) at each level (or in each geometry), one can state unambiguously and

consistently* whether two objects are the same or different; (ii) that objects which are not the same in one geometry become the same in another geometry, i.e., essential differences at one level become 'ignorable' at another level.

In the application of these ideas to the philosophy of *Bheda* and *Abheda*, we are not dealing with geometrical figures but other entities physical or mental, and instead of different transformation groups, associated one with each geometry, we have different situations or 'purposes'. Two objects which may be considered the 'same', (i.e. which can replace each other) for one purpose or in relation to a certain order of ideas, will have to be considered different in relation to another purpose or in relation to a different situation or order of ideas, like the cracked pot being the same as the uncracked pot for storing rice but not for storing water.

6. DIFFERENT LEVEL OF ACTIVITIES OR OF CONSCIOUSNESS

A human being has to carry out activities at various levels as part of the general scheme of life. At one end of the scale of existence and because he is associated with a physical body, he responds to mechanical forces just like any piece of inert matter. At the vital level his sense organs and his digestive and circulatory systems function in exactly the same manner as those of any living animal. At the other end of the scale, he is a thinker and a dreamer who seeks to merge his individual consciousness into a supreme all embracing cosmic consciousness. At each level of activity he has to recognise certain distinctions as 'essential' in relation to that activity and others as ignorable in that situation. For purposes of chemistry the distinction between diamond and charcoal becomes ignorable—they are the same as text-books assert—but for purposes of jewelry they are different. To ask whether two things are the same or

* The 'consistency' lies in the fact that 'sameness' is a symmetric relation between two objects with the further property that if A is the same as B, and B is the same as C, then A is the same as C.

different without mentioning the purpose is to ask an incomplete question which admits of both answers.

Are all men 'equal'? Yes and No. Of course there are differences between men and men; but the question is, Are they ignorable or essential? In a modern democracy, all men are considered equal so far as civic rights like voting are concerned, but not for appointments to posts of responsibility.

Is a rope the same as a snake? Yes and No. If it has been mistaken for a snake and a man got so frightened by it that he got fever and died, as happened to a friend of mine, the distinction is ignorable. The rope was a snake for him. I do not say that it was mistaken for a snake, because according to my definition of *Abheda*, the rope actually took the place of the snake and did the duty of a snake as effectively as a real snake. But if the man recognised that it was a rope and got over his fear, then for him it was only a rope. But it may be argued: 'It was really a rope though it was mistaken for a snake. A more careful examination would have revealed that it was a rope and not a snake.' My reply to the above argument is that there is no point in guessing what other course events may have taken under hypothetical conditions and drawing conclusions therefrom. It may be that it was not a rope but a toy snake so cleverly made that it looked not only like a snake but also moved like a snake. But it may be argued that even then, if the toy snake had been cut into pieces it would have been seen that it is made of rubber with hidden mechanisms. But who said it was made of rubber? It could have been made of synthetic materials imitating snake skin and snake flesh and endowed with an artificial heart pumping artificial blood so cleverly as to deceive even a biologist. In practical life we do not follow this infinite regress but stop at a certain stage and it may be that the toy snake was so cleverly made as to stand examination up to this stage. We are thus moving farther and farther away from the original question of the snake and the dying man into chemical analysis of artificial blood etc. which is quite a different question.

The question of whether a particular object was 'really' a snake raises question about a prior definition of reality which we shall both have to agree upon.

7. ARE OBJECTS REALLY DIFFERENT?

If it is asserted that two things are 'really the same' only if they have identical attributes, then the answer is as stated already in (2.2) that *any two objects are different* because in the very act of defining separately the two objects so as to enable us to apprehend them individually before deciding whether they are really the same, we have produced a dichotomy and hence a difference in one of their attributes, namely the way in which we apprehend them. If it is argued that the way we apprehend an object is not an attribute of the objects *per se*, but only a relation between us and the *thing-in-itself*, the obvious answer is that we never come into contact with things-in-themselves except through such a relation; in fact, that all perceived attributes are relations between ourselves and the objects perceived.

I submit that all questions whether two things are 'really different' are improper questions. The proper question is whether the differences between them of whatever nature are ignorable or essential, and this question is complete only when the 'purpose' or 'situation' in relation to which the question is put is clearly specified.

Is artificial milk which indistinguishable from true cow's milk in all its chemical, nutritive and other properties 'really' the same as cow's milk or is it different? This question is, according to me an improper question which admits of both answers. The only attribute in which they differ, as per our hypothesis, is that the former was produced in a manner different from the way in which a cow manufactures milk by physiological processes. The proper question is 'Does it make an essential difference?' For purposes of nutrition it does not, but for purposes of manufacture it does because of the difference

in cost between maintaining a cow and running a milk producing laboratory. This clear cut answer is not obtaining when we ask the question in the form 'are they really different?'

Is $8 + 8$ the same as 16? We know that for all arithmetical operations $8 + 8$ can be replaced by 16 without invalidating the conclusions. But two beams each 8 feet long but having the other dimensions the same, are not as useful separately as a single piece 16 feet long. So for utility in constructional work $8 + 8 < 16$. On the other hand for convenience of carrying $8 + 8 < 16$, the symbol $<$ meaning 'is more convenient than'. Arithmetically $1 + 1 = 2$, but a diamond weighing 2 carats is far more costly than two diamonds each weighing one carat. I recognise the arithmetical equality of Rs. 1,000 and 1 lakh of naye paise, but I shall be unwilling to accept the payment of a thousand rupees all in naye paise. The frantic efforts one sometimes makes to get small change for a currency note shows that arithmetical equality does not ensure equality at the *vyavaharika* level.

8. ADVAITA DOCTRINE AS AN EXISTENCE PROPOSITION

In the *vyavaharika* world, for every situation there are certain distinctions which are essential—such as between food and poison for purposes of eating—and other distinctions which are ignorable. What then is the significance of the Advaita doctrine of the oneness of all things?

From the point of view developed above the assertion of the one-ness of two objects is meaningless without the further specification of the situation or purpose in relation to which the statement is made. Hence the only interpretation we can give of the Advaita doctrine is that *there exists a purpose, or level of activity, or situation in relation to which all differences must be considered 'ignorable'*,—something like the geometry in which there is only distinction between existence and non-existence. Since the aim of Vedanta is the search for the unity which underlies all the diversity in the phenomenal world, this function does as

one withdraws farther and farther from the world of activity and thought and concept into an inner world of the self, states of consciousness arise in which the grosser distinctions and then the subtler distinctions of normal consciousness appear as 'ignorable' differences and fade away leaving only an intense awareness of one and only one entity—the Self. This is the Samadhi state where all sense-contacts with the external world have ceased, all physiological functions reduced to the barest minimum and consciousness is at the Sat-Chit-Ananda level. I shall be, however, more modest and say simply that *Advaita vedanta asserts the existence of a situation in which all differences are 'ignorable'*. (8.1)

9. THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPLEMENTARITY AND THE RELATIVITY OF TRUTH

The thesis that has been advanced in this paper, namely that the truth of even such a simple statement like 'A is the same as B' or 'A is different from B' is not quite determinate, but is relative to the particular situation in which the statement is made, is so shocking to our intuitive notion of the absoluteness and universality of 'truth', that one may well pause before accepting it. Let me, therefore, submit further material in confirmation of my thesis from such a sober subject as Physics. Physics observes certain aspects of nature, builds up hypotheses which will account for the observations and repeatedly subjects them to impersonal objective tests suggested by the hypotheses. There is practical unanimity among savants in this science regarding the 'truth' of the theories they advance. Thus all matter is supposed to be made up ultimately of tiny particles. Each particle has a definite mass and at each instant a definite position in space, and a definite velocity and is subject to forces which determine its motion in accordance with Newton's Laws of Motion. Besides matter, there is another entity called energy which is usually propagated in the form of waves—waves of heat, light or electro-magnetic waves as they are otherwise called. Waves, on the other hand have no particular position in space, but

are spread out over a whole region, and can be considered as made up of a large number of harmonic components, each having its own velocity and amplitude and phase. A wave-packet which is a superposition of separate harmonic waves will have a group velocity—the velocity with which the packet travels though changing shape all the time—different from the velocities of the individual waves. Thus the particle and wave concepts are widely different and each has its field of applicability, the first in connection with matter, the second in connection with radiation. This was the situation in Classical Physics which reached its zenith at the end of the 19th century.

The advent of Quantum Mechanics which was forced on physicists when they began to study the physics of the atom, changed the whole of the above picture profoundly. It is found that it is no longer possible to maintain the dichotomy between waves and particles, in spite of the fundamental differences between these two concepts. When a beam of electrons, which are certainly particles of matter pass through a thin gold leaf, we get a diffraction pattern which is typical of the diffraction of a beam of light-waves. On the other hand, the photo-electric effect showed that luminous energy possesses a granular structure which cannot be reconciled with the undulatory conception of Fresnel, a conception which was also based on solid experimental proof. The modern physicist finds that in order to describe observable realities it may be necessary to use in turn, and even simultaneously two or more apparently contradictory pictures. But the penalty of the use of two incompatible descriptions of the same object is a logical crash somewhere! How does micro-physics avoid this catastrophe? It does so by making each of these pictures less sharp and clear than in classical physics. The particle's position can be measured to any degree of accuracy but such a measurement interferes with its velocity in an uncontrollable manner with the result that the less our error in measuring the position, the more our ignorance of the exact value of the momentum. Thus instead of the

twin attributes of position and momentum, the particle emerges in micro-physics as a blend of the two, with more or less of the one associated with less or more of the other. The wave in its simplest and purest form is a plane monochromatic wave which does not give any privileged role to any particular point of space or to any particular instant of time. In its pure state it represents a movement, a dynamical condition with the location or particle aspect completely suppressed. A wave packet in which a number of elementary waves combine to produce a hump somewhere is a compromise in which the geometrical or the locational aspect is somewhat emphasised at the expense of the dynamical. The character of this compromise is determined by Heisenberg's 'indeterminacy relations' which involve h , Planck's quantum of action. Because of this, the more the wave aspect asserts itself, the more the particle aspect recedes into the background, till it completely vanishes when the wave aspect has full play, and hence a contradiction is avoided. The compromise picture is embodied in Schrodinger's ψ function which enables us to calculate the possible values which the geometrical variable x will be found to have on measurement with the probability of their occurrence, and similarly the possible values which a measurement of the dynamical variable—the momentum p —will reveal and the probabilities of their respective occurrence.

The above result that in our description of the ultimate particles of nature we shall be obliged to employ mutually contradictory descriptions, has been elevated into a principle called the 'Principle of complementarity'. Hence if a modern physicist is asked 'does light behave like a particle or like a wave?', his reply will be 'The two descriptions are contradictory, but each is relevant to its own situation. In its interaction with matter, light behaves as if it consisted of individual particles each carrying a concentrated energy $h\nu$ where ν is the frequency of the monochromatic light wave. On the other hand in its interaction with radiation, the wave picture is relevant leading to the phenomena of interference and

diffraction. The two descriptions are 'complementary' because they apply to different situations'.

Another example of the principle of complementarity occurs in micro-physics when we study systems of similar particles like electrons in an atom. We usually assume that we can identify each particle by attaching a fixed number to it and can follow its evolution in the course of time. Knowing the exact position at any instant and its velocity and acceleration, its position at a later instant can be calculated. But in quantum mechanics a highly exact determination of the position of the particle makes it impossible to find its velocity and hence to predict the location at a later time except between wide limits. It happens therefore that the zones of location of particles encroach on one another. We can no longer follow the individuality of the several particles, since the only distinction between them, namely their difference in location in space has disappeared. Thus in quantum physics, we must be content to say of a collection of elementary particles of the same nature, that so many of them are in a particular state, so many others in another state, but we cannot say of any particular particle what state it is in. In order to distinguish a particle it is necessary to tear it from the system to which it belongs and to isolate it. On the other hand a system of identical particles between which there are strong interaction-potential-energies is a sort of unity of a higher order, represented by a single ψ function and having an individuality in which the constituents are more or less blended, and from which they are difficult to isolate because of their strong mutual interaction. Thus individuality and group behaviour are two complementary characteristics. We shall have to make use of both these mutually contradictory pictures, each in its appropriate situation. There is no unique answer to the question, Is a person's behaviour conditioned by his individual thought and experience or does it conform to the group mind of the group to which he belongs? By himself he may be quite a different being from what he is as a member of an excited crowd

It is true we have covered only a very limited field—the field of simple statements like A is B or A is not B , but at least in this field it has been overwhelmingly evident that the truth value of such statement depends on the situation, that is, that *truth is relative and not absolute*. A stronger form of the same would be following the proposition, 'Given any statement which is true for a certain situation, there always exist other situations in which the same statement becomes false.' And such a proposition must be examined not only for simple statement like A is B , but also for more complicated statements. For example, one may ask are there any situations in which statements like 'A line two inches long is greater than a line one inch long', or

'The sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles' becomes false? The consideration of such complicated statements must await another paper. It would appear that the relativity of truth persists even for such statements with reasonable and acceptable meanings for the words used. I may also add that ancient Indian tradition is based on the concept of the relativity of truth, for they say that the truths about the universe and God as revealed in the Vedas are not to be revealed to any one who may ask for it but only to those who are fit for that knowledge as judged by the Guru, and there are many traditional stories of the preceptors having given different and contradictory answers to the same question put to him by different disciples.

BHAGAVAN BUDDHA AND HIS MESSAGE

T. KRISHNAJI

Bhagavan Buddha is the ninth of the ten Avatars of Lord Vishnu, revered by the Hindus and hailed as a great Teacher by a large section of mankind. He belongs to the line of historic personages. Mr Saunders says, 'He is the greatest of Indian seers, at once the last of her great Upanishadic Rishis, and first of her great heretics'. To the Hindu, Buddha is a god; but Buddhism is heresy. Buddhists revere him as god; but Buddhism has no god. It all seems a paradox.

Buddha lived in the sixth century before Christ. It was an age of religious and philosophic awakening in and around India. Confucious and Lao Tze in China, Maharishi Zarathustra in Iran, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Thales, Anaximander, and several others in East Asia and Greece, preached doctrines akin to the Upanishads, probably derived from India or independently thought out. Each thinker gave vigour and fresh direction to the religious life of the people.

Hinduism holds the Vedic teaching as supreme. Two rivers, of thought and action, the Purva Mimamsa, and the Uttara Mimamsa or

Vedanta, were intended to supplement each other for a spiritual life. But, one with the rituals and sacrifices, and the other for Jnana and asceticism, in course of time, became cross currents. Ritualism, promising fruits of action, became more popular and widely practised. God was ignored as irrelevant and remote. Rituals were so popular that even unfit persons performed them. The cleavage between the two schools became rigid and pronounced. Bhagavad Gita seems to counsel a golden mean between the two schools of thought. Mundaka Upanishad warns that ritualism is a frail raft, yielding temporary gains. Man is an egoist and full of desires (trishna). Self effacement is essential for a spiritual life, and karma is a bondage. History, social, political or religious, is a challenge and response. In the widespread ritualism and sacrifices of the Purva Mimamsa lay the seeds of challenge; and the response came from Kshatriya princes and teachers, Vardhamana Mahavira and Bhagavan Buddha.

Vardhamana and Buddha belong to the royal race. Vardhamana was born in 599 B.C.

and he left home in his 28th year and after 12 years of tapas, became a 'Jina' and Maha Vira (great spiritual conqueror). He emphasised right knowledge and conduct and ascetic life. His was a protest against ritualism. Like the Purva Mimamsaka, he ignored God. He went a little further, denying Vedic authority. The Jinas themselves became gods and were worshipped. Rishaba Dev of Hindu Puranas was a Jina and Maha Vira was the 24th Jina.

The next challenge to ritualism came from Buddha. He is the 24th Buddha, King Sibi being one of the early Buddhas. Suddhodana was a king of Kapilavastu. He had two wives, Mahamaya Devi and Mahaprajapati. Maya Devi's father was Suprabuddha, ruler of Devadaha. When Maya Devi was proceeding to her parents' place, she gave birth to the future Buddha, in the Lumbini forest, in between two 'sala' trees. (It may be noted that Buddha died in between two 'sala' trees. Maya Devi died on the 7th day of the birth of Buddha, the coincidence may be noted that the Buddha had left for forest on the 7th day of the birth of his son Rahula.) The babe was named Gautama and nicknamed Siddhartha (it is the 252nd name in the Vishnu Sahasranama). Siddhartha, in his previous life, was called Sumedha. The child was reared by his step mother Maha Prajapati. Rishi Kaladeva, the family priest, came from heaven and Suddhodana presented the babe to the Rishi for his blessings. But who can bless One whose blessings all seek. The Rishi reverently rose, praying 'O Babe, I worship, Thou art He'.¹ He prayed to Buddha in the language of Mahavakya 'Tat Tvam Asi'. Buddha was married to Bimba called Yasodhara at an early age of 16 and for 14 years he led a life of pleasure. A boy was born to him named Rahula. Siddhartha had fulfilled the debt of pitris and the three purusharthas. He sought the fourth, Moksha. Siddhartha was born with a mission and after the birth of Rahula, the spirit of renunciation took hold of him and he would not brook delay in retiring. He silently stole himself away from his dear wife and child

¹ *Life and Teachings of Buddha* by Devamitta Dharmapala, p. 17.

and the palace of pleasures. It is a picture of renunciation in bold colours.

Sri Rama left for the forest to fulfil the plighted word of his father. Siddhartha left for the forest to attain buddhahood. His favourite horse Kantaka took him to the banks of the river Anoma (illustrious). The horse could not suffer separation from him and died. Siddhartha removed the tuft of hair. Buddha had left all to seek the cure for human misery. Kaivalya Upanishad boldly asserts that immortality is gained by Renunciation (Tyaga) alone. Gods were moved at the sight and Maha Brahma appeared and presented Siddhartha with the requisites of a monk.

Siddhartha proceeded to the two famous sages, Allara Kalama and Uddaka and learnt from them religious lore and Ashtanga Yoga. He left them to perfect practice. Kathopani-shad says, 'Nayam Atma pravachanena labhyo na medhaya na bahuna srutena.' Siddhartha retired to a forest called Uruvela (near Gaya) and led an austere life. Mortification, however, told on his health. Gita counsels *yukta ahara* for a spiritual life. Body is the vehicle for spiritual attainment. 'Nayam atma balahinena labhyah', Spiritual life is not for the weak. Siddhartha resumed taking food and his companions left him. Loneliness is a spiritual help. As the Sufi says 'Alone to Alone'. Sex sense is the greatest obstacle to peace of mind and Siddhartha conquered the forces of Mara. He overcame all such evil forces and settled himself in samadhi. Peace and light radiated about him. A girl by name Sujata offered him milk and rice in a golden plate, which he took, again came back to the Bodhi tree, spread darbha (grass) for his seat (throne of wisdom) and sat in meditation for seven weeks delighting in the bliss of Self. All obstacles ceased and he obtained illumination. He attained to omniscience and Buddhahood. He crossed the ocean of misery. The serpent king held his hood over Buddha to give him shade. Sumedha, Siddhartha, now became Buddha. Buddha solemnly uttered :

How blest the happy solitude
Of him who hears and knows the truth :
How blest is harmlessness towards all,

And self restraint towards living things :
How blest from passion to be free,
All sensuous joys to leave behind :
Yet far the highest bliss of all
To quit the illusion false "I am".²

The perennial problem of philosophy is the nature of the Self. The Upanishadic philosophy postulates one Reality, and the world of differences, and false 'I am', as illusory. All misery is due to Avidya, kama and karma. Buddha's path of dependent origination is to fade out Avidya. Vedanta says that the path of knowledge alone will lead to Reality.

Buddha thought of going to the Brahmin sages Allara Kalama and Uddaka but they were no more. His companions, who left him at Uruvela were persuaded to accept the truth of his message.

Quick came followers to his doctrine from the Brahmin class. He sent them to proclaim the doctrine. 'Only because the Buddha Himself instructed the disciples in the Doctrine, and that they were mostly Brahmans and men who had already passed their whole lives in self denial, meditation, and holy striving for emancipation, was it possible for them to go forth as itinerant preachers in the short space of five months.'³ Most of his principal disciples were drawn from the Brahmin and Kshatriya clans. It must be noted that there was no opposition to the Buddha from the Hindus at that time, except from the people adhering to the school of Purva Mimamsa.⁴

Lord Buddha has been referred to as an Avatar in several Hindu works and prayers. In the Vishnu Padadi Kesanta stotra, verse 49, Sri Sankara refers to him as the conqueror of the mind, 'manasija vijayi'.

Vadair vimohayati yajna krito adharhan.
Tatah kalau sampravritte sammohaya surad
visham.—*Bhagavata*.

Buddha-rupam samasthaya
Sarva-rupa-parayana.
Mohayan sarva-bhutani
Tasmai mohatmanam namah.—*Bhishma-stavarnja*.

² *Life of the Buddha* by H. C. Warren, p. 87.

³ *Message of Buddhism* by Subhadra Bhikshu, pp. 19-20.

⁴ *Ibid*.

Chandra-satanana kunda suhasa
Nandita daivata nanda supurna
Daitya vimohaka nitya sukhade
Deva subodhaka Buddha swarupa.

Dwadasastotra by SRI MADHAVACHARYA.

Kesava-dhrita Buddha-sarira

—*Gita Govinda* by JAYADEVA.

In the context of the religious conditions in India with the widespread rituals and sacrifices by persons unfit to perform them, Buddha's advent, with a mission to spread love and kindness and wean away people from their adherence to ritualism, was necessary. Shock treatment is required sometimes. God knows how to deal with vice and virtue. He had taken the avatar of Mohini to delude the Daityas. It was Lord's lila.

On the positive side, Buddha was supreme as a teacher and organiser. He emphasised ethical conduct by his eightfold and fourfold paths. He was an empirical philosopher, discouraging all speculative thoughts and vain disputations. Buddha cared for the means and not ends. Dr Radhakrishnan says :

'Buddha's doctrine is a restatement of the Upanishadic truths with a fresh emphasis. In Buddha, we find a powerful combination of spiritual profundity, moral strength, and discreet intellectual reserve.'

Buddha referred to himself as 'Tathagata', one who tread the path of his predecessors. To the serpent King, Buddha said :

The highest bliss of all
To quit the illusion false 'I am'.

The ego or the false 'I' must be effaced to awaken the 'Self'. Buddha's message consists in a restatement of nivritti marga, emphasising that life is misery, and that the path lay in ethical conduct and effacement of avidya. His silence over the metaphysical problems was practical and pragmatic. Buddha was referred to by Amarsimha as an 'Advaya-vadi'.

Then the question arises, if Buddha was a Upanishadic seer, why should the charge of atheism be levelled against him? This has been an unjust accusation against him due to misunderstanding of his message and his silence over metaphysical problems. Further, Buddha

was revered by the agnostics and atheists in later times. Sir Francis Younghusband, in his introduction to the book, 'Some Sayings of the Buddha', says :

'Buddha could never have denied God or propounded negative doctrines. He was silent on the nature of God, not from any inadequacy of appreciation, but excessive reverence.'

He further quotes Mrs Rhys Davids,

'The educated man in Buddha's day believed in Deity as immanent in each man as the Most, the Highest, the Best in that man's spiritual being or self.'

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said referring to the Buddha :

'Why atheist? He was not an atheist. He simply could not express his inner experiences in words. Do you know what "Buddha" means? It is to become one with Bodha, pure intelligence, by meditating on That which is of the nature of Pure Intelligence; it is to become Pure Intelligence Itself. When one realizes Swarupa, the true nature of one's Self, one attains a state that is something between asti, is, and nasti, is not.⁵

Malunkyaputta, one of his disciples, approached the Buddha with certain doubts, whether soul and body are separate or whether soul survives death; but the Master sternly rebuked him and narrated the parable of a man wounded by an arrow refusing to allow the removal of the arrow without knowing the nature of the arrow, and who had shot it. Such things do not profit any one. Life is misery and one should try to end it. He did not appeal to tradition or his own authority. He wanted his disciples to examine for themselves.

'Pariksha Bhiksho grahyam
Mad vacho na tu gauravat.'

Buddha himself did not leave any writing; and in his own lifetime, disputes and schisms arose amongst his disciples. It was said that there were about 30 schools of Buddhism and that by itself is sufficient to show that the real teaching of the Buddha was either lost or obscured by doctrines attributed to him. If the Buddha had denied gods, it would be surprising that his disciples should deify him.

⁵ Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 941.

The Buddha's daily habits were to rise early, beg food, teach the disciples as to how to meditate and exhort people to follow the right path. He observed 'chaturmasya' and the other principles of sannyasa. But his originality lies in establishing group life of the bhikshus and admission of women into the Bhikshu order. He warned Ananda that admission of women into the order will cut short the life of sangha by half. He lived for 80 years and took ill taking some noxious food, edible mushrooms.

It was said that Buddhism died in the land of its nativity by the fraternal embrace by the Hindu religion by deifying the Buddha. Sri Devamitta Dharmapala remarks that 'the unlearned critics say that Buddhism met its fate at the hands of Kumarilla Bhatta and Sri Sankara'. After the passing away of the Buddha, several schools of thought with alien ideas of nihilism, mentalism arose, and each school turned out to be the rival of the other; and some of them took to secret Tantraism. When the rot had set in, Buddhism ceased to be a force what with the rise of the Bhakti movements, of the Saiva Nayanmars and Vaishnava Alwars in the south; and in the north, the Muslim ravages wiped out all Buddhist institutions.

The message of the Buddha comprised the ancient Hindu doctrines with certain emphasis on 'Dukkha' and the doctrine of karma, and maintained that the end of Dukkha lay in right conduct and aspirations and meditation. He laid the ground work for the metaphysical philosophy of later times. He had not denied Self. A young man in search of his runaway mistress asked the Buddha, if he had seen her. The Buddha replied to him, 'Were it not better ye sought the Self?'. Mr Saunders remarks that 'it is remarkable that he who taught millions a sane doctrine of the Divine and of the human, should be accused of denying God and the Soul'. It is true that the Buddha kept silent on several metaphysical problems. Sri Sankara in the commentary on verse 99 of Alatasanti prakarana of Mandukya Karika says that the Buddha did not speak of the Paramartha Tattva, transcending the

triputi of Jnana, Jneya and Jnata. But he says that the Buddha reached the outskirts of the Advaita vastu by some process of thought. Thus the Buddha seems, to me, to have paved the way for the metaphysical philosophy of Sri Gaudapada and the Absolute philosophy of Sri Sankara.

Lord Buddha had completed his mission on earth. He called Ananda and other disciples and imparted the final message, that life is transitory; and hence the need to work for salvation with diligence to attain supreme wisdom. He was born in between two sala trees on the day of Vaisakha Purnima and on the Vaisakha Purnima day he obtained illumination under the Bodhi tree. On the Vaisakha Purnima day, too, he laid himself in between two sala trees with his head to the north, entered into deep samadhi and gave up his body.

Passage of over 2,500 years has not dimmed his Divine Personality. Freed from all miracles and myths, the Buddha is the greatest human personality, abiding ever with us, pervading peace and love about him, with a sweet smile

playing betwixt his lips. Like the Lord of silent wisdom, Sri Dakshinamurti, the Buddha sits in padmasana with the jnana mudra betokening the unity of Life. He is not only the Light of Asia, but of the world. He is Buddha-Bhagavan.

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THE ABSOLUTE AND ITS SPORT ARE INSEPARABLE

SISTER SAVITRI

'The Absolute and Its sport are inseparable.' Thus told Sri Ramakrishna once to Keshab Sen. It is the basic doctrine of the Vedanta, only there Shakti is called 'Maya'. Most of us will have read this a hundred times, will agree with it, will claim it to be the only possible way to look at life. But is this, apparently so familiar, doctrine not for most of us merely an intellectual speculation, a speculation beyond which our human intellect cannot go on arguing? And therefore we agree with it, are satisfied with it and, let it be at that.

However, if once we look sharper, experience shows that among those who are inclined to spiritual life, who search for Realization, there are two clearly distinguished groups.

One consists of those who strive for the Absolute, the Formless, Brahman. Usually they look with a little disdain upon the other group, the Bhaktas, because they think the worship of a personal God, in which form soever, to be inferior, as belonging to the realm of Maya. The Bhaktas, on the other hand, are usually so fond of their chosen form of God that most of them don't care much for the Absolute. They have no place left in their mind for any such thought. They wish 'to enjoy the sugar, not to become the sugar', as Sri Ramakrishna once explained. Although it is left to every seeker of Realization to choose his own path and the Ideal which appeals to him most, it is nevertheless very important to be at the same time also aware of the other aspect. But

if we once make a *practical* attempt to do so : to imagine, to meditate both aspects of the Divinity — with form and without form — most aspirants will find this rather difficult, almost impossible. This problem can also not be solved by any further discussion because

Arupa sāyare lilā-lahari
uthila mridula karunāvāy,

Ādiantahin, akhande vilin,
Māyā dharile mānavakāy.

Maner opāre kothā kon desh,
Shashi tapaner nāhi paravesh,

Tava hāsirāshi kirana barashi
ujale sethāo chāru vibhāy.

Premar e tanu atanu-ganjan
kī madhura vibha vikāshe nayan

Je here se jan tanu-prāna-man,
charane arpana karite chay.

Tomāri āshāy kata jug gata
sanshay jata, āji tirohita

Jā āche āmar laha upahar
sapinu jivana tava sevāy.

'From the Ocean of the Formless eternal sport of waves' — what a wonderful picture, and yet how difficult to imagine : the sport — of waves — of the Formless. To our limited human mind it almost seems a contradiction. Can the Formless have waves? Waves belong to the realm of form. How then can the Formless have waves? And of which nature may they be? Are they like floating clouds? Like waving mist? All this seems still far too concrete, too limited. There further will arise the question : Can That, which is *immovable*, sport? Already we are falling back in our old habit of separating, what is inseparable.

But to imagine the sun and its rays or the fire and its burning-power as one, is a quite natural conception for our mind. Why is it then so difficult to imagine the Formless and its forms as one?

The sun and its rays, the fire and its burning-power belong both to the same realm —

it will remain only in the intellectual sphere. But there exists one of the most beautiful Bengali songs by Swami Premeshananda, whose first lines give us a wonderful picture for an attempt of combining in our imagination the Formless and a beloved Divine Form.

In the Ocean of the Formless, eternal sport of waves, rose a gentle breeze of Mercy,

Endless and beginningless, absorbed in the Undivided, and induced by Maya's will, Thou assumed a human form.

From which sphere beyond the mind, from which land didst Thou emerge? Neither sun nor moon can reach there;

Only the rays of Thy radiant Smile pour there forth in splendid lustre.

Put to shame by this Love-Body is the god of love himself. Oh what charming radiance emanate these eyes!

Whosoever beholds this Being cannot but offer body, life and mind at his Lotus-Feet,

How many ages have gone by hoping in vain for Thee! How many doubts there ever were, they all have vanished now.

Take whatever is mine, take it all as oblation! My whole life I dedicate to the service of Thee.

the realm of form, perceivable with our senses; and even the sceptical intellect agrees with this experience of the senses as it conforms to the results of scientific examinations.

But in the case of the Formless and its forms, this is different. They apparently belong to different realms. The forms and their play are perceivable to our senses and conceivable to the intellect. But the Formless? There does not exist any way of approach for our senses or intellect. We have to use another medium. Which? Intuition? The often mentioned sixth sense? We can only search and try. But we are not accustomed to the use of such a subtler medium. Therefore we have at first to train ourselves in its proper use. Then we have to deal with another problem : one cannot move in two different spheres or elements at the same time. We cannot with one foot walk on the earth and with the other foot swim in the water. Due to age-

long habit we are not able to immediately disengage ourselves from the use of senses and intellect in our attempts of meditating on forms. So, what to do?

Divine Mother once told Sri Ramakrishna : 'Remain in Bhāvamukha'. Bhava is regarded to be the most subtle state of mind. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* it has been translated with 'threshold' — the threshold between the two spheres, that of the Formless and that of forms. It may be something similar as standing at the border of the ocean, still on solid ground, being touched now and then by its spray, breathing in its fragrance.

Some other talks of Sri Ramakrishna reveal to us two important points about the unity of the Absolute and Its sport.

He describes his spiritual experiences in the following way : 'The other day, when Harish was with me, I saw Satchidananda come out of this sheath (Sri Ramakrishna's body). It said : "I incarnate Myself in every age." I thought that I myself was saying these words out of mere fancy. I kept quiet and watched. Again Satchidananda Itself spoke, saying : "Chaitanya, too, worshipped Shakti." (Gospel, pp. 646-7.)

At another occasion Sri Ramakrishna tells his disciples : 'The Divine Mother would put me in such a state that sometimes my mind would come down from the Nitya to the Lila (from the Absolute to the Sport) and sometimes go up from the Lila to the Nitya.'

After describing his different visions when his mind had descended to the Lila, he continues as follows :

'Then a change came over me. The mind left the plane of the Lila and ascended to the Nitya. I no longer enjoyed seeing the forms of God; I said to myself, "they come and go." I lifted my mind above them. I removed all the pictures of gods and goddesses from my room, and began to meditate only on the Indivisible Satchidananda — on that Primal Purusha. I myself remained in the state of a

handmaid; — the handmaid of the Purusha.'

Satchidananda, a term which is generally used for the Formless, the Absolute, in an attempt to give us an idea of Its nature, this Satchidananda — the Absolute — is *seen* by Sri Ramakrishna coming out of his body, and moreover It *talks*, saying : "I am the Avatar of this age." This shows clearly how inseparable one were the two spheres for Sri Ramakrishna. The same impression we receive, when he describes how he was only absorbed in the Indivisible Satchidananda, but at the same time he remains in the state of the handmaid of the Primal Purusha. These descriptions transmit to us a slight idea that the Formless and Its Forms, the Absolute and Its Sport, are indeed inseparable one and that this unity can be realised though probably not by ordinary mortals.

The other important thing that we learn from Sri Ramakrishna's words in this connection is that he passed from the Nitya to the Lila, from the Lila to the Nitya and so on. This shows us that to be at the threshold of the two spheres is a floating state, preliminary to the blending of the two spheres.

That brings us back to the first lines of the above-mentioned song. For those who aspire to realise the highest Spirit in Its two aspects — with form and without form — this song may be of great help because it develops before us also a floating picture caused by the nature of the waves. Out of the Ocean of the Formless, its waves rising and falling in eternal sport, slowly a form takes shape. Just for a moment while they raise, we may get a faint glimpse of a divine form, a glimpse of eyes that seem to smile at us in causeless love. But still before we can distinctly see this subtle Form, It has dissolved already sinking back with the waves in the bottomless Ocean of the Undivided. And if we learn in the course of time to surrender completely to these waves they may carry us with them from the Lila to the Nitya, from the Nitya to the Lila, the Indivisible Satchidananda.

THE QUINTESSENCE OF VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY.

(Based on *Vakya-Vritti of Sankaracharya*)

'BALU'

The easiest means for liberation from the bondage of transmigratory existence is the attainment of the knowledge that arises from sentences such as 'Thou art that' etc., and relates to the identity between the individual Self and the universal Self.

Who is the universal Self and who the individual Self? And how are they identical, and how is the identity proved by the mahavakyas?

He who questions 'Who am I?' is himself the individual Self; he is surely Brahman. The individual should recognise that he is an embodiment of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, the witness of the internal organ and its modifications. The Self is not the body (gross) which is possessed of form etc. like jars and other things and also because it is a modification of ether and other great elements, like a pitcher.

Just as the seer of the jar is different from the jar, so also the seer of the senses is not the senses, and likewise, it is not the mind, not the intellect, not the vital force or prana; it is not the combination of the gross and the subtle either; nor is it the seen; it is quite distinct from the seen.

It is that owing to whose proximity non-conscious entities like body, senses, mind, vital force etc. appear to possess consciousness; it is identical with the changeless innermost Self which moves the body, makes the mind think 'I went elsewhere, now I am here' and so on; it is just like fire which makes a red-hot piece of iron look like fire; it is that which illumines the waking, dream and deep sleep states, and also the appearance and disappearance of intellect and its modifications. Just as a light within a jar is different from the jar, so also the Self which is the illuminator is different from the illumined.

The 'I' is one with the seer, the dearest of all, for whose sake other things exist (Atmanastu kamaya priyo bhavati).

'Thou' is the sakshi, or witness whose nature is consciousness; witnessing is nothing but awareness on the part of the Self as one devoid of changes, such as birth, phenomenal existence, growth, passing from one state to another, declension, and destruction.

Now, what is 'That'? The negative 'Neti' method and the direct positive method are the two methods to ascertain this.

The universal Self is that which is free from samsara, which is neither gross, nor subtle etc., which is not the seen, which has not the qualities of the seen, which is free from darkness, which is the greatest of all bliss, which is the embodiment of existence, knowledge, which is defined as the Sat, which is all-pervading, and wellknown.

Brahman is the being which has been proved by the Vedas to be all-knowing, all-powerful and the supreme overlord of all. By knowing Brahman, nothing else remains to be known. Brahman is the limitless, of whom the universe is just a modification, just like the jar which is a modification of the earth which cannot limit the earth and which is nothing but earth.

Brahman is the object of search on the part of the mumukshus; it is that which has entered creation as individual souls and which is known from same sources to be their controller. It is the giver of the fruits of actions and is the motivator of the individual souls.

Now, we come to the identity of 'Thou' and 'That'. The meaning of the sentence is indivisible. In the sentence 'The lotus is blue', the blueness is in the lotus, and the lotus is qualified by the lotus, and there is mutual connection; or the sentence may mean only

a lotus with blueness and not vice versa. But in the sentence 'Thou art That', neither of the two constructions above is applicable; therefore, they are absolutely identical.

The apparent individual conscious Self is of the nature of bliss without a second and vice versa; therefore, the Brahman is the Self and vice versa. Hence, 'Thou art That'.

When this identity is known, the misconception that Thou means something other than Brahman, and 'That' means something mediately known disappears. Then, the individual conscious Self stands as the one all-pervading bliss without a second.

The sentences like Tattvamasi etc. are used to establish the identity of what are indirectly expressed by the two words 'Thou' and 'That'. The consciousness which is combined with the internal organs and which is the object of the idea and word 'I' is the direct meaning of the word 'Thou', and the qualified being, the cause of the universe, described as all-knowing and mediately known, possessing the nature of existence and having maya as its upadhi is the direct meaning of the word 'That'. So, in the sentence 'Tattvamasi, we find these two direct meanings for the two different words combined in one sentence; that is, on one and the same substance, two contradictory qualities are present, that is, the quality of being indirectly and directly known, and existence with a second and absolute oneness. So, only the indirectly expressed meaning has to be resorted to, namely that the meaning which is clearly intelligible by itself and connected with what is denoted directly.

For instance, in the sentence 'So ayam' or 'he is this', 'he' refers to past time, and 'this'

refers to the present time; therefore, it involves an apparent contradiction. In explaining this sentence, we leave out from each of the words a directly expressed meaning, the idea of 'past' from 'he', and the idea of 'present' from 'this' and take it as one indivisible man having no connection either with the past or with the present.

Similarly, in the sentence, 'Thou art that', we leave out the part consistent with the internal organ and the reflection of consciousness from the direct meaning of 'Thou' and leave out the part consisting of maya and the reflection of consciousness from the meaning of 'That', and we get as the only possible meaning one indivisible entity which is existence-knowledge-bliss, having no connection either with maya or the internal organs or with the reflection of consciousness in either of them.

The study of the Vedas, contemplation over their meanings, and practice of control of internal organs, and other virtues are necessary to have a right and firm understanding of 'I am Brahman'. When knowledge becomes firm, the cause of the whole of this transmigratory existence is absolutely negated for ever. Such a person, with his gross and subtle bodies dissolved, freed from the subtle elements and released from the chain of actions becomes liberated immediately.

On the destruction of the bondage due to actions that have not begun to bear fruit, the man remains by force of those that have begun to produce them, liberated in life for some time, when he comes by absolute oneness, the greatest and ultimate bliss called the supreme abode of Vishnu, from which there is no return.

At the outset is enunciated the perception of the Self and of the non-Self by means, respectively of true knowledge and illusion. Thus does the Veda speak of the knowledge of Brahman as twofold, namely by means of experience relating to oneself (*Svambhumi*) and by conclusive certainty (*Upapatti*). The former arises in correlation to bodily limitation, while the latter arises out of universality; at first springs up the experience, 'I am Brahman', and then, 'All this is Brahman'.

— SRI SANKARA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Prof P. Sankaranarayan is the Retired Professor of Philosophy, Vivekananda College, Madras. His article is the summary of two discourses delivered by him on 11th and 12th August, 1959 to a Seminar organized by the Christian Theological College, Bangalore on 'Contemporary Hindu Religious Movements'.

Sri A. J. Srivastava is Controller of Communication, Madras region, Civil Aviation Dept., Govt. of India.

Sri K. S. Ramakrishna Rao, M.A., is from Govt. College, Tumkur, Mysore.

Swami Nikhilananda's poem has been adapted from a Bengali song by Rabindranath Tagore.

Dr A. Narasinga Rao is Hon. Professor, Madras Institute of Technology.

Sri T. Krishnaji, Advocate, is from Madras. Sister Savitri is a German writer and singer. Sri 'Balu' is from New Delhi.

BEHIND THE CLOUD OF PROPAGANDA

In modern times propaganda has become the greatest moulder of public opinion. Its main support is the gullible human mind which believes a thing to be true if it is repeatedly told for a considerable time. In times of war it is said to be a normal method. The War is gone but the method persists. The effects of clouding the merits of an institution sheerly through propaganda may be seen now and then even on intellectual and otherwise well-informed minds. This feeling one has when one reads an axiomatic statement like the following:

In its eagerness to build the character of the nation the Government has now commissioned the services of Himalayan sadhus a good number of whom left New Delhi on September 17 in a special train on a three-month 'character-building' tour of the country. This batch of sadhus, who are accompanied by more than five hundred people, most of whom women, would visit important religious, historic and developmental centres in the country. This spectacle brings to one's mind the old saying that everything would be topsyturvy in the Kaliyuga which seems to be on the way to fulfilment. Otherwise why the sadhus should have left their meditations and have entered the field of practical politics by agreeing to serve as the vehicle of official propaganda. What is to be achieved by the sadhus? What particular lessons are the sadhus capable of instilling or are expected to instil into the people they visit? Is it devotion to God? Or is it the art of organi-

sation? The sadhus as a class are a-social if not positively anti-social; they are by nature parasitic living upon the dole or contribution of others. Under such circumstances what lessons can they impart to the people?

—Vigil, Sept. 26, '59.

We have nothing to say about the comments on the advisability of taking the help of the monks by the Government. There will be surely difference of opinion. But what seems peculiar is the casual but cocksure way of dubbing as parasite or anti-social an age-old institution honoured by thousands of people, disregarding all the services it renders to the society. It is true every religious institution requires to be justified nowadays. The institution of sadhus is sometimes attacked. But often there is very little of thinking behind these. A callous acquiescence to propaganda must be the reason, taking for granted the honesty and idealism of the writers. The Communists, of course, have ideological objections to religion itself and hence to all religious institutions. But open minds should not gulp without thinking whatever is dished out by propaganda.

There is no objection to the modern fad of judging everything from the social standpoint and on utilitarian grounds. Often we are impatient and want an immediate, tangible

service from an institution. But to our estimation even from this standpoint the monks — even the old type monks — have a great social utility. The institution of monks points out some of the ideals to the society. Every ideal must have some experimenters in its fundamentals. The monks stand for the ideal of renunciation, self-immolation and devotion to God. Their mere presence will at least remind the people around that such virtues are necessary for society. Contact of such people helps man to be unselfish, to achieve mental equilibrium, to be comforted during ailments, bereavements and sufferings, thus making them more fit to face life. With the coming in of the science of Psychology we do not hesitate to spend thousands of rupees for maintaining

the psychiatrists. Then why should we grudge providing the wherewithals, that too the minimum, for the monks? Unworthy people are there in every group. Should we make capital out of it? Or, judge a tree by its unworthy fruits? It is improper to say that the monks are parasites. In that case all the non-productive professions will also be dubbed the same, as is actually done by the dialectical materialists. Moreover, a change of the pattern of service by sadhus is slowly gaining ground in India after the advent of Swami Vivekananda. Hence it is better, at least for the well-meaning persons, not to make uncharitable remarks and create doubt in the minds of people, thus undermining the prestige of a group trying to dedicate themselves to some higher principles.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MANU DHARMA SASTRA: A Sociological and Historical Study by Kewal Motwani, 1958, Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras 17, India, Price Rs. 20.

Dr Kewal Motwani is to be congratulated upon the most opportune publication of his *Manu Dharma Sastra*, which is mainly a sociological and historical study. Time has really come when, to the enquiring world, our great classics should be presented in a form which appeals to the Modern Man and in terms which he can understand and appreciate. Such a work as *Manu Dharma Sastra* is essentially in a *sutra* form, originally preserved from the oral tradition and meant for scholastic purposes where the teacher is expected to elaborate the tenets of Manu with all the wealth of his knowledge for the edification of his students. Tradition has not preserved what the teachers of various schools have said on the subject and the extant commentaries are but a poor substitute for it. As the greatest of thinkers, Manu holds a unique place in our literature, his teachings have stood the test of time and the fundamental truths incorporated in his work regarding the Indian Historical tradition, the constituent elements of Man, his social behaviour, the pattern of the idealistic society, the inter-relationship of Man and Society and vice versa, and the healthy social life are ageless in spite of the diverse theories and experimentation by modern thinkers. To understand such a

text with the full bearing of its essential teachings and to present it in its re-oriented form is a very difficult task and Dr Motwani has done it in the most satisfactory manner.

Dr Motwani is a gifted writer, possessing a very agreeable style, capable of seizing upon the essentials out of a detailed mass of material and with a touch of imaginative genius of spinning out his own interpretation based on the teachings of Manu and its application to the present-day society. He always has a freshness of outlook in whatever he writes, as his little tract on *India's Ancient Literature* will indicate, and the magical charm of his style enchants the reader when an unexpectedly new vista is opened before his eyes. Though not a scholar of Sanskrit, his work is a standing monument to his industry, deep penetration and a very wide but selective reading. Opposed to the exhibitionism of a research scholar, he does not want to prove every single point with meticulous documentation. His role is that of an *Interpreter* of the ancient Indian Culture and it is enough for him if he does not deviate from the original text, in its most essential aspects, quoting his authority wherever necessary. We badly need such Interpreters of our National Wisdom, at this moment.

The book has been divided into two parts, the one treating the sociological aspect of the teaching of Manu and the other projecting the personality of Manu against the historical back-

ground across different ages and different climes. Consistent with his role, he has touched upon only those views which he wants to convey to his readers, although he has not failed to quote his authorities for the same. It is possible to differ from his views and many of the historical details but, in our opinion, it is undeniable that he has substantially presented the Indian Case which, in due course, will find staunch supporters both among the Indians as well as the dispassionate scholars of the West. It will take some time before the Indian scholarship comes up to the level of the Western scholarship. Unfortunately, neither the Ministry of Education, Government of India, nor the Universities realise the importance of a broad-based specialisation in the various aspects of Indology, co-ordination among scholars, frantic efforts to equip our libraries from research point of view, liberal endowments, scholarships and travelling purses to competent scholars which is the *sine qua non* of research in the West. It is these facilities that enable the Western scholar to make first-rate contribution to the world stock of knowledge. Bereft of all these, a serious-minded patriotic Indian has to wend his weary way, single-handed, and without any help of any kind because he dislikes the present ways and means of currying favour with the authorities and their advisers in the Ministry, Universities and Trusts of all kinds. He has to remain content with whatever sheaf he can lay his hand on in the gathering, although he sees a great harvest before his eyes! Dr Motwani also has suffered from want of these facilities. If Government could spare half the amount which is disproportionately spent on films, spectacles and *tamashas*, Indian scholarship will come to be respected by Western scholars and the glorious past of the ancient Indian civilisation will be unravelled by the indefatigable efforts of our scholars, successfully refuting the erroneous western theories regarding the relative lateness of India's past and the consequent linguistic theories which are so rampant to-day. Beginning with the story of Creation, it is now tentatively possible to enmesh the missing links to a certain extent with the aid of archaeology, linguistics, ethnography and other related sciences. The various historical documents, so far unearthed, throw a flood of light on events which are contemporaneous with the ancient Sumerian, Assyrian, Chaldaean, Egyptian and Minoan civilisations. The history of our ageless civilisation, thus presented in the most scientific manner, will have many psychological, political, social and ideological repercussions, in the old as well as the new world, the extent of which cannot be determined

at this stage. India has won her freedom and time will come when she will vindicate her past with a view to building up a Kingdom of God on this earth, in the living present and in the more hopeful future.

Dr Motwani, in the first part of his work, has dealt with all the important aspects of Manu Dharma Sastra and his first chapter on "Ideological Foundations" is a masterly presentation of Indian Culture in general and Indian Sociology in particular. He has eschewed all the laborious details while treating of our Educational Institution, the Family Life, the Political Institution, Religious Life and Social Stability and Progress in an inimitable manner explaining fully the basic ideology and its social and cultural significance which no other scholar has ever done before him. No doubt he stands as one of the pre-eminent spokesmen of our culture to the West, though in a restricted field of India's past and its undying social fabric which has stood its ground when other societies and civilisations have perished in the dust.

In the second part of his work, Dr Motwani traces the world-wide influence of Manu on the ancient societies and their law-givers, in a general way. The panoramic view of the ancient history unfolded by him, depending upon various authorities, has no doubt contributed to work up an hypothetical possibility of the indirect influence of Manu's teachings but one stands unconvinced of the claims made by our author in this respect. The fact is that in treading upon the ground of ancient history, where no interlinking is possible for want of documentary evidence of such a great antiquity, he has found himself in the vortex of all kinds of controversies. The scope of this part of his work is so vast and so ambitious that the summary disposal of controversial issues on esoteric grounds would not appeal to a common reader who demands factual presentation and documentary proof. It is possible that the other side may have an equally eloquent advocacy and then the entanglement becomes deeper. He has no doubt raised many an important question like the Sanskrit chronology, the basic idea of the Manvantara system and its confirmation by modern science, the history of the migrations of the Aryan peoples in every part of the globe, East, West, North and South, tracing the influence of Sanskrit in all these regions, and consequently of Manu also, which deserve careful consideration. It is also possible to supplement his information at many places in order to substantiate his point of view but it requires more space and a fuller treatment of the various

points involved. Instead of congesting his material within a space of about 170 pages, it would have been better if he had projected a special volume for this most important and enthralling study and done full justice to the different aspects of the question.

This is certainly not the place to enter into any controversial discussions regarding the historic role of Manu as Law-giver. We sincerely feel greatly obliged to our author for having produced his *chef-d'oeuvre* on Manu which will remain as a standing monument to his intrinsic ability, gift of imagination, a far-sighted vision, deep and penetrating study and above all an elevated and charming style which carries everything before it and leaves the reader in the land of enchantment!

Dr R. G. H.

THE HEART OF EMERSON'S JOURNALS:
Edited by Bliss Parry. (Dover Publications.
Inc. 180, Varick Street, New York 14, Pp 337.
Price \$1.85).

This is the first one volume collection of the personal diary — 'the hasty and informal writings' — of Ralph Waldo Emerson, which he started to compile when he was seventeen and finished off when he was seventy-two. He was one of the 'greatest thinkers of his age, and a contemporary of the mighty minds of his times, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Carlyle, Landor, Coleridge. Pen pictures of these personalities, lie strewn in, which attest to his keen powers of observation, and judgment. His opinions and views on various matters have been expressed in those pages, frankly — wit and wisdom run through every one of them; and his excursions into religion and philosophy show his catholicity and sense of world brotherhood. The strains of Hindu thought are discernible in his mental make up; and it is pleasing to note that he had Sanskrit literature in mind, when he said that he wished 'his life were 3000 years long whenever he read a good book' (p. 315).

He was American to the core: yet he had been its relentless critic, even of its best and at its best. 'The salvation of America and of the human race depends on the next election' (p. 240). 'Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, Carlyle and Macaulay, cannot be matched in America' (p. 282). 'If Socrates were here, we could go and talk with him: but Longfellow, we cannot go and talk with. There is a palace, servants, wine and coats' (p. 264). 'America should affirm and establish that guns should not go in advance of the perfect right' (p. 315).

'Wealth will vote for rum, tyranny and slavery' (p. 266). 'America is a vast know nothing party' (p. 278). 'You complain the Negroes are a base class. Who makes them and keeps them so but you?' (p. 319). 'America has immense resources but it is a village littleness' (p. 220). 'Judge the country by the minority. The mass are animal, in a state of pupillage' (p. 267).

On modern civilisation and its attitude towards things spiritual and secular, he had his own views which were expressed frankly and unequivocally. The extracts given below display the wide range of his intellect and mental powers. 'The human mind cannot be burned or bayoneted nor wounded' (p. 296). 'To be out of war, out of debt, and out of the dentist's hands — what an alleviator is sleep, which muzzles these' (p. 307). 'The only poetical fact in the life of thousands is their death' (p. 182). 'The blazing evidence of immortality is our dissatisfaction with any other system' (p. 270). 'The religions are obsolete when the reforms do not proceed from them' (p. 337). 'The Bible wears black cloth, comes with a certain official claim against which the mind revolts' (p. 311). 'In sceptical hours, when things go whirling astronomical facts make for sublime peace' (p. 125). 'All writing is by the grace of God'. 'We are apt to overstate the importance of our actions. Give yourself no anxiety about events, about the consequences of actions. There is another Director, Controller or Guide' (p. 39). 'The whole object of the universe is the formation of character.' 'It is right to ask God's blessing on us, to enumerate our wants, our sins, even our sentiments to the unseen Idea. There has been no man who never prayed' (p. 31). 'Material beauty perishes. Intellectual beauty limits admiration to seasons and ages, has its ebbs and flows. But moral beauty is lovely, imperishable, perfect' (p. 16). 'I would freely give all I ever hope to be, to do good to posterity, in a golden way' (p. 16). 'There is one distinction amid the fading phenomenon, which is eternal and real — the distinction between Right and Wrong'. 'What do I mean by morals? I cannot define. It is man's business to observe and the definition must be the slow result of years and lives' (p. 80). 'Miracles have ceased. Have they indeed? Pick up that pebble at your foot. Tell me what fiery inundation of the world gave this stone its shape? ... Where is the manufactory of this air, so thin, so blue, so restless, which eddies round you?' (p. 118).

Emerson was no man of religion in the conventional sense of the term, but a more devout

prayer to the Almighty had not been uttered than the one on the eve of his engagement to Ellen (p. 42); 'I have been for days engaged to Ellen. Will my Father in Heaven, regard us with kindness and as He hath as we trust, made us for each other, will He be pleased to strengthen and purify and prosper and eternise our affection?'

S. RAJAGOPALAN

REFLECTIONS ON THE TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI: By Mr S. S. Cohen. (Published by the Manager, Sri Ramanaswamiam, Tiruvannamalai, S. India. Pp. 180. Price Rs. 4.)

This is an abridged edition of the author's well known 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi,' which were a redaction of the substance of the conversations with and the observations by the Great Seer. These, rightly classed as 'gems,' are noteworthy as much for their simplicity and rationality, as for the liberal use of homely and apt similes and metaphors, illustrating great metaphysical doctrines, with a naivete and accuracy which are amazing to a degree.

Bhagavan Ramana was no philosopher in the technical sense nor had schooling in any system. Indeed, his was one of experience; and as Mr Cohen correctly observes (p. 170), 'realisation came to Him long before He had contact with any philosophy or doctrine. The result was that when He much later recounted his experiences in the ordinary language, the learned among the listeners, found them to be identical with Sankara's philosophy'. The Maharshi's doctrine is a logical consummation of Sankara's monism of 'Aham Brahma Asmi', and fitted in also with the theory of Gautama Buddha that the integration of the individual soul with the Ultimate Reality was a matter for individual experience. Sri Ramana himself has said (p. 160) that the 'whole Vedanta is compressed in the two Biblical statements, "I am that I am: Be still and know that I am God".'

The book under review could quite accurately be styled as a text book of Sri Ramana's philosophy. The author has adopted the method of the commentators on the Brahma Sutras; and his notes on each of the sayings of the Maharshi are erudite and lucid, surcharged throughout by intense devotion and dedication. It could have been no easy task to weld together utterances made on different occasions and contexts, to various types of people and present them as a connected narrative and exposition of a metaphysical system which on his showing, appeals both to the head and the heart. Perhaps the

best tribute to this extremely valuable treatise is that it has succeeded in indicating not only the core of the Bhagavan's teachings but their practicability and adaptability even in the humdrum existence of modern life.

Faith in God and in His Omniscience, is implicit in the Maharshi's system; and the Bhakti cult could not have had a more ardent champion. 'Recognise the force of the Divine will', he warns an enthusiast, 'and keep quiet. There is no need to let Him know your needs. He knows them Himself and will look after you' (p. 61). 'Every action is prompted only by Him' (p. 65). 'One must continuously and unceasingly think of Him' (p. 31). 'The Creator knows how to take care of His creation' (p. 58). 'Divine Grace is essential for realisation. But this grace is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or yogin, who had striven hard and ceaselessly for freedom' (p. 117).

'Sat Sang' is essential for the aspirant. 'Grace is necessary. God, Grace and Guru are synonymous. Sadhu Seva is meant only for it. Just as a physically weak man comes under the control of the stronger one, so does the weak-minded come easily under control in the presence of the stronger-minded' (p. 119).

A few other quotations might be made, which illustrate the various facets of the Bhagavan's philosophy.

'Re-birth does not happen, if you cease to have desires', (p. 24). 'Give up actions which are Bandha Hetu and cultivate those which are Mukthi Hetu' (p. 31). 'Brahmacharya is not celibacy alone, but finds bliss in Brahman which is the self' (p. 45). 'The simple man is satisfied with japa and worship. The trouble is with the book worm' (p. 75). 'There is no man who even for a trice fails to experience the self'. 'The Self is the Heart. When asked who you are, you place your hand on the right side of the chest and say I am. Unknowingly you point on the Self' (p. 104). 'Mouna is not closing the mouth. It transcends speech and thought' (p. 113). 'Vow of silence is helpful, but what is the good of keeping the mouth closed and letting the mind run riot. Nothing is as good as Dhyana' (p. 115). 'By Pranayama, the mind will be only temporarily quiescent, because the tendencies are still there. If the mind is transformed into the self it will no longer give trouble. That is done by meditation' (p. 154). 'External contacts make the mind restless. Vairagya is the first step. Then introspection and concentration follow, ending in Samadhi' (p. 120). 'Vairagya and Abhyasa bring about control of mind and con-

templation' (p. 150). 'A child and a Jnani are similar. The interests of the child in things end with the things. So also, in the case of the Jnani' (p. 169). 'The look of the Jnani has a purifying effect. Just as a piece of coal takes long to be ignited, a piece of charcoal takes a short time, but a mass of gunpowder is instantaneously ignited, so it is with grades of men coming into contact with the Mahatma' (p. 168).

The book needs to be translated into the various regional languages, so as to enable the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi reach a wider public

S. RAJAGOPALAN

SRIMAD VISHNU-TATVA-VINIRNAYA OF SRI MADHVACHARYA: By S. S. Raghavachar (Publisher: The President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mangalore) 1959. Pp. XXI, 98. Price Rs. 3.

Srimad Vishnu Tatva Vinirnaya is the most important among the prakarana granthas of Sri Madhvacharya who is a violent and uncompromising critic of Advaita Vedanta. An absolute realist that he is, Sri Madhva affirms the doctrines of five eternal differences, of the undeniable reality of the world, of Vishnu as the Supreme Reality and of the need of propitiating Him to obtain His grace for attaining salvation. In this work of 464 sections, he sets out his doctrines in pithy statements controverting the cardinal tenets of Advaita like abhedha, anirvachaniya-khyati, ajnana, maya etc., and advances his own interpretations of Sruti passages commented on by the Advaitin in support of his position. Sri Madhva buttresses his arguments by quotations from a number of not-so-well-known Upanishads. Without embarking upon a consideration of Sri Madhva's arguments, it may be pointed out that this work brings them together in a compact and concise form and focusses attention on the Realist's objections to Advaita. The dispute between the Dvaitins and the Advaitins, which dated from Sri Madhva's time has gone on down the centuries and very sharp intellects have participated in the fray. These doctrinal disputations have not resulted nowadays as in other times in vanquishing and annexing the opponents. If they have served any purpose, it is only to make each party state his position with greater clarity in the light of the criticisms offered and to deepen faith in one's own position. This is all to the good if the debate is conducted without acrimony or rancour. In fact controversy is the whetstone of conviction.

From this point of view, publications of the kind under review are to be welcomed. Sri S. S. Raghavachar has taken upon himself to bring out these works with the very laudable purpose of laying before his readers the contributions of differing thinkers on the metaphysical problems. This is his second publication, the first being Sri Ramanuja's *Vedartha Sangraha*. This book gives the text of Sri Madhva's work in Sanskrit following each section with an English translation which while retaining the conciseness of the original keeps faithful to it. Swami Adidevananda in his *Foreword* and the translator himself in his *Introduction* have provided a summary of the fundamentals of Dvaita philosophy which will be useful in following the text. It is to be hoped that this book will be followed by another setting forth a full exposition of the criticisms pithily conveyed in it. The printers, the Sharada Press, Mangalore are to be congratulated on the excellence of their work.

P. Sankaranarayanan.

SANSKRIT

SUGAMA: By Swami Sri Saccidananda Saraswati. Pub. Adhyatma Prakashana Karyalaya, Holenarsipur (Mysore). Pp. 16-115. Price Rs 1.50.

The *Adhyasa Bhasya* forming the introduction to Shankara's commentary on the Brahma Sutras, occupies a very important position in the Advaita dialectics. The Acharya expounds therein the concept of *adhyasa*, illusory superimposition, which accounts for the apparent reality of the empirical world in this Thought. Number of scholars have since taken up this topic and discussed it threadbare. The present work of Swami S. Saraswati, a fresh commentary on Shankara's *Adhyasa Bhasya*, is a notable addition to the literature on the subject and will be welcomed by all lovers of Sanskrit and the Vedanta.

As the title suggests, this work expounds in simple and understandable language the postulate, the objections and their weaknesses, and the inevitability of the Doctrine of *Adhyasa* with its attendant implications, closely following the text of Shankara. The author, who is an authentic interpreter of the Advaitic tradition today, draws upon *Sruti*, Scripture, but at the same time presses into service the arguments of Reason. The style is elegant and direct though the method of elucidation is happily traditional.

M. P. PANDIT

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, KHAR REPORT FOR 1957-58

The Mission celebrated Durga Puja and Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda with great eclat. Religious classes were held in various parts of Greater Bombay and also outside the city. The Free Reading Room and Shivananda Library is equipped with more than 8,000 books and 70 dailies in different languages. 4,400 books were issued and a good number of readers utilized the Reading Room every day. 80 students were admitted in the Home, out of which 65 appeared for their College and University examinations and 41 passed. The Charitable Hospital has Ayurvedic and Allopathic Dispensaries as well as an Indoor ward to accommodate six emergency cases, an Operation Theatre, X-Ray Department, Pathological Laboratory and Gynaecological, Ophthalmic and Dental sections. During the period under review, Earth Quake Relief in Kutch was conducted by the Bombay centre. Milk powder was distributed to poor children and adults. The Managing Committee thank the supporters and contributors and appeal to all to contribute liberally to enable the centre to progress with its noble services.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CALCUTTA STUDENTS' HOME REPORT FOR 1958

At the beginning of the year there were altogether 85 students, of whom 47 were free, 13 concession holders and 25 paying. But in the end the number came to 86 of whom 54 were free. Pecuniary help was given to 58 students belonging to several colleges towards their examination fees. There were 3,000 well-chosen books and 13 journals and 6 dailies in the library. 925 books were issued during the year. From the text book section, 749 copies were lent to the inmates. As usual ex-students are showing good interest in the maintenance of the Home. A technical institution, called the Ramakrishna Mission Shilpapiitha, for 540 students was opened

in July. While thanking the supporters and sympathisers the management appeal for generous contributions.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, CHINGLEPUT REPORT FOR 1957-58

The Chingleput Branch runs a Boys' High School, a Girls' High School, an Elementary School for Boys and Girls, a Boys' Residential Home (Hostel) and a small Printing Press. There were 17 teachers and 400 boys in the Boys' High School and 10 teachers and 256 girls in the Girls' High School in the year 1958. In the Elementary School there were 257 boys and 194 girls and 14 teachers. The Boys' Residential Home is a Paying Boarders' Hostel attached to the Boys' School. Prayer, study, work and games are in the daily routine of the inmates. It is proposed to put up a three storeyed building consisting of a kitchen, a dining Hall and about 12 decent rooms. The Printing Press was inaugurated in 1955 with a very modest equipment to get the printing work required for the institutions. The Managing Committee express their heartfelt thanks to the well-wishers, and supporters and donors and appeal for donations.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, JALPAIGURI REPORT FOR 1958

During the year under report 20,156 patients were treated in the Charitable Dispensary, of whom 6,255 were new cases. The maternity and child welfare centre had 133 expectant mothers in the indoor hospital and 4,198 were visited in the house. Milk was distributed to 50,335 children and 10,120 mothers. The Students' Home had 15 boys in the Ashrama. The Harijan School and Night School had 28 and 22 students respectively. 2,825 books were issued from the library. Holy birthdays were celebrated as usual and religious discourses were regularly given. While thanking the sympathisers the management appeal for funds for the Students' Home and specially for the incomplete temple.

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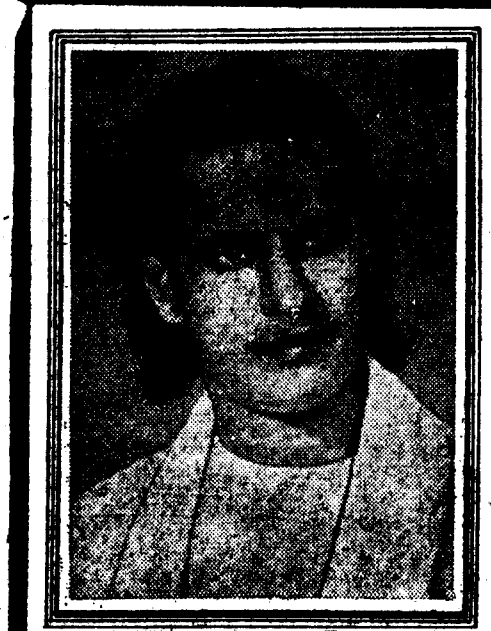
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DECEMBER, 1959

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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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No. 8

HOW EVEN THE GREAT ONES SURRENDER

Pandit Sasadhar was one of the renowned Sanskrit scholars of his time — a pillar of orthodox Hinduism. His exposition of Hindu religion was the one talk everywhere in Calcutta.

One afternoon Pandit Sasadhar was to come to see Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. The Master got afraid like a boy, thinking that he himself could not even read and write. But when the pandit arrived, the Master became a different person. He was in a state of partial consciousness, his lips slightly quivering with a smile. He then said affectionately : 'You are a pandit ; please say something.'

Sasadhar : 'Sir, my heart has dried up because of my studying philosophy. So I have come to you to have a little of the sap of devotion. Therefore, please say yourself something and let me listen.'

Sri Ramakrishna described himself this incident thus : 'I was much afraid when I heard the pandit would come. I said to the Mother, "I don't know the Sastras and philosophy ; I know only You, Mother ; please protect me Yourself !" Mother then showed me that the study of Sastras, etc., is of no avail, if there is no detachment and discrimination. Immediately afterwards something crept up to the head, and all fear vanished. I felt a flow of words gushing out of my mouth. The more words came out, the more were pushed forward by someone from within. But I did not know at all what I said. When a little consciousness came, what I saw was that he (the pandit) was weeping. He was completely changed.'

At the end of his Bhavasamadhi Sri Ramakrishna said affectionately : 'Oh pandit, I have seen you through and through ; you are good. You too will finish telling others of Him, and will go, never to come back.'

Pandit Sasadhar : 'It is all through your grace.' His heart melted into tears ; again and again he took the dust of Sri Ramakrishna's feet.

A little later, Pandit Sasadhar gave up preaching and went to Kamakhya-pitha to practise tapas.

IN SEARCH OF SECURITY

Search for security is the lot of man from the beginning of his history. For physical safety he, as a primitive man, had to fight against the natural forces and other creatures. With the growth of civilization, the uncertainty and anxiety lessened a little but still it remained the dominant note in the life of man. The different movements inspired by ethics, philosophy and politics are all busy in finding out the material security for him. Science and technology are primarily aimed at that. For physical security, food is the first thing that is necessary. Man has given up his nomadic life in search of a peaceful, secure life of agriculture. Every improvement of the means of production has helped him to meet this requirement. With the growth of industrialization, the economic forces have gone out of control of the common man. In earlier days there might not have been much of the modern conveniences but man was the master of his situation. The village community was more or less self-contained and self-supporting regarding the basic necessities of life. To fight other creatures man had to live in groups. Individuals however were joined in a natural family. The undivided family was the order of the day. It had many advantages too, for it provided security to weaker members.

With the change of the rural structure of society, the individual hold over land, the direct means of getting food, was gone out of the hands of the individual. New methods had to be found out for providing security to man in old age and illness, which was provided earlier by the joint family in such circumstances. Various social security measures thus evolved with the passage of time. Several countries in the West have developed

so much in this direction that their citizens are insured against all eventualities. The recent move of the Communists to have the communes is yet another search for finding out the complete security for all people in the shortest possible time. It is claimed that all possible securities are assured in this system, for everyone is an equal member of the society. But this requires total regimentation which is very much resented by educated people. The Sarvodaya movement wants to provide almost the same security but through democratic means and voluntary efforts. This is the goal of human endeavour, the utopia of social workers, to provide complete material security to man, without losing freedom if possible.

Security of the basic necessities of life is essential. Without some measure of this security no higher thinking is possible. As Sri Ramakrishna has said, 'Religious life is not possible for empty stomachs.' But it has been reported recently from Sweden, the most progressive country in the West in providing the social securities, that too much security is also not so good for man. A large number of cases of mental disturbance and neurosis prove that there must be something in the environment of man to fight against, so that he finds a purpose in life. And the requirement of fight keeps him alert. Moreover, man does not live by bread alone is a valid saying.

The instinct of self-preservation is predominantly evident in the primitive man as well as in children. It is present in every being too. But then there are other securities the necessity of which is felt by man. Emotional security is a great need for the proper growth of children. The troubles and agony

through which the adolescents and young people pass are due to unknown fields of experience and uncertainties of life. If they have suitable emotional security through the love of relatives and friends the adjustment becomes easy. Much of delinquency and anti-social attitudes are often traced to the feeling of insecurity in childhood and not so much to physical insecurity.

Then there is the question of spiritual security. Dr Jung says that for a vast majority of people after 35, the urgent need is to find out the purpose of life. Often psychological troubles have been traced to the lack of a goal of life.

We can enumerate other securities viz., the economic, military, intellectual and the like. But they may be included more or less in the broader classification of physical, mental and spiritual. When a man is possessed with a purpose he can ignore other securities and take risks. This can be seen in the austerity and hardship courted by religious men, patriots, soldiers, scholars, adventurers and many others. Insecurity as such, as we said, is not always bad. It makes a man of better mettle.

Spiritual security must be discovered by every man in his own heart. Now-a-days doctors and psychologists advise people to be engaged in purposeful, creative activity. This of course must be supplemented by the intellectual understanding of the scheme of the universe and one's own place in it. The spiritual understanding that there is One who is the root of all, can give a permanence to this sense of security. Religions down the ages have preached of surrender to God, which automatically gives security even to the despondent soul.

As an antidote to the feeling of insecurity and fear, cultivation of the positive attitudes of courage and strength is also necessary. Danger is not so much in

objective situations as in our thinking. If the attitude of fight and not submission is cultivated, much of the worries regarding the future will melt away. Even when there is real difficulty, an attitude of fearlessness and strength will make man more capable to face the situation better. Fearlessness hence has been described as a cardinal virtue. Swami Vivekananda exhorted his countrymen in despair in these energizing words :

What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, oh mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, and not matter. It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies that piteously cry, 'Weak, weak, we are weak'. What the nation wants is pluck and scientific genius. We want great spirit, tremendous energy and boundless enthusiasm, no womanishness will do. It is the man of action, the lion-heart, that the goddess of wealth resorts to. No need of looking behind. Forward! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, and infinite patience, then only will great things be achieved.

In our scriptures God has been identified with Abhayam, fearlessness. The Gita considers abhayam as a sattvic quality. Its great usefulness has been forcefully presented by a noted writer thus :

Who is there who today is not enveloped by mundane fears — fear of starvation, of nakedness, of poverty; fear of myriad possessions, of plenty, of prosperity which may be lost; everyone's life is permeated with insecurity and security is sought through armies and aircraft, and in other dubious ways. Courage alone feels security, for through it a man gains his own Soul by losing the whole world. This courage alone is the help of the helpless and in dire calamity it stands its possessor in good stead. Did it not enable Gandhiji to die with under-

standing in his heart, love in his mind, forgiveness on his lips?

(B. P. Wadia : *Thus have I heard*, p. 378.)

Shakespeare's advice in such a situation is worth noting :

'Tis true that we are in great danger ;

The greater therefore should our

courage be.

Strength is the greatest security against all weakness. Weakness of body, mind, and soul can each be counteracted by the corresponding strength. The mind being stronger than the body, the mental strength can engender even physical strength to a large extent. Spiritual strength however is the best.

In the scriptures mention has been made of various methods of cultivating the spiritual strength. Surrender to the Divine Being is the easiest method, suitable for most people. In the Vaishnavite books, different factors of surrender have been noted. Of these, there is one which asks us to have 'faith that He will protect' — *Rakshishyati iti visvāsah*. Faith in the existence of God and in His mercy has a great sustaining power.

Great souls also can infuse faith and courage in us by their bold assertion born of realization. Sri Sankara in his *Vivekachudamani* rises to this height when he declares :

Fear not O learned one, there is no death for thee ; there is a means of crossing this sea of samsara ; that very way by which sages have gone beyond it, I shall inculcate to thee. (43)

God is the only ultimate refuge of man. Property, friends and society are only relative ones. As Acharya Nimbarka says, 'There is no refuge other than the lotus feet of Krishna' — *Nānyā gatih Kṛṣṇapadāravindāt*. The *Gita*, that mine of advice regarding all human situations, says :

And having obtained which, a man regards no other acquisition superior to that, and

where established, he is not moved even by heavy sorrow ; — let that be known as the state called by the name of Yoga — a state of severance from the contact of pain. (VI. 22-23)

Sri Krishna Himself proclaims about His devotee :

Soon does he become righteous, and attain eternal Peace, O son of Kunti ; boldly canst thou proclaim, that My devotee is never destroyed. (IX. 31)

When we read this we know we are safe in His care as soon as we take His refuge. The burden of sin and misdeeds often hangs heavy on us. Sri Krishna assures :

Relinquishing all Dharmas take refuge in Me alone ; I will liberate thee from all sins ; grieve not. (XVIII. 66)

When surrender or the path of devotion is most suited to many people, there are other natures who require other methods. The Stoic philosophers practised determinedly all endurance. Their motto was, as said by Marcus Aurelius, 'A man's life is what his thoughts make of it'. And they applied this principle in their life. The spiritual aspirants following the path of knowledge go to the roots and build up their strength. According to the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 'fear comes from the existence of a second one'. But the Vedānta asserts that there is only one existence, one reality and hence there is no cause of fear. So the jnanis doggedly practise the art of avoiding reaction to all pairs of opposites like happiness and sorrow. As the *Gita* puts it :

Having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and defeat, the same, engage thou then in battle. So shalt thou incur no sin. (II. 38)

For regular practice it advises further :

He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after happiness,

who has become free from affection, fear and wrath, is indeed the Muni of steady wisdom. (II. 56.)

The yogis however have perfected the method of mind-control. It is in the mind of man that all feelings of fear, worry, anxiety and insecurity are born. If a man gets control over his mind he becomes the master of the situation. So *Rajayoga* advises the method of meditation through gathering, fixing and concentrating of the mind. As a result, mastery of the mind is achieved, which frees a yogi from all unpleasant feelings.

The followers of the path of karma however consciously practise detachment and action. Action has been accepted as an antidote to all paralyzing emotions like fear and insecurity. The practice of detachment gives a strong mental fibre to the man of action.

Thus through these various disciplines the scriptures try to take us to a haven of peace and security. The spiritual method is not a palliative or a tranquilliser, meant for temporary relief. It goes to the root of the problem and has no adverse effects. As this leads to the highest goal of life, there will be no necessity to discard it on the way.

The above ones are the broad divisions of spiritual discipline to attain peace, happiness and security. Even if they are practised partially they are cap-

able of giving man a great measure of the sense of security. As the *Gita* puts it :

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.)

The disciplines need not be thought of as difficult. The approach to God is very simple. Believe now and make it a reality. Practise it right now and you get the benefit. God has been described in the theistic systems as Father or Mother. A child feels most secure in the arms of its parents. As God becomes real in our life, the feeling of all insecurity vanishes. The growth of terribly destructive weapons have brought in now-a-days new insecurities, for inner life has not been elevated. Modern economics and politics have made individuals helpless regarding external situations. It is only in the inner life he is still the master. So if the feeling of insecurities, physical, mental or spiritual, troubles him, he has got the mechanism of diving deep into his soul and forget the environment for the time being and come back with renewed strength, hope and faith to face the situation better. If genuine love for God develops, He Himself will take the reins of his life. And there will be no more any fear. Such a man will rock in the everlasting arms of God.

'Thinking all the time that we are diseased will not cure us ; medicine is necessary. 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.'

'Despondency is not religion, whatever else it may be. By being pleasant always and smiling, it takes you nearer to God, nearer than any prayer.'

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

AT THE HOLY FEET OF M.

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI DHARMESHANANDA

21st March, 1931.

I went to the roof of M.'s school building at 8 p.m. and after making obeisance to M. asked: Did the foreign ladies come here?

M.: Yes, I saw one in Udbodhan the other day: Are there three in all?

I.: No, there are two. It is the same one that came here today.

M.: Oh, I see.

Himangshu: Isn't there one belonging to Madras?

I.: Yes, she is staying in Chandra Babu's house. She goes to Udbodhan every day to recite hymns.

Himangshu: Her recitation is fine. She studies Sanskrit too.

I.: Yes, she is a very sincere and ardent devotee. She has got her husband to take another wife and is now staying here in order to be close to her Guru. She tried to find a place somewhere near the Math: she goes there every now and then. Mahapurush Maharaj treats her with affection. She is energetic and has learnt Bengali and Hindi. Whoever hears her reciting the hymns says she is deeply religious, otherwise it is not possible to develop such a sweet voice.

M.: Really! She appears to be just like Mira. It is said that Mira in a similar way left her husband and went on pilgrimage. It must be true, because now we have here a living replica of the original Mira. How wonderful it is! What a marvellous devotion to God!

I.: And Faper (an American lady) and Omba (this Madras lady) are so devoted to each other that on their occasional visits to the railway station when Omba boards the train for Madras they burst into tears although they do not know each other's language and make themselves understood by means of signs only. One feels amazed to see this communion of

thoughts between two such ladies of different races.

M.: That is devotion indeed, but in spite of all this devotion, the sadhus have to keep them at a distance. To the sadhu women should be what saucers and tamarinds are to the sick. One day the Master lavished high praise on a woman of a devotional type and told them all to go to the Panchavati to have a look at her. On their failure to return after a considerable time the Master sent somebody to fetch Rakhai Maharaj. On the latter's re-appearance the Master said 'Why did you go there? Did I tell you to go? What I said was only meant for people to whom women are a great attraction'. So you see that sort of thing is not meant for sadhus. Afterwards I visited the house of one of those people and asked him how he found her. He said, 'Oh, she is more advanced than the Master himself', I laughed and said to myself, 'That is why the Master says that they make one forget even God himself'. Do you know the story of 'what a nice sadhu sanga (company of holy men) I have got'?

In a lonely place a monk seeing a nun at a distance of about a mile from him ran in rapid strides to her and said 'what a nice sadhu-sanga I have at last found'. Just see to his sadhu-sanga; as if he could not find a better company of a sadhu except in the person of a woman. This is why a sadhu should always keep himself aloof.

25th July, 1931.

After attending a lecture in the Theosophical Society Hall in College Square I, on my way to the Mother's place at Bagh Bazar, stopped to see M. in his school building in Amherst street at 8 P.M. M. was then running temperature and had shifted to this building from his resi-

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AT THE HOLY FEET OF M.

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dence at 13/2 Guru Prasad Choudhury Lane. It was a four-storied building, open on all sides, the rooms being very big with high ceilings. M. called it his Sanatorium. I found him seated on the open terrace facing west, with Amrit Babu, Amulya Babu and a few other devotees. A second-year student was also present. I made obeisance, sat down, and then asked, "Have you taken rice-diet today?"

M.: No, I took Khichuri today. I am still weak, though free from temperature. Have you been to the Math recently?

I.: Yes, I went on Wednesday.

M.: At what time?

I.: I went there in the morning and returned at about 5-30 in the afternoon. The sadhus had a discussion among themselves from three to five after which I came back.

M.: Yes, you should go there often.

I.: It is difficult to go there very frequently. And in the morning I have to be engaged in other work (Editorial work for Udbodhan).

M.: You can go whenever you can make time and spend a couple of hours there. What were the subjects discussed in today's meeting?

I.: What is the aim of a sadhu's life? And what is the aim of the human life? How is that aim to be achieved? What is the path to be followed for realising God (Jnana, Karma or Bhakti)? What are the impediments on the way to this realisation and how to proceed about it, and so on. And there were mutual questions and answers, somewhat like a debate. Some had come with points jotted down. H. Maharaj had some questions in writing.

M.: Was Sudhir Maharaj there? And Nagen Maharaj, Girija Maharaj?

I.: Yes, Girija Maharaj was there.

M.: Really? And what did he say?

I.: He said, 'We are all doing so much disinterested work but do not feel as if we are making any progress within ourselves. Can it be that we are not proceeding in the right way? It looks as if there is some snag somewhere.'

M.: That was very well said. He seems to have spoken straight out of his heart.

Amulya Babu: Was it something like a debate?

I.: To a certain extent, yes. But it was more like a discussion than anything else.

M.: Did not A. Maharaj say anything?

I.: Yes, he said, 'In the Srimad Bhagavata Lord Krishna says to Uddhava, "I love you dearly and therefore I will tell you the secret of Yoga. As long as you do not see God in all created beings you should prostrate yourself with reverence before all—even before such lower animals as cows and asses." So religion does not consist in reading scriptures only but in precepts translated into actions'.

M.: Yes, he has spoken rightly—so what he meant to say was that Bhakti (devotion) lies at the root of all. Isn't that so?

I.: The gist of what he said, however, was that religion begins where philosophy ends. Reading and speaking about religion leads one nowhere until it is put into action.

M.: Swami Vivekananda very often used to say in the language of Hamilton 'A learned ignorance is the end of philosophy and the beginning of religion'. He would never characterise academical dissertations as religion and very often used to tell us regretfully, 'Sankaracharya's philosophy is just enjoyable to Pandits'. In other respects, however, he would refer to him with great reverence; only he attached little importance to his dialectics. Can one attain God-realisation by these academic discussions? If God could be realised through meetings and votes only, it would have been so easy indeed! Anyway this is better than killing time in fruitless and idle gossip. To be an adept in anything you require a preceptor from the very start. The dispensary is stocked with all kinds of medicines which are all efficacious in a variety of diseases. But you have to follow the instructions of the doctor who diagnoses your case and tells you what particular medicine to take for your ailment. Otherwise if you go on taking them promiscuously there will be end of you. Therefore a guru is necessary. You can see therefore that Bhakti is the main thing. It means

complete devotion to Him, loving Him in word, thought and deed. The Gita says :

मच्चित्ता मद्रतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ।

(X. 9)

'With their minds wholly in Me, with senses absorbed in Me, mutually enlightening, and always speaking of Me, they (devotees) are satisfied and delighted.'

With your hands you are offering Him flowers and sandal paste, for Him you visit holy places, in your heart you are always contemplating Him and meditating on Him. And with kindred souls you are talking only about Him. One who devotes his mind entirely to Him is faced with no difficulty whatsoever. He has Himself given an assurance in the Gita :

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ।

(IX. 22)

'I bear the burden of those who are wholeheartedly devoted to Me without thought of anything else'. You need not worry about your food and raiment. He will provide you with these. When you have made Him your sole refuge can He avoid looking after you? You have to devote your entire heart and soul to Him and think of Him to the exclusion of everything else.

Amrit Babu : Then what is to be done to Him in thought, word and deed?

I (to M.) : Surrender to Him completely, isn't it?

M. : Yes, devotion and love, complete and unreserved. That is all.

The sky was getting cloudy and he was ill, on account of which it was suggested that he should go in. His reply was, 'With such a beautiful moon shining, can one feel like going in?'

I : What do you take in the night, bread or anything else? I was thinking to feed M. with something if he would accept it kindly and praying to Lord for it when he suddenly expressed his desire in the following way.

M. : To day I hope to take fruits only. Now at present I am under such kind of diet :

but I do not like chapati as it does not suit me, moreover, I like to change the monotony of diet.

I : Don't you like loaves?

M. : Oh, nobody offers me at all.

Then we left him after paying due reverence to him.

27th July, 1931, Monday at 7-15 P.M.

M. was sitting at the courtyard of the ground floor of the school building and talking with Dr Madhu Babu, 79 year old Allopathic physician. M.'s son Prabhas Babu was also present. I went in and took my seat on a bench. After half an hour M. came to me and I accompanied him upstairs, carrying a lamp. He rested for some time on the first floor. Standing on the verandah and looking at the street he said, 'I feel I am in a Sanatorium'. I gave him the loaf of bread called milk roll which I brought for him. He instructed his servant to have it properly toasted and then went up to the top-most roof of the building where he offered his greetings to the visitors already assembled. He also told me to sprinkle a few drops of Ganges water on the loaf of bread.

M. : A. Maharaj came today. He is now staying in Dakshineswar. He said that he would be going very soon to some quiet retreat for meditation and spiritual austerities. He said he felt love for God but he was not advancing much towards his cherished goal. (Looking at us) Love for God! is it so easy! That is seen only in divine incarnations. Our Master as is well known, never spoke about himself; so he gave the example of Sita and said, 'Sita in the Ashoka grove was almost on her last legs due to starvation and sleeplessness. Yama (Death) went to take her but came back baffled because he found her soul was not in her body, it was with Rama.' This is called love, absolutely immersed in the beloved, without any thought of anything else. With water all round it the chataka will not take a drop of anything except rain water. What a wonderful love for rain drops! This is devotion, not asking anyone for anything except the cherished one. I told all this to A. Maharaj. Bhola (grand son) was flying a kite

when I asked him for a glass of water. He did not hear me at all, his mind was so deeply engrossed in the kite. So I had to tell the servant to fetch me the water. See the boys' attachment for kites : they go to bed thinking of them and even dream of them. Day and night their one thought is of kites and threads. With a kite in their possession they are oblivious of everything else, and even the risk of falling from the roof is no terror for them. This is called love. It is this kind of love which makes a sadhu. It is in response to the prayers of sadhus that God comes down on earth to demonstrate the nature of divine love. It is not a question of putting on ochre robes only. One can be sadhu even without changing the colour of his cloth. That is only to help them in their

progress towards God. One has to pray to Him always. Studying Vedantic scriptures is undoubtedly useful but that itself does not help much in engendering love for Him. The Master told Hari Maharaj, 'What are you ploughing the scriptures for? Will they help you to realise God? That is possible only through intense love.'

Then M. went in for his dinner and sent a nice dish for me also through Bhola and came back to feed me affectionately. Amrit Babu accompanied me to the gate with the lamp in his hand. He offered me carriage-hire which I refused. He said, 'I often see that sadhus refuse to accept anything'.

(To be continued.)

AN OLD RECOLLECTION

AMULYA BANDHU MUKHERJEE

On the inspiration of Revered 'Kedarbaba' (Swami Achalanandaji), we started from Mymensingh (East Bengal) for Calcutta in the year 1917 on the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. Enjoying the grand ceremony, we set forth after a few days by 8-30 A.M. train for the Holy Mother's house at Jayaramvati. At 2-30 P.M. we reached Vishnupur. Taking our noon meal in the house of Sri Sureswar Sen, a disciple of the Holy Mother, we started at about 7 P.M. on a bullock cart. All through the night the cart was on its way. At 9 A.M. we reached the Koalpara Ashrama and heard of Mother's indisposition. She was suffering from blood-dysentery for 10 or 12 days. Hearing this I was quite disappointed. Revd. Kedarbaba assured me, 'Don't be disappointed. A man will come to-day from Jayaramvati. We can get her news from him.' No one was allowed to go to Her place without the permission of that Koalpara Ashrama, as the Swamis had forbidden anyone's visit to her in her ailment. Through God's grace a man came in the afternoon with the news that just on that day

Mother took food, Revd. Keshav Maharaj asked me to start for Jayaramvati. At about 6 in the evening I reached the village. Revd. Jnan Maharaj took me to Mother. This is my first darshan of her. I was overjoyed. She was standing in her own room. I prostrated myself before her. She asked me, 'Where from do you come?' I replied, 'Dacca, Bikrampur.' Mother said, 'Bangaal'. She generally told this word with affection. She gave me a sweet-meat as prasad. With this prasad I returned to Jnan Maharaj's room for rest.

I was called at 9 in the night for meal. Along with two other disciples I sat for meal. Mother came to supervise, saying at intervals, 'Eat well'. After finishing the meal the other two disciples were going to take the leaves on which they ate for throwing out. Mother told them, 'Don't take the leaves; there are men to do it.' While I was also doing the same a disciple told me, 'Mother has forbidden, why are you taking?' I replied, 'We are carrying out all her orders, only this one will be exempted.' Mother laughed at this and said,

'Just see, how intelligent this tender boy is, as he is a Bangaal!' Mother did not forbid me in my removing the leaf.

In the night I sat near Revd. Jnan Maharaj and told him about my initiation (Diksha). He promised to approach Mother next morning. In the morning Jnan Maharaj went out for work. Even at 9 A.M. he did not return. I was extremely worried, as I was to leave the place on the very day. At that time men were harassed much by the Police. No one was allowed to put up there for more than one day. Holy Mother also did not give initiation except during the time of worship in the morning. At this time Manmatha Babu (Radhudidi's husband) came and asked me, 'Can you sing?' I replied, 'Yes'. Of course, I could not sing very well. 'Please sing one.' 'No, Sir, my mind is now quite restless.' 'Why?' 'Jnan Maharaj told me that he would speak to Mother about my initiation. Just see, it is 9 o'clock, still he has not yet returned.' Manmatha Babu said, 'I will tell her.' I was very much relieved, I was then taken to Mother. She was at that time dressing the vegetables on the courtyard. Manmatha Babu said, 'Mother, this boy has come to you for initiation'. Mother asked me, 'Have you brought any letter from Sarat?' In those days no unknown man without introduction letters could get initiation because of police disturbance. I told, 'No Mother.' She asked, 'Is any one known to you in Belur Math?' I replied 'Yes, Mother. I am known to Revd. Rakhai Maharaj.' 'With Rakhai! Well, wait here after bath, I shall call you.' With extreme joy I was waiting after bath. Only for Manmatha Babu I was going to be blessed, but he did not request me to sing anymore.

This 13th March, 1917 A.D., is the best day of my life. At about 11 A.M. the call came. I went to Mother's room and sat beside her. She asked me, 'Who are all there in your house?' I replied to the point. She asked me to recite the Gayatri. After my doing this, she enquired, 'What are you? A Sakta or a Vaishnava?' After my reply she said, 'Pray to Sri Ramakrishna, "Forgive my sins of this and the next world".' Then she gave me a Mantra

and asked me to recite it twelve times. After my doing so, she gave another Mantra and showed me the process of recitation. She said 'Recite it 108 times every day, morning and evening'. She also told that God Himself is both the Ishta and the Guru. I offered one thin red bordered cloth and some fruits to her as offering to the Preceptor. She unfolded her hands and took it, saying 'What was the necessity of your giving me the cloth?' With joy I prostrated myself at her feet. Mother said 'See, I am not doing well, only yesterday I took my diet.' I replied, 'Yes, Mother, I know, it is only through your grace I am initiated.' She gave me offered 'halooa' and parched rice to eat. Having this I went to the outhouse and was wondering how it was possible for her to know that I am a Brahmin though my body was covered with cloth, for she asked me to recite the 'Gayatri', how she knew also the first Mantra which I got in a dream before, or the second one prevalent in our family. I was really perplexed.

When we went for meal, I requested Mother to give me prasad. Mother told, 'You can have it afterwards. Now go on.' At the time of our eating she was telling at intervals, 'Son, eat well, to your full'. After our meal we went to the outhouse and took rest. Mother called us after a while and gave the sacred food. I asked permission for leaving the hermitage, as I was to go to Kamarpukur. Mother said, 'Offer food to Shitala and Raghuvir there. Staying there at night, start for Calcutta in the morning. Go carefully, you are too young. On going to the Belur Math convey my affectionate blessings to Baburam.' Now, I took the Charanamrita and the prasad of sugar candy. Bowing down to her I prayed, I should not be enticed by your illusion that has charmed the whole world, and I should have devotion to your feet.' Hearing this prayer of mine, She gazed at me, but did not tell anything.

I started for Kamarpukur and reached there at about 5 P.M. I bowed down to Shibadada. He very kindly showed me everything. With joyful heart I passed the night in the holy place. Next day I returned to Calcutta and

met Revd. Baburam Maharaj in the Math and told him in detail about the affectionate blessings of Mother. On hearing this, he said, 'What can I say, only grace, grace, grace. Remember this grace of Mother. Don't be ungrateful. What is she you will understand later on. At present none of us has the power to realise. It is she who, in due course, would let you realise this. Only remember her now. She is doing anything for the welfare of man-

kind. She has even given up looking after her own health and comfort.'

Thus Baburam Maharaj became overwhelmed while speaking about the Holy Mother. It appeared to me that he was not able to finish speaking of Mother's greatness. I was greatly charmed to hear of the greatness of Mother from him. Along with that it seemed to me that Mother sent me to Revered Baburam Maharaj to hear all about her greatness.

THERE THE VAST BLACK SKY

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

There the vast black sky glitters in moonlight :
Why then burn a lamp inside my room ?
Do not hedge me with māyā — snap love's ties.
Let me run far away and disappear.
When again will there be such a lovely night ?
There the vast black sky glitters in moonlight.

Gently on the papiya's ardent song
The heavens and earth are floating. Vina, cease :
Quietly come and listen to the bird.
Death approaches me with a mother's love :
What use is life now, if I cannot die ?
There the vast black sky glitters in moonlight.

Done is my play, my selling and buying ;
Settled are my accounts, my debts and dues.
Mother, take me in Thy arms — I am tired.
Carry me where vast black blends with vast white.
There the vast black sky glitters in moonlight.

THE IDEAL OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD

SWAMI MAITHILYANANDA

Samkhya, the oldest philosophical system of India admits and establishes the principles, the male and female. The female principle is always associated with the functions of creation, maintenance, and dissolution. These functions come into operation only when the female principle finds its close proximity with the male principle. The male principle possesses the qualities of constant purity, alertness, and freedom. So it stands eternally aloof from any contamination arising out of dualism and any urge of functional movement.

According to the doctrine of Shakti which is as old as the earliest Vedic period and even far more ancient on the evidence of the modern discoveries at Mahenjodaro and Harappa, the male and female principles find altogether a different interpretation. The two principles are inseparably one like word and its meaning, milk and its whiteness, fire and its burning property, and gem and its lustre.

Sri Ramakrishna gives an illustration of the doctrine, by pointing out the static and dynamic characters of the snake, while it rests, and while it moves.

There is one doctrine which is known as Ardha-nariswaravada. In it God has been described as half-man and half-woman, showing thereby the co-existence of the two in one and the same personality. Both the principles make up the whole conception of God.

All these extra-mundane conceptions are to be found in Indian philosophy.

As we probe into the details of Indian culture, we find that the Indians, be they rich or poor, learned or illiterate, treat all unknown woman either young or old as 'Mother'. Even the farmers, coolies, common sailors, and the people coming from the lowest strata of society are found to behave towards women in general with respect, reverence, and tenderness worthy of the 'Mother'. In the pages of the celebrated Chandi, all women have been described as so

many sparks of the Divine Creatrix. '*Striah samastah sakala jagatsu*' i.e. 'All women in the world, endowed with various attributes, are, O Devi, so many aspects of Thine.' Manu, the law-giver has extolled the glory of woman in the household. He describes that wherever women are honoured, all gods rejoice, and wherever they are dishonoured all religious ceremonies and observances become fruitless. Even a small girl in an Indian home is addressed as 'Mother' by both the father and the mother of the child. In this connection, Swami Vivekananda used to say, 'To a Hindu, the very word "woman" means a "Mother".' Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'All the women you see are only She, the Divine Mother. That is why I cannot rebuke even Brinda, the maid-servant'.

Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi made practical applications of the age-old traditions in ways peculiar and unique to the modern age. Sri Ramakrishna found in his spiritual consort the fullest manifestation of the Divine Mother. Not only that, he worshipped her as the veritable Goddess and completely dedicated himself at her feet, after having offered the fruits of his life-long sadhana to her. Sri Sarada Devi in her turn developed in herself such a sense of universal motherhood that she not only became a mother to her husband, but also to her innumerable disciples, friends, relations and to all, be they easterns or westerns, be they Hindus or Mohammedans, be they men or women. Her sense of motherhood extended over the beasts and birds, trees and creepers, and to all that surrounded her.

Although a woman has had in the world the roles of a daughter, a sister, a wife, and a mother, she finds herself fully developed in character, when motherhood becomes uppermost in her. This is why it has been stressed: 'Motherhood is the beginning, motherhood is the end of Indian womanhood.'

SRI SARADA DEVI

(An Appreciation)

ANDAL VENKATASUBBA RAO

It is good for us to learn what we can of the life of Sri Sarada Devi and try to realise how such a study can help us in the daily problems of our confused lives.

Sri Sarada Devi was an ideal woman, one whose personality was more irradiated with the divine than is the lot of common clay, and who therefore is called an Indian Madonna and a type of ideal Indian womanhood like Sita or Savitri. Legends have gathered round Sri Sarada Devi, but she is no mythical figure; she was born just a century ago and died in 1920, after the first world war and in the midst of the crumbling of the materialistic ideas of the early twentieth century; many of her younger contemporaries are living today and there are authentic photographs of the Holy Mother and records of her actions and talk. It is worthwhile for us all to study how Sri Sarada Devi came to be recognised as a saintly woman to whom devotion is due, such devotion having the power to clear our understanding and strengthen our spiritual efforts.

Her Life. The outward events of Sri Sarada Devi's life follow a pattern that is bizarre in no way, but which seems so familiar that the same events might have happened in the lives of many other women; and yet there is in the centre of it a mystery which is felt only by its effects. Many an Indian woman whose early life was full of bright hopes which were blighted later by circumstance, compares herself to Sita in exile and is comforted by the thought that Destiny was cruel to Janaka's daughter also; this ideal of courage in loneliness is the blessing conferred by Sita on womanhood; but there is only one Sita in the world's eternity. Sri Sarada Devi is another type of peerless womanhood, an individual woman that has power to bless and enlighten those that come to learn of her. She was born of poor

and pious parents and married at the age of six. Her husband was eighteen years older than her and his parents planned a marriage for him, so that the love of a wife and family cares might later hold him back from that devotion to God to which he was getting addicted. When Sarada Devi grew up to womanhood, her husband had already given himself up wholly to saintly ways; she accepted the fact that he was a Saint and made up her mind to minister to his needs and devote her life to his service. Sri Ramakrishna recognised the greatness in his wife's spirit and made her his disciple; she cooked for him and his mother and his disciples and learnt certain prayers and rituals from him, and loved him and served him wholeheartedly. After his death, she carried on his work, initiating the disciples that came to her; she became attached to members of her own family and especially to an ailing, eccentric niece; she spent much time and labour in serving her family, but she knew all the time a different spiritual state of communion with Godhead and with her husband's spirit. She was ever kind and compassionate; she learned to read but did not know to write; she could be childish sometimes, but her constant attitude to those around her was that of maternal solicitude; she taught her disciples that spiritual striving did not distinguish a man in any particular way, except that detachment and kindness to all became more and more his characteristics. She taught the path of Bhakti or devotion. She was often in a state of trance and had many unusual psychic experiences; but in spite of these, she led an ordinary simple life and the core of her spiritual experience was the nearness she felt to her husband (The Master).

The worldly wise, scheming, educated or sophisticated folk who had contact with her felt

she used to say that she had not acquired enough merits to be seeing and serving him every day. Such was her humility! Such was her divine resignation! She used to bear meekly and silently the insulting words of inferior persons. But the Master used to be greatly perturbed in mind whenever she was hurt by anyone; for he knew that it would tell upon that person. Still he could not avert the evil, for unless a person was doomed, he would have never dreamt of insulting the Mother.

Thus, Sri Sarada Devi born with divine propensities became more and more divine by her associations with the Master and at the time of the Master's last illness, she had a sudden realization that in truth, there was neither husband nor wife, and all her attachments for the Master disappeared and her mind was filled with utter renunciation. But when the Master actually passed away her sorrow and the feeling of emptiness in life were so great that she even thought of giving up her body. But Sri Ramakrishna appeared before her and persuaded her to stay on in the world.

The Holy Mother subjected herself to greater suffering after the Master's demise. She first went on a pilgrimage to Brindavan and then went to live in Kamarpukur, the village of the Master. The Holy Mother at this time underwent untold suffering. The suffering was not so much physical as it was mental. It was just a few months after the demise of the Master who had been her truly loving partner, protector, guide and philosopher. If their love had been merely physical, it would have died a natural death soon after the Master had ceased to exist. But their love was disinterested and therefore, undying. The Holy Mother was all alone in the house. She had no one to console her or keep her company. Everywhere and in every thing she saw nothing but emptiness. She missed the Master very much. The village gossip was busy pointing her finger at the Holy Mother who was wearing, contrary to social convention, a saree with a border and bracelets. In fact, the Holy Mother had tried to remove the bracelets soon after the Master's disappearance from this world. But he had appeared to her in a vision and asked her not

to put on the garb of a widow, as he had 'merely passed from one room to another'. The Master had specially made and given those bracelets to the Holy Mother after he had a vision of Sita wearing such bracelets. Soon, a respected and popular lady of the village said, 'Our Gadai's wife is a veritable goddess. She need not observe the social convention meant for ordinary women' and thus put an end to the village gossip.

In addition to her sorrow due to the irreparable loss in the Master's demise and the social criticism, the Holy Mother, at this time was subjected to great pecuniary difficulty. To-day, lakhs of rupees are being collected and spent to perpetuate her memory. But at that time she had no money even to buy salt with and she had to eat her frugal meal even without a pinch of salt! Though this sort of suffering lasted only for a short period, it has a significance of its own. The direct disciples of the Master would have protected her somehow, if only she had let them do so. But she seems to have preferred to live in obscurity for some time.

We all know that Sita was kept in imprisonment by Ravana, the King of demons, and Sri Rama had to build a bridge across the sea—and that too with the help of monkeys and bears—to go to Lanka and redeem her. Of course this does not mean that either Sita or Rama was not an incarnation. When the gods choose to sport like human beings, as the Master has said, they have to pay the tax for the use of the body, to the last farthing. Hence they too have to undergo suffering and death incidental to the embodied state. Another evident reason for the Holy Mother's self-imposed suffering at this period was, perhaps, to demonstrate to the present day world how a woman should forbear and act with great mental courage at the time of a crisis and prove her worth as the universal power behind all actions.

The Holy Mother had always been very meek, gentle and extremely modest. Yet, it is said that once when she was harassed by a lunatic finding no other way of escape, she

pushed him down and sitting on his chest, pulled out his tongue and dealt him a few sound blows. After he had become quite tame and helpless, she left him and quietly went back to her abode. This incident shows that though a woman should not be audacious, loud or too forward, and though modesty is her natural ornament, when, however, a crisis comes, she must not helplessly surrender herself to atrocity or injustice; she should act with great courage, resourcefulness and presence of mind and come out of the danger unscathed just as Sita had emerged out of the ordeal of fire. Thus the Holy Mother has illustrated from her own life the different aspects of the everlasting principle of womanhood.

As we have mentioned previously, after the Master had passed away, it seemed as if the Holy Mother too would cast off her mortal coil. But she had come to the world with a definite mission and she had to remain here for some more time to fulfil that mission. Now the Master found out a means to make her stick to this mundane earth till the appointed time. The Holy Mother was suddenly seized by Yoga-maya and she began to feel deep attach-

ment for her little niece Radhika, the daughter of her youngest brother. Radhika's mother was insane and gave her no end of trouble. Radhika too became insane when she grew up and spared no pains to hurt the Holy Mother in every possible way. The Holy Mother patiently bore all these sufferings though she could have easily cut asunder that bondage and lived in peace and happiness, not only because of the worldly fame and prosperity that were now almost oppressing her, but also because of the divine powers she possessed. Why then did she put up with all these sufferings? The answer is that she had come down to the world to deliver the message of disinterested love and forgiveness for all! 'Forgiveness is tapasya', 'do not find fault with others', these were her most significant words of advice to her followers. By getting herself entangled in the miserable domestic life of Radhu and her mother, the Holy Mother has, by her own example, delivered in a most effective manner, her message of disinterested love and forgiveness for all.

Blessed are we that we live in an age permeated with the living presence of the Great Master and the Holy Mother!

THREE ASPECTS OF THE HOLY MOTHER

A. P. SARADA

To speak of Shri Sarada Devi, the spiritual consort of the Paramahansa, 'the spouse of a Godman', the dearest and most faithful of his disciples, and to sing our paean to this most glowing symbol of eternal motherhood, is akin to lighting the undying lamp of our prayerful homage before the shrine of Indian womanhood. If the status of women in society may be regarded as an adequate pointer to the excellence of its culture and civilisation, the panorama of great women of India cannot but proclaim the unique spiritualistic tone of our culture and the highly superior character of our civilisation, which through the surge and thunder of the years has still managed to retain

vestiges of its pristine purity even though the spirit of the sacred past of India is in danger of being enervated due to the ill-conceived synthesis of cultures now sponsored between the East and the West.

From the dawn of our civilisation, from a point of time, beginning with the period of the Rig Veda, down to the recent past, the names of many Indian women have flashed across the pages of our history, shedding a soft luminous radiance which has entered into the lives of many Indian men and women, calling forth mute admiration and pious reverence for these beings of light whose lives hymned the vitality of human nature and of the human spirit. They

are the representative types of Indian womanhood whether they be the Puranic Panchakan-yas, Ahalya, Tara, Draupadi, Sita and Mandodari, or Savitri and Sakuntala, or the Vedic women Gargi and Maitreyi or again the historical figures of Chandbibbi, Rani Rasmani and the Holy Mother. Among them, the last named, Shri Sarada Devi, appears to us of the 20th Century as 'the most wonderful thing of God' as Sister Nivedita once addressed her, chiefly because we know that she is no legendary figure—no half submerged personality which must be dragged out from the shadows of a hoary past—but one who was living just a few years back, utterly human like any of us, but undoubtedly a manifestation of divinity in flesh and blood. Besides the three-fold nature of her services as the perfect wife, the perfect mother and the perfect spiritual preceptor, has enabled us to recognise in her the truest representative of our ancient spiritual order of women. Truly may it be said of her that she is 'Shri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood', 'the chalice of his love for the world' remarked Sister Nivedita, 'a token he left behind with his children, when he finally took leave of them.' It is my belief that all these aspects of her unique personality can be well understood if we attempt to make a study of the wife, the mother and the Guru in her.

Ancient Hindu culture demanded that a wife should have certain definite qualities of character. Chastity, constant faithfulness through life to the one man who is the husband, formed the keystone to this type of character. The marriage tie was considered the most sacred of 'bandhans' and the thought of a divorce seldom occurred to the mind of either husband or wife. The Hindu wife lived for and served the God in her husband, thus fulfilling the mission which the poet Milton chalked out for Eve the first woman 'She for God in him'. The goal of marriage was thus considered to be not physical union, not even human companionship but spiritual comradeship. In May 1859, at the age of six, when she had not the faintest idea of the significance of the nuptial tie, Shri Sarada Devi the daughter of a

devout Brahmin couple Ramachandra Mukhopadhyay and Shyamasundari Devi, was married to Gadadhar Chattopadhyay, the immortal Paramahansa of later years. When she completed her seventh year, Gadadhar came to visit her at Jayarambati, to take her with him to Kamarpukur and send her back after a short stay. On this occasion, great was the surprise of everybody who saw the girl-wife hastening forward most willingly and voluntarily to wash her husband's feet and fan him. The service thus begun at the tender age of seven was continued in her maturer years when on her husband, Shri Sarada Devi focussed all care and solicitude. By the year 1866, Gadadhar renounced all worldly ties and was thenceforth called Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In spiritual ecstasy and otherwise, he perceived Brahman the Eternal in and all around him and stood, it is said, poised 'on the threshold of relative consciousness' waiting for the call of the Divine Mother who would liberate him from the bond of the flesh. News of his transformation reached the small village of Jayarambati, and the untutored village minds recognised a maniac in this God-mad bhakta. 'Shyama's daughter' the village women lamented, 'has married a lunatic'. Hearing these words the young Sarada resolved to find out for herself who and what her husband was, and proceeded to Kamarpukur in June 1867. One look at Shri Ramakrishna, one word from his mouth, were enough to convince her that she was united to a being, the like of whom the world sees but once in a myriad years, a God-chosen, God-filled vessel who lived in the exalted plane of the mystic. It was in 1872 that the young wife was reunited with her husband. After her first visit she had returned to Jayarambati. During the interval the pangs of separation she endured were very similar to the grief experienced by Shri Radha, when Bhagavan Shri Krishna left her for his lila in Brindaban. The story of Shri Sarada Devi's stay at Dakshineswar reads like a gospel. From 1872 onwards she entered into the life of a perfect Hindu wife who dedicates herself entire to the spiritual and physical welfare of her lord. The incidents that mark the life of

this holy couple cannot fail to thrill the reader. Once, it was said, Shri Ramakrishna asked her whether she had come there to drag him to the worldly plane. At once came her quick and bold reply, 'No, why should I pull you down? I am here to serve you so that you may go ahead on your chosen path'. It is significant that she used the word 'serve' and not 'help' for she considered herself very much his disciple and devotee rather than his equal. Strange indeed and rare are the words coming from the mouth of a young bride! In later years the Paramahansa recalled these words and remarked to his disciples, 'Had she been of a different nature, this life would have been rendered impossible for me'. In Shri Sarada Devi, he had discovered his ideal wife, predestined his from the beginning of time, his soul-mate who came to minister to his frail body, so that it would not be prematurely burnt out by the fiery soul within! A year and a half, Shri Sarada Devi stayed at Dakshineswar, so close to Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, almost feeling 'the breath of Divinity' on her. He taught her to recognise the different kinds of Samadhi, the ecstatic trances in which he would be plunged every now and then. Thus she had to keep vigil over him in the hours of the night to bring him back to the normal plane if the superconscious state was prolonged. Their relationship was that of a religious teacher and his devoted disciple; but each was unique in his and her own spheres. Shri Ramakrishna looked upon her 'as a representation of the Blissful Mother in human flesh'. She, on her part, repeatedly stated that he was her father, mother, spiritual guide and divine partner—indeed she even saw the divine Mother in him. We know how, on one auspicious New Moon night Shri Ramakrishna worshipped his wife as the Divine Mother, according to the Tantra rituals of Shodashi puja. This was the supreme occasion when the divine couple transcended the world of senses and became one with the Original self that knows no beginning or end. This incident, remarks Swami Nirvedananda, 'has absolutely no parallel in the history of mankind. . . . None has even dreamt of a husband glorifying

his wife'. After staying for short intervals of time at Dakshineswar, Shri Sarada Devi usually returned either to Jayarambati or to Kamarpukur. But in January 1885 she joined the Master for the last time and stayed with him till the end of his life in August 1886. During this period she proved how perfectly a wife can play her destined role in life's drama. She was a ministering angel to her husband, preparing food that agreed with his delicate appetite, fanning him, washing his feet and even engaging him in conversation of the type that would prevent him from falling often into ecstatic trances. In addition to this, she had to receive and entertain a number of women devotees of the Master. This programme of work continued till the very end, till 1886, when the Paramahansa made his last exit from the mortal body. Most human sounds the cry that arose from the lips of this Pativrata, this wife in a million, the embodiment of grace and love as she stood at the bed-side of her lord after the event—'Mother! O Divine Mother, for what fault of mine have you departed leaving me here?' But the paroxysm of grief did not overpower her—it lasted only for a few minutes, soon after which she retired to her room and gave herself up to silence. With his death ended the first stage of her long and holy life and the curtain was rung down on a drama of holy wed-lock.

The Mother in Shri Sarada Devi manifested itself even as early as at the age of twelve when she tended her cows, carried tiffin to the labourers in the field, and cooked and served food to the people of her village when famine laid hands on the locality. She proved, in her later life, especially in her dealings with her disciples and devotees and all who came to her that Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children. 'God could not be everywhere', says the Jewish proverb, 'and therefore he made Mothers'. In the scheme and pattern of Hindu life, motherhood, symbolising renunciation and love, is accorded a unique and glorified place. All women, the Hindu scriptures enjoin us, are to be considered as the earthly counterparts of the Divine Mother of the Universe, even as the Parama-

hamsa looked upon the Holy Mother. In the role of the mother, the role which perhaps, best fitted her (for even as a wife she was dominated by the maternal instincts) Shri Sarada Devi had the rare habit of overlooking the foibles of her children. She embraced the sinner and the saint alike but her eyes shed more compassion and her heart grew tenderer towards the former. The erring child was dearer to this woman who never had a child of her own. Indeed, viewing her later years when hundreds of devotees thronged round her addressing her by the sacred name of Mother, we cannot but wonder at the prophetic soul of Shri Ramakrishna who once remarked that she would get a countless number of children to call her thus. She denied her love and blessings to none. 'If my child,' she used to say, 'gets covered with mud and dust is it not my duty to cleanse him and take him on my lap?' This overflowing spring of motherly love blinded her to defects in her children, or even when acutely conscious of them, made her yearn to enfold them to her breast and remove their sorrows. She used to wake herself up deliberately from sleep at two or three o'clock at nights to do japa for such of her disciples as were slack in practising japa regularly. Though she was the storehouse of spiritual wisdom she was observed to contradict none harshly, for she was absolutely tender and completely egoless. Yet how perfectly her children recognised their weaknesses while in her presence? We are told that the Mother even catered to the rather foolish demands of some of her more sentimental devotees. One of them wanted to worship her according to a ritualistic course. With quiet patience the Mother waited for him while he made preparations for the puja. Little did the devotee realize at the time that he was causing acute discomfort to her. But all the same her motherly instinct refused to be subdued by any personal considerations. Her love was a golden chain that bound each of her disciples to her. This overwhelming affection and solicitude thrilled the hearts of Swami Saradananda and Swami Brahmananda who basked in the warmth of her limitless grace. She would not

take her meals before her children were fed. Indeed many of her disciples were observed pleading to her to mind her health which she freely and joyfully sacrificed for their sake. Clearly this type of love is an attribute of God himself and springs from that absolute identification of oneself with all creation that characterizes illumined souls. Some of her disciples openly avowed that they saw in her the exact physical likeness of their own mothers whom they had lost in childhood. She was to them the very incarnation of Sweetness, as patient as Mother Earth, as bountiful as rain-giving clouds but withal as dispassionate in some of her actions as a perfect Karma-Yogi. Her life consisted more of giving than of taking. Thus she is an apt illustration for the truth of the Biblical words, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'. The devotion which Swami Yogananda cherished for her knew no bounds. After his death the Holy Mother used to remark wistfully, 'No one loved me like Yogen'. He used to put aside whatever was given to him, for the mother's use. Similarly Swami Saradananda, Swami Sivananda and the rest of the Master's disciples cherished an abiding affection for her. It is noteworthy however, that all this gentleness of nature and tenderness of heart was combined with a rock-like strength of will and mind which gave no place to weak sentimentality in her all-embracing affection. When occasion demanded, a quiet but magnificent dignity enveloped her whole body, so much so that those who provoked her righteous indignation quailed at the sight of the Mother. One is reminded of the words of Shri Ramakrishna himself who once remarked to Hriday, one of his oft-erring relatives that if he provoked the Mother, not even Brahma, Vishnu or Maheswara could save him from her wrath! She once 'quitted' Harish, a mad disciple of the Master, by planting her knee on his chest and repeatedly slapping him on the cheeks! This was when he chased her in her country house at Kamarpukur. What more need be said of this Divine Mother who combined in her frail form grace and grandeur alike! Blessed are those happy souls who were given the rare opportunity of serving her and

taking the dust off her lotus feet! Today, whenever we think of Shri Sarada Devi, to our mind's eye she appears with the halo of divine motherhood around her. This love of a mother, to quote Sister Nivedita again, 'by its very nature, grows deep with deeper need and follows the beloved even unto hell. A yearning love that can never refuse us; a benediction that forever abides us, a presence from which we cannot grow away; a heart in which we are always safe; sweetness unfathomed; bond unbreakable, holiness without a shadow, all these indeed, and more is motherhood'. And all this and more was the Holy Mother.

And now we come to the Guru or the teacher in Shri Sarada Devi. The seeds of wisdom sown in her mind, perhaps in previous births sprouted as soon as they came into contact with the dynamic personality of the Master and were nourished by his words. Hers was a silent wisdom—indeed all true wisdom is ultimately silence, for is not silence the element in which great things fashion themselves? Thus, in her retreat at Dakshineswar, within the four walls of her little lodgings, listening to the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of her divine partner, Shri Sarada Devi acquired the greatest of all knowledges, the knowledge of the Absolute as 'the unmanifested principle in all manifestations' and the effulgent Divine Self. It was after the Paramahansa's death that this silently acquired wisdom of hers flowered into words of advice and instructions that thrilled the hearts of the hearers and made them look upon her as a virtual Guru. The Master, in his last days had instructed her to live upon whatever she got and to spend her time repeating the sacred name of Hari. This parting advice the Holy Mother followed to the letter. It is said that when she went to Calcutta in 1888 after the death of the Master, her close devotees were amazed to notice a remarkable transformation in her mental outlook and behaviour. As Swami Nirvedananda has so vividly put it, there was 'a phenomenal change in her being... established firmly on the pedestal of spiritual motherhood and urged by superhuman compassion. Sarada Devi was about to release her

Divine power of helping numerous people out of nescience (Avidya)'. From now on she assumed the role of the Guru. She herself had a noble conception of the duties of a Guru. 'The power of the Guru', she used to say, 'is transmitted through the mantra to the disciple. . . . The Guru at the time of initiation takes on himself the sins of the disciples and suffers from physical maladies'. Many aspiring disciples were initiated by her. She remembered the various dynamic mantras which the master had taught her and used them variously for people of different natures and attitudes. One factor is noticeable—whereas the Paramahansa took care to 'select' his disciples, the Holy Mother did not. This was because her task was different; he had to leave his gospel in the hands of a few well-chosen spiritual giants—but she who had come to succour millions of distressed souls, had the rare capacity to assimilate the sins of all and sundry and therefore the 'small fry' were all pushed towards her. Herself sinless, the embodiment of Purity, white as the driven snow, she shouldered the sins of many, even suffering physical pain, sometimes, during the process of blessing her erring sons and daughters! In Calcutta when she went there shortly before her death, the crowds which rushed to her for blessing were so large that she almost suffered from nervous breakdown. She was tormented by the misery of the living beings all around her, she could not bear to see ugly sins and hear the heart-broken words of repentance that came from the mouths of people who had strayed away from the path of virtue. But she forgot their sins when they called her Mother, prescribed spiritual exercises for them and watched their spiritual progress. Swami Saradananda once remarked that 'the very touch or will of the Holy Mother guaranteed that the disciple was resigned to and accepted by the master'. This extraordinary spiritual power is the distinctive mark of an incarnation, 'entrusted with a divine commission'.

The Mother's sayings reveal deep insight into the Divine and have a clarity of expression all their own. She would repeatedly remind her disciples that Shri Ramakrishna had not come

down to the Earth to take only sweets! 'You will achieve peace only at the fall of the body,' she warned many a spiritual aspirant, 'if you do not regularly practise the spiritual disciplines I have prescribed for you.' She used language that had a singular sweetness; one cannot forget her last message given to an afflicted world which is being rapidly sucked into the quagmire of materialism. How simple and how significant are the words addressed to the average man and woman, warning them against the destructive forces of egoism and isolationism. 'Learn to make the whole world your own. . . . If you want peace of mind, do not see the fault in others, no one is a stranger, my child; this entire world is your own'. On the 20th July 1920 her unsullied soul shuffled off its mortal coils and merged with the divine. The Holy Mother left the physical world.

Great souls rise, blaze and fade out like meteors. But they never disappear completely from the firmament of men's mind and memory. They leave behind them, a trail of

glory which the succeeding generations recognize to be the blazing light of true greatness. Thus this divine couple, the Master and the Mother, undoubtedly a manifestation of Brahman the Absolute in dual aspects as Shiva and Shakti, set before the world of the average man and woman a most unique and unparalleled pattern of conjugal life. They come in that line of divine incarnations which boast of the eternally attractive pairs—Shri Krishna and Shri Radha and Shri Ramachandra and Shri Sita. The prophecy of the Gita assuring mankind of succour and protection through the uplift of the righteous, the destruction of the evil and the reinstatement of Dharma when Dharma declines, has been fulfilled throughout the centuries in this Dharmabhoomi of ours. Incarnations of God have been 'our help in ages past, our hope for years to come; our shelter from the stormy blast and our Eternal Home'. They are the heralds to the birth of a new race of supermen and to the Life Divine on Earth.

OUR CREED

SWAMI TAPASYANANDA

If the life of Sri Ramakrishna has any message to give to the world, it is the uncompromising declaration of the supremacy of a Divine Intelligence over the apparently non-intelligent and mechanical world-process. The firmness of his conviction in regard to this fact and the way in which he lived his life in complete agreement with this conviction are the only reasons that made him a noted personage in his own life-time and subsequently the centre of a spiritual movement of great significance. The ideal of Shiva refers to this central fact of Sri Ramakrishna's life—to a world-view that is wholly spiritual in its outlook and to a life that has the realisation of God as its highest aim. The philosophical and ethical implications of this world-view have been elaborated by Sri Ramakrishna in the teachings he has left behind and these form the creed of the

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement. While these teachings are above every form of narrowness associated with creeds, they give expression to certain universal ideas which, if accepted, will kill sectarianism without in the least endangering the existence of any sect. The following is a brief statement of these ideas:

Reality is in essence a Principle of Intelligence. It is this one Intelligent Principle that is variously known as God, Allah, Buddha, Shiva, Vishnu, Brahman, etc. in the different religions of the world. It is both personal and impersonal, with attributes and without attributes. Impersonal does not mean less than personal but without the limitations of personality. While it transcends every form of relation in its absolute nature, it is none-the-less intimately related to the world of living and

non-living beings as their cause, support and substratum. In this aspect the Intelligent Principle is spoken of as He or She, as Father or Mother of the universe. Both the Jivas and the Jagat (living and non-living beings) are the manifestations of this Father-Mother God. He is alike the source of what is pleasing and terrific in Nature. For the devotee, however, He is the God of Love, the pains and terrors of life being only the devices He employs to draw His careless and forgetful children to His feet. He is present in every being but is very near to a devoted heart in a special sense. He hears the prayers that well up from it and responds to them in His infinite mercy. As the Impersonal, He can be approached through knowledge, and as the Personal through love. But the path of love and self-surrender is easier and more natural, and on one who treads this path He confers also the fruit of knowledge—the sense of identification with the Absolute. In the path of love He may be looked upon as Father, Mother, Friend, Child, Lover, or in any other intimate form of human relationship. According to the devotee's attitude He manifests Himself in various forms of beauty and holiness to his purified vision. A special form of Divine mercy is the Incarnation. From time to time He embodies Himself as a human being of great holiness and spiritual power in order to show unto mankind the way of holy and righteous living. All the founders of the great religions who have opened new paths of spiritual life to men of different ages and climes are such special divine manifestations. To worship them and meditate on their life and personality form one of the most effective means of spiritual upliftment. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna is such an Incarnation of the Divine for the guidance of man in this age (Yuga Avatar), and in his teachings are to be found the solutions of the problems of morality and religion suited to the needs of our times.

The human personality is intimately related to the Cosmic Intelligence; for it is a manifestation of that Intelligence through the limitations of matter. Every soul is therefore potentially

divine and the goal of life is to manifest this indwelling divinity by controlling Nature within and without. Every form of activity in life can aid this process, provided the proper attitude of mind is brought to bear upon it. Religion embodies the methods evolved by mankind for the attainment of the life's goal. As such it is the expression of the highest aspirations of mankind. Religion does not consist in mere intellectual assent to dogmas or creeds, but in the realisation or the actualisation of the great spiritual truths in our consciousness and daily actions. We shall have to do this either by work, worship, psychic control or philosophy—by one or all these. The special conditions of our age however require that men should cultivate all these and thus develop their personality on all lines.

Strength is the most essential requirement of spiritual life. For strength is virtue and weakness is sin. Faith is the source of all strength—faith in God and faith in oneself. Self-depreciation by calling oneself a sinner is to be avoided by all means; for sin is not overcome by dwelling on thoughts of sin but by contemplating the inherent divinity of the soul. Sin is but a form of error, and all that is needed to overcome it is sincere repentance and firm determination to avoid it in the future. Man is no sinner but the child of God—nay, His very Self in his essential nature. An abiding consciousness of this is true faith, the source of all strength and therefore of all virtue.

Spiritual life is impossible without a sound moral basis. The underlying principle of all sound morality is unselfishness. A man cannot be unselfish unless he is imbued with a spirit of renunciation. Renunciation means the giving up of Kama and Kanchana, of passion and greed. The spirit of renunciation manifests in life as purity of character and devoted service of one's fellow beings. The vision of God dawns in a heart in which the spirit of renunciation has reached its maturity. A man lives in vain if he does not gain this realisation or at least makes some progress towards it.

A GREAT CHARTER OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

S. N. RAO

Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I accept them.

Whatever path they may choose, they come to Me. (GITA IV-11)

Whatever form any devotee with faith wishes to worship,

I make that faith of his unfailing and steady. (GITA VII-21)

These verses from the Gita contain the Magna Carta, the great charter of liberty in religion and religious worship given to humanity, irrespective of country and race, by Lord Sri Krishna. All freedoms and all religions are comprehended in this position. All ways and types of worship lead to the same Godhead. There is no condemnation or denial of any religion or worship. The gospel of Sri Krishna does not lay down creeds and doctrines for the egoistic satisfaction of religious aspirants and for the pedantic delectation of philosopher dialecticians. All the emphasis in the Gita is on the psychological approach to self-unfoldment, taking into consideration the different types of the human mind at various levels. As Dr Radhakrishnan points out :

The Gita gets beyond racial distinctions in its emphasis on spiritual values. ... It speaks of the impulse which is expressed in all forms, the desire to find God and understand our relation to Him. The differences of conception and approach are determined by local colouring and social adaptations.

Divested of all Puranic settings of the social, religious and cultural environment of the conditions then prevailing, the environment which naturally influences the thought of every great author in that period, there is not a Shashtra or Science which has enunciated the basic principles of human action, of human life and its fulfilment, with such lucidity and erudition as we find in the Gita. The message of the Gita is for the man of the world, for the citizen and the householder, not for the ascetic in the cave or a forest. It is not a denial of life, but an affirmation of life. The object of Sri Krishna was to rescue Arjuna, and through him every

man from the futile and dreamy ideal of all eerie religion and make him plunge into a whirl of activity where the grimmest fact of existence is to be faced and accepted. Work is the only effective means for self-expression and self-unfoldment. Even under constantly varying human conditions, these principles have validity and application. If we wish to give any name to the philosophy in the Gita, that name can only be 'Sanātana Dharma'. What we call 'Sanātanatvam' or eternality in that Dharma is the spirit behind, not the written letter.

Man generally worries over things that come and go, over things that keep on changing, over things whose values are also changing. He is environed and conditioned by an ever changing world. It is an empirical world on an impermanent plane of mortality. It is a factual world of experience. It is the human plane where pleasure and pain, good and evil have their sway as a result of relentless play of senses with their corresponding sense objects. These opposites must be met, endured and fought. It is on this known and factual plane of mortality that the teaching of the Gita begins, and then takes us to the plane of Immortality, the real abode of the human soul, though temporarily enshrined in a mortal body.

The universe we live in is a cosmos with a purpose and an order, and also a Jagat which means movement and implies a ceaseless continuum of change. Dharma is the system of law which upholds and sustains that Jagat. When Jagat itself is a ceaseless continuum of change, how can Dharma which sustains that Jagat remain static and unalterable? Dharma is an ever-changing principle, changing according to the moving conditions of an evolving society.

There are laws eternal and laws non-eternal. Dharma is an eternal principle, not an eternal law. As Dharma itself is not static, Karma or action resulting therefrom cannot also remain static. What is eternal in all human action is the Yajna principle which alone abides for ever. It is the principle of service and sacrifice, not sacrifice in the old ritualistic sense. What is eternal in Dharma is the spirit which holds and sustains us in our onward march to perfection. If we hang on in this age to the old forms of Dharma and Karma, both the individual and the society will be put in an iron

strait-jacket, tending to mummification and day dreaming, and getting back to the shell of the dead past, with no vitality to preserve the present or to strike forward into the future. Our Dharma is to preserve and sustain the present on the eternally solid foundations of the past, and certainly not to bring back the mere superstructure of that past. 'Life that goes forward, not life that goes backward, picking up the stale crumbs fallen from centuries that have finished their banquet and passed on', is the life that is positive and progressive.

WESTERN RELIGION AT ITS MYSTICAL HEIGHTS

ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

About ten years ago, at a study circle held in Calcutta, the present writer had to give a talk on the subject: *Platonism, Christian mysticism and the Vedanta*. During the discussion that followed the talk, a student rose up and said: 'Your lecture is too mystical, so misty and foggy that a matter-of-fact man like myself finds it difficult to understand it'.

With the progress of empirical sciences, matter-of-fact attitude to life, it has become increasingly difficult to talk on the problems of metaphysics, ontology and mystical religion. Nurtured in topical journals, sensational films and exciting sense-bound literature, man finds it difficult to believe in super-sensual and supernatural world. God is either denied or brought down to anthropomorphic level. It is at this juncture that the great mystics of Catholicism can point out to us a religion at its Himalayan mystical heights. It is from that God-summit-angle that we have to view our matter-of-fact problems in economics, politics and sociology, not vice versa. For it is by seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness that everything else is added unto us, not the other way round.

Prior to the emergence of Christian mysticism, we hear of the Eleusinian mysteries of

ancient Greece and of the mysticism of Plato, Plotinus and Philo. Pseudo-Dionysius of Aeropagite echoes Greco-Christian mysticism at its best in his *Mystical Theology*, which together with his *De Divinis Nominibus* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* exercised great influence in Christianity until the late Middle Ages. From internal evidence modern critics attribute the above three works to an unknown author of the fifth century, and not to the first century, as the author was then falsely identified with the convert of St. Paul, Denys the Aeropagite.

Before entering the sanctuary of mystical religion, it is well worth asking: What is mysticism, after all? Empiricists and positivists see nothing but mist and fog in mysticism, a lack of clear thinking and matter-of-fact attitude towards life. Some others identify mysticism with occultism, theosophy, clairvoyance and esoteric spiritualism. Then, there is a naturalistic mysticism the like of which poet Wordsworth describes in his verses, and Francis of Assisi, at times, in his *Canticles*. Then there is a school of thought which, transcending naturalistic mysticism, considers Catholicism as the quintessence of mysticism. Dean Inge quotes no less an authority as

Harnack as saying : 'Mysticism is Roman Catholic piety in its extreme form'.

Excluding these near-approaches to mysticism, we come to Catholic saints who have experienced and described mystical religion at its best. From the utterances of the Catholic mystics we can arrive at some kind of definition of mysticism which is the communion of the soul with God, a direct perception of God-head, the relish and realization of the Ultimate Reality by the spirit of man. Fr. A. B. Sharp, in his book on mysticism, on page 74, defines mysticism as

'A direct contact of the soul with transcendental Reality, a direct and objective intellectual intuition of Transcendental Reality.'

On page 96 of the same book, Fr. Sharp quotes an American professor, A. Seth, as saying :

'Mysticism is the endeavour of the human mind to grasp the Divine Essence or the Ultimate Reality of things, and to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the Highest. It maintains the possibility of direct intercourse with the Being of beings.'

St. Augustine and St. Thomas upheld that Moses and St. Paul beheld the Essence of God while still on earth. Genuine ecstasy in the lives of saints is the outcome of that direct vision or intuition of the Ultimate Reality, far transcending the realms of senses, discursive thought and logical reasoning. Pseudo-Dionysius says :

'Do thou, in the intent practice of mystic contemplation, leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and all things that the senses or the intellect can perceive, and all the things which are not and things which are, and strain upwards in unknowing, as far as may be, towards the union with Him who is above all being and knowledge. For, by increasing and absolute withdrawal from thyself and all things in purity, abandoning all, and set free from all, thou wilt be borne up to the ray of the Divine Darkness that surpasseth all being.'

—*Mystical Theology*, Ch. I.

Besides philosophical reasoning and theological faith, mystics maintain, there is a direct way to perceive Truth and become one with the Absolute Truth which is God. In fact,

St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas only echoed the teachings of earlier mystics, specially of Denys the Aeropagite, when they pointed out to the mystical way as the most direct and quickest way to reach God. Denys has said :

'Besides the knowledge of God obtained by process of philosophical and theological speculation, there is that most divine knowledge of God which takes place through ignorance, in the union which is above intelligence, when the intellect, quitting all things that are, and then leaving itself also, is united to the superluculent rays, being illuminated thence and therein by the unsearchable depth of wisdom.'

—*De Divinis Nom.* VII. 3.

St. Augustine, in one sentence gives us the idea of the mystic intuition of God. He said : '*Mens mea pervenit ad Id Quod Est, in ictu trepidantis aspectus*—My mind, in the flash of trembling glance, came to Absolute Being, to That Which Is.' (Conf. VII. 23). Only God is That Which Is. Only God can say : *Ego sum qui sum* — I am Who Am, as per the Mosaic revelation. The direct vision of that *God Who Is* is mysticism. This search and discovery of God is far better made inside the human soul than without. Outside is the vestige and image of God ; but within the soul is the sanctuary and ground of God. Says Augustine again :

'And being admonished by them (the Platonists) to return into myself, I entered even into my innermost self, Thou being my guide. I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul, above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the Light Unchangeable—and Thou didst beat back the weakness of my sight, streaming forth Thy beams of light upon me, most strongly, and I trembled with love and awe.'

—*Conf.* VII. 16.

St. Augustine develops this introspective approach to God in his *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, Psalm, 41, *Confess.* IX. Ch. 23 & 24; in *Genesi ad litteram*, in *Vita Beata* and elsewhere.

Of the common consent of the experience of mystics, we gather that mystical religion develops in the soul as we withdraw from the sense-bound world. We become blind to the world outside so that we may see the Kingdom of God within. We become dead to the world so

that we may live with God in His life and light. St. Gregory the Great (d. 604) says :

'In that species whereby God speaks beyond all words and more secretly and immediately by an ineffable speech, where whoso sees Him, will not live with that life with which we mortals live in the bodily senses ; but unless he be in some sort dead to this life, whether as having wholly departed from the body, or as being so withdrawn and alienated from the carnal senses that he knows not whether he be in the body or out of the body, he is not rapt and uplifted to that vision.'

—ST. AUGUSTINE,

De Genesi ad Litteram, XII. 27, 55.

It is in dying to worldliness that we become alive in godliness. It is in closing our eyes that our mind awakens to the vision of the Invisible. To the extent we could abstract ourselves from created beings and pleasures, we could enjoy the bliss of contemplation of the Uncreated Essence of God. Or as Thomas A. Kempis says :

'This is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because few know how to separate themselves wholly from created and perishing things.'

—*Imitation of Christ*, III. 31.

Even among those who are vowed down to the blessedness of contemplative life, few, very few only enjoy the vision of God. Even the contemplatives enjoy the ecstasy of the vision of God only momentarily, and on rare occasions. St. Bernard, himself a mystic of the first order, vouches for this when he says :

'In this life the happiness of contemplation is enjoyed only rarely and momentarily—*raro raptimque*—; contemplating alone can experience the freedom of enjoyment, but only in part, and in small part, and on most rare occasions.'

—*De gratia et libro arbitrio*—XV.

All sincere, pure and struggling souls in quest of God and thirst for Truth and Holiness glimpse into God, however faintly, in this mortal life, which is a foretaste of Life Eternal in God. If friendship and love in this world is bliss, then God-union of the soul is a thousand times more bliss when we become one with God through grace and love. This union is never in essence as monists and pantheists would have it. Says Francis of Sales :

'When the union of the soul with God is most specially strict and close, it is called inhesion or adhesion, because by it the soul is caught up, fastened, glued and affixed to the Divine Majesty, so that she cannot easily loose or draw herself back again.'

—*Treatise on the Love of God*, Bk. VII. 3.

Mystical religion, by its very nature, tends to the union of soul with God, not through metaphors and mirages, but in actual reality. Mystical religion of the union of the soul with God is the crowning consummation of the struggles of a devout soul to purify herself from worldly contaminations and to seek light from above. The classical stages of purgation and illumination should precede the unitive way which is the royal road to mysticism. It is a vital experience transcending human descriptions. Expressions always fall short of experience ; and mystical religion is the vital experience of God within the soul of man. Augustine Baker, the Benedictine mystic, says :

'According to the doctrine of mystics, this union passes above both the understanding and will, namely, in that supreme portion of the spirit which is visible to God alone, and in which He alone can inhabit, a portion so pure, noble and divine, that it neither hath nor can have any name proper to it, though mystics endeavour to express it by diverse names, calling it the summit of the mind, the fund and centre of the spirit, the essence of the soul, its virginal portion.'

—*Holy Wisdom*, P. 533.

Although mystical experience cannot be adequately described, from the unanimous teachings of the mystics we have to conclude that religion at its mystical heights is literally union of the soul with God. It is only the degree of that unitive experience that differentiates mystics from mystics, as different pieces of iron receive different degrees of heat from fire according to the nearness of the metal to the furnace. Blossius, (Luis of Blois), the Benedictine abbot who died in 1566 A.D., has given us a graphic picture of this union of soul with God. He says :

'It is a great thing, an exceeding great thing, in the time of this exile to be joined to God in the divine light by a mystical and denuded union. This takes place where a pure, humble and resigned

soul, burning with ardent love, is carried above itself by the grace of God, and through the brilliancy of the divine light shining on the mind, it loses all consideration and distinction of things, and lays aside all, even the most excellent images, and all liquified by love, and, as it were, reduced to nothing, it melts away into God. It is then united to God without any medium, and becomes one spirit with Him, and is transformed and changed into Him, as iron placed in the fire is changed into fire, without ceasing to be iron. It becomes one with God, yet not so as to be of the same substance and nature of God.'

—*Spiritual Mirror*, C. II.

As a consequence of this blissful union of the soul with God, man realizes that every happiness outside of God is sham happiness, and that all besides God is 'vanity and affliction of the spirit'. The innermost of the soul is touched by God and God alone. This touch and taste of God is the bliss of contemplation which is the essence of mystical religion. Says the Carmelite saint, St. John of the Cross :

'This knowledge consists in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity, and it is God Himself who is then felt and tasted, though not manifestly and distinctly, as it will be in glory. But this touch of knowledge and of sweetness is so deep and so profound that it penetrates into the innermost substance of the soul. This knowledge savours in some measure of the divine essence and of everlasting life.'

—*Ascent of Carmel* II. C. 26.

When the sweetness of things divine intensifies in the soul, the sweetness and fascinations of created objects diminish, until, in divine ecstasy all worldliness is conquered or killed. Richard of St. Victor, Canon Regular of St. Augustine, has written :

'The third grade of love is when the mind of man is rapt into the abyss of the divine light, so that, utterly oblivious of all exterior things, it knows not itself and passes wholly into its God. And so in this state is held in check and lulled to deep sleep the crowd of carnal desires.'

—*De Gradibus caritatis*,
Patrol. Lat. Migne. CXCVI. 1220.

Carnal lusts and worldly love are either lulled to sleep, or killed through the intensity of divine rapture experienced in the vision of God imperfectly in this world through mystical religion, and perfectly in the world to come,

in the beatific vision. Mystic trance is far more blissful than poetic genius or artistic creations, because it is the Infinite that becomes the Life and Light and Love of the soul. No wonder, then, that mystics sought every opportunity to indulge in this poetic romance of the soul with God. Says St. Augustine :

'This I often do, this delights me, and as far as I may be freed from necessary duties, unto this pleasure have I recourse. And sometimes Thou dost admit me to an interior experience most unwonted, to a wondrous sweetness.'

—*Confess.* X. 65

The Word of God, being the 'Light that enlightens every man that comes into this world', it is obvious that mystical touch of soul with God is found in the lives of ancient Greek seers, and in this wide world, although, as Evelyn Underhill says, 'the greatest mystics have been Catholic Saints'. — *Mysticism*, P. 126.

Porphry says that, during the six years of his service and discipleship he saw Plotinus, his master, going into ecstasy four times. St. Augustine vouches for the mystical trance of the great pre-Christian philosophers. Augustine calls Plato, Plotinus, Philo and their likes as 'great and almost divine men — *magni et pene divini homines*. If so, there are a number of such 'great and divine men' from among the Buddhist Bodhisattvas, Hindu Vedantins, seers like Bodhidharma, Sankara, Ramanuja and others in the eastern world. Plotinus, who was very much instrumental in bringing Augustine to Christian faith, said :

'When, after having sought the One, the soul finds itself in its presence, it goes to meet it and contemplates it instead of itself. When in this state the soul would exchange its present condition for nothing, no, not for the heaven of heavens; for there is nothing better, nothing more blessed than this. It judges rightly and knows that it has what it desired, and that there is nothing higher. It is not deceived in its happiness; it fears no evil while it is with the One, or even while it sees Him, though all else perish around it, it is content, if only it can be with Him. So happy it is.'

—*Plotinus*, VI. 7-34.

Plato, that master-mind and patriarch of idealistic philosophy and mysticism in the West, has written :

'The soul when using the body as an instrument of perception, that is to say, when using the senses of sight or hearing or other senses, is dragged by the body into the region of the changeable, and wanders, and is confused. But, when returning to herself she reflects, then she passes into the other world, the region of purity and eternity, and immortality and unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she ever abides when she is by herself and is not let or hindered; then she ceases from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging is unchanging. And this state of the soul is called wisdom.'

—*Phaedo*, 79.

There is a remarkable passage in Plato where he calls all men and women to come back to their deeper sense and divine wisdom in God, after they have performed all their duties in the world and experienced the vanity and illusion of everything created. It is equally a call to us who are distracted in the work-a-day battles of life, and it points out the way to abiding peace and bliss within the soul of man. Plato says :

'Let those who have distinguished themselves in every action of their lives and in every branch of knowledge, come at last to their consummation. The time has now arrived at which they must raise the eyes of the soul to the Universal Light which lightens all beings, and behold the Absolute Good — *To agathon autou*—for that is the pattern according to which they are to order the State and the lives of individuals, and the remainder of their own lives also, making philosophy their chief pursuit.'

—*Republic*, Bk. VII.

Even a positivistic and matter-of-fact philosopher and sage like Aristotle, the famous disciple of Plato, goes into lyrics and poetry when he speaks of the blessedness of the soul in communion with God, which is the essence of mystical religion. In his *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* there are several passages which bespeak of the mystic bliss of the soul in communion with the God. He says :

'Happiness is the activity of the highest part of our nature; but the speculative is the highest, as the intuitive reason — *nous* — is the highest of our faculties, and the objects with which the intuitive reason is concerned are the highest of things that can be known. There is no virtuous activity so pleasant as the activity of wisdom or philosophic reflection. Speculative activity will be

the perfect happiness of man, if perfect life is given it. But such a life will be too good for man. He will enjoy such a life not in virtue of his humanity, but in virtue of some divine element within him ... the activity of God, being pre-eminently blissful, will be speculative; and, if so, then, the human activity most nearly related to it will be most capable of happiness. The life of man is blessed in so far as it possesses a certain resemblance to God's speculative activity.'

—*Ethics*, I-3.

St. Thomas Aquinas literally follows this line of argument when he deals with the question of happiness and blessedness in his two *Summas*, *De Veritate*, *Quodlibetales* and in his commentaries in Aristotle and the Scriptures.

The blessedness, that inward peace and joy springing forth from the depths of mystical religion, certainly is not for the few saints we have quoted. It is meant for all of us. Such a busy, intellectual controversialist like Blaise Pascal reached his spiritual summits in a hidden mystical trance. When Pascal died in 1662, underneath his bed was found a scrap of parchment stitched into the lining of his doublet. On it there was a rough drawing flaming cross, around which were found written these words :

'In the year of grace, 1654, Monday, 23rd November, the day of St. Clement Pope and Martyr ... the eve of St. Chrysogonus and others, from about half-past ten in the evening till about half an hour after midnight :

FIRE

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
Not of the philosophers and the learned.
Certitude. Joy. Certitude. Emotion. Sight. Joy.
Forgetfulness of the world and of all outside
of God.
The world hath not known Thee, but I have
known Thee.

Joy! Joy! Joy! Tears of Joy.
My God, wilt Thou leave me?
Let me not be separated from Thee for ever.'

—Facsimile in ABBE BREMOND'S:
Sentiment Religieux en France, IV, 368.

Here is Blaise Pascal at his mystical heights, not Pascal, the intellectual and controversialist, the author of *Provincial Letters*, but Pascal the child of God, the lover of God.

I have stitched together an anthology of the mystical religion as it grew in the West, because these and similar thoughts have given me that peace and joy which I failed to get anywhere in the world. In fact, journalistic and political worlds, our cut-throat economics and the mental confusion and spiritual unrest in the world invaded the realm of my soul and I became unhappy. The only way I could regain my peace and undisturbed peace and happiness is by clinging on to God and religion at its mystical heights. If this piecing together of the experiences of mystics have given me light and strength, I feel, kindered souls elsewhere also will be benefited by them. Hence the *raison d'être* of this *catena aurea*, this golden chain of mystical thoughts which give us the elan vital of ethical and spiritual life.

Worldly people fancy that mystical religion is negative, viz. denial of the world and self. Religion at its best, certainly, does mean

mortification of the senses, self-denial almost to the point of crucifixion of flesh and of the *homo-sapiens*. But such a crucifixion is the prelude to resurrection, the budding of the soul and spirit of man into the boundless realm of Freedom, Joy and Bliss which could be found only in God.

I feel, it is high time, for all thoughtful and sincere souls to leave the dead to bury their dead, to give up the world entangled in the meshes of power-politics, sensational journalism and cut-throat economics. It is far better to die in an honest attempt to reach God rather than to continue to lead this senseless, spineless, sinful life of the worldlings. This is the flight of the soul from worldliness to godliness, from the confusion of the many to the integration of the soul with the One, the One without a second — *Ekameva advitiyam* — as the Upanishads say. Religion, at its best, is mysticism which is the life of Light and Love of God.

THE LESSON OF THE STORY OF MAHABALI

N. SESHADRINATHAN

Mahabali! The name itself is identified with great sacrifice. Mahabali is a Chakravartin. Who is a Chakravartin? The Chakravartin puts forth all his resources to conquer the world. For this he resorts to all means of military strategy, which may not be consistent with ordinary human ethics. The Chakravartin then rules the earth in such a way that every one is prosperous and happy. There is Ramarajya everywhere. Mahabali was not satisfied with being Chakravartin of the world. He wanted to control the three worlds and usurp the place of Indra, and he succeeded to the discomfiture of the Devas.

Bali is an Asura, the embodiment of materialism. Materialism believes in secular achievement only. The materialist could be good and moral and true. Even in the matter of gifts he can reach heights unattained by others.

Thus Bali, though an Asura showed that he could attain name and fame for goodness, morality and truth.

Having thus reached the highest state in materialism he was unsatiated, since man is, by nature, unsatiable. The next thing he could do was to slip into spiritual attainments. But, though Bali did not seek spirituality, it came to him in the wake of his pursuit of goodness, morality and truth. The pursuit of Truth can end only in spiritual realization.

Rocketing the moon and other planets is not different from the classical description of the conquest of the three worlds, and the attainment of the Chakravartin ideal. And then making the inhabitants of the earth and those of the planets if any were present in them happy and contented. This is the materialistic utopian ideal of the Chakravartin.

Having attained with the aid of the sputniks and lunics the control of the cosmos the next step can be nothing else than spiritual realization, as Bali did, which is bound to come whether sought for or not.

The characterization of Mahabali is remarkable for its extravagant imagination, as many another Puranic tale. But, it is all the same basically very true to life, like a plum with its bed in the centre.

Every man's life begins with the most favourable background for birth and growth and attainment. And yet it must have its end, however much man may try to extend his span of life by scientific and rational living. His body is a condensation of Cosmic forces and must again get dispersed into the Cosmos.

Man, as well as every unit of life, begins with a minimum sustaining energy which gathers momentum and mass. It may become a huge tree a thousand years old, a huge animal, or a well-grown human being, the receptacle of mighty intellectual powers, but must end finally by giving up all that had been amassed, and if the presence of a soul is accepted, it must slip out of the body as a tenuous fraction of the universal soul.

These lives gathered, possessed, fought and killed for the sake of possessions, sacrificed themselves for their offspring and even for the good of other lives. Many lives commit what will be considered by human standards as sin, and immorality or as being against all social, ethical standards.

Mahabali attained all this power, and obtained all the possible possessions and enjoy-

ed all the prosperity and fame but found in the end that all this did not belong to him, but to the all-pervading Energy, Sakti which the spiritually minded call God or by other corresponding name. The Almighty appeared as the apparently insignificant speck of a man capable of expanding to occupy the whole universe with His two feet and body. The offer of three feet of earth by Bali to this speck of a man remained unfulfilled and Bali offers his head as an inevitable necessity to keep his word. This is the casual impression we get. We may even feel that this Dwarf (Vamana) of a man has deceived Mahabali. In fact, Bali's Guru Sukracharya warns him of the danger to his possessions and even his life. No! Bali sees in this opportunity the attainment of the zenith of sacrifice. Is he not now engaged in the performance of the great Visvajit sacrifice, and how can he refuse to accept this opportunity?

Mahabali offers his head not as one who has been humiliated, not as one who submits to an inevitable fate, to be crushed by this deceitful dwarf. No! He offers himself as a Bhakta, that he may be blessed by the dust of the feet of the Almighty, that he may be humbled and sanctified by being the Dasa of God.

Let us see the concluding feature of the story. Bali rules the underworld and God becomes his chela. The difference between the Bhakta and Bhagavan has disappeared, Bhagavan himself becomes the slave of the Bhakta.

Bali represents the Ego of man. It is not Bali who is crushed under the feet of God, but his Ego. When the Ego is destroyed there is no distinction between the Bhakta and Bhagavan.

If Brahman is without form, then all the upasanas of the Brahman with form would be futile; for how can the worship of such a false Brahman lead to Brahmaloka and other spheres? But they are not without a purpose. Just as light which has no form appears to be great or small according to the aperture through which it enters a room, even so the formless Brahman appears to have a form as being limited by adjuncts. The worship of an illusory Brahman can help one to attain Brahmaloka etc. which are also illusory from the absolute standpoint. Hence it is not altogether purposeless. Brahman though connected with limiting adjuncts is not dual in character.

— SRI SANKARA.

A SAVANT'S WORKS

P. SANKARANARAYANAN

In the death of Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar, Retired Principal and Professor of Philosophy, Pachaiyappa's College, the world of philosophy and the Ramakrishna Mission and its Madras Math in particular have suffered an irreparable loss. The Professor was one of the very few left of the last generation who had seen Swami Vivekananda and who came under the conquering spell of his magnetic eyes. Attracted to Swami Ramakrishnananda by the intensity of his devotion to Sri Ramakrishna, by his transparent sincerity and his austere simplicity, Srinivasachariar saw in him a personality to love and revere and was in turn held by the Swami in great esteem and affection. He had the darshan of Swami Brahmananda as well as of the Holy Mother when they visited Madras. He knew the beginnings of the Madras Centre of the Ramakrishna Math and was intimately connected with it all these years. Every Sadhu of the Mission with whom he moved took to him spontaneously and it is certain that the Professor's passing away would have caused great regret to them all, now working in different parts of India and abroad. He was co-editor of the VEDANTA KESARI along with Swami Saswatananda and the pages of this journal since its inception till the time of his death abound with the thoughtful articles from his pen marked with rare insight that he possessed of the true inwardness of Sri Ramakrishna's Gospel and of Swami Vivekananda's exposition of it. To the Madras Math Library he presented his valuable collection of more than a thousand five-hundred books dealing with Eastern and Western philosophy.

Born in an orthodox Vaishnavite family which had a tradition of Vedic scholarship, Prof. Srinivasachariar acquired the benefits of University education. This combination helped to fashion his distinctive personality in which there was a blending of conservative orthodoxy

with modern liberalism. Neither wedded to uncompromising dogma, nor rebelliously radical, he expressed in his being the best elements of the ancient and the modern in such a manner that he was quite at home with those who were orthodox and with those who were otherwise and received from both of them their affection and esteem. His was a wise conservatism which would hasten slowly, never attempting to uproot the classical ways of life.

Professor Srinivasachariar's mind worked more in the realms of philosophy rather than of theology. Not that he decried or dismissed the practices of the denominational religion to which he belonged. In fact, he gave his undivided allegiance to it in the full measure that was due to it from him. Yet, his theological conformity was subordinated to his philosophical training. He would frequently say about himself that he was a Visishtadvaitin rather than a Srivaishnava. The reason for this was that he disliked the sectarian acrimonies of the different forms of Vaishnavism which undermined the unity among the followers of Sri Ramanuja. If sects there were, as they will be when religion gets institutionalised and organised behind personalities, it was his firm conviction that they may be different, but never opposed to one another. 'Sects may grow, but sectarianism must go' was one of his common observations. In like manner, the inclusive mind of Prof. Srinivasachariar accommodated Saivism and Vaishnavism. Whether it was a fortuitous accident or a divine design for the upbringing of the young Srinivasan, he was adopted by a father who was for many years the 'maniyagar' of the Sri Kapaliswarar Temple at Mylapore. The father himself though a staunch Vaishnava was an ardent devotee of Sri Kapaliswara and of Sri Kalpakambal. The early years of his association with that temple through his father which he retained till he died, made such a

deep impress on Srinivasachariar's mind that he adored Siva that is Kapali with as much bhakti as he did Vishnu that is Krishna. In fact, he used to equate Krishna and Kapali adding that the black ring over lips of Kapali's image reminded him of the Black One that is Krishna. All his life, he never missed, not even once, the annual car festival of Sri Varada at Kanchi even as he was never missed at a like festival for Sri Kapali at Mylapore. It is not to be wondered at therefore that the 'circle', if one may call by that name a figure that had no limiting circumference, of Prof. Srinivasachariar's friends included people belonging to all sects and schools of the Hindu faith.

Another remarkable feature of the Professor was that early in his life he was nurtured in the philosophy of Advaita. The companions of his youth were strong Advaitins like B. R. Rajam Aiyar, Singaravelu Mudaliar, Santananda Saraswati, A. S. Kasturiranga Aiyar and others. His contact with Swami Vivekananda and his close study of his writings produced an Advaitic climate in his mind. But Swami Ramakrishnananda and the Professor's Visishtadvaitic gurus (the last, but the greatest of them all, Sri Kapisthalam Desikachariar), restored the balance and the Professor's mental scales were kept even between Advaita and Visishtadvaita. It may not be wrong to say that the two systems of philosophy, which to use his own expression 'were not on speaking terms with each other', met in his mind, though, as it must be, the allegiance of his heart was given to Visishtadvaita. Sri Kapisthalam Desikachariar taught him Sri Ramanuja's works in the traditional style and Srinivasachariar saw in them 'a synthetical philosophy that mediates between Dvaita and Advaita'. By writing his magnum opus 'Philosophy of Visishtadvaita', he fulfilled 'his (Kapisthalam Desikachariar's) chief instruction to me (which) was that I should, by way of guru dakshina, publish in English, with my knowledge of European philosophy, the essentials of Visishtadvaita and thus try to restore the balance in Indian philosophy which is now overweighted on the side of Advaita'. But

he ventured on this not in a spirit of partisan ship or fanaticism. 'My object', says he, 'is this humble work is to try to bring together seekers after God on a common platform and thus serve the cause of inter-religious and inter-Vedantic understanding so essential to universal peace'.

The Professor stood for synthesis rather than for opposition in every aspect of human life and thought. By habit, he was a mediator in all quarrels, domestic and other. He could not understand or approve the opposition between Smartas and Vaishnavas, or between the two different schools among the Vaishnavas. He delighted to say that his motto was both and, not either or. His study of Bhaskara's bhashya on the Vedanta Sutras produced in him a fascination for the philosophy of Bhedabheda on which he wrote a scholarly work illuminating it with parallels from Western thought. Sankara and Ramanuja were not two alternative metaphysicians signifying acceptance of the one and rejection of the other. They were not 'Sankara and Ramanuja', two conjoined philosophers. They were, for him two hyphenated personalities, 'Sankara-Ramanuja'. Due to this, he was often jocularly criticised as being neither an honest Advaitin nor an earnest Visishtadvaitin. But cultured in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, the Professor did not feel any divided loyalty in him make up and used to plead continuously and passionately for a synthetic acceptance of both the schools of Vedanta.

Following the tradition of the classical commentators, Srinivasachariar has written on all the books of the Prasthanatraya. His *Wisdom of the Upanishads* exposes the 'unsympathetic interpretations' of these sacred springs of Hindu metaphysics. 'The method followed in this work is a systematic formulation of the Upanishadic thought under the well-known headings of Epistemology, Ontology, Cosmology, Psychology, Ethics and Eschatology or theories of mukti. It is a synthetic presentation of the essentials of the Upanishadic Philosophy of Religion whose keynote is struck in the opening and concluding

ing portions of the *Vedanta Sūtras*, namely that existence and value are one and that Brahman is the ultimate ground of all existents, and the supreme goal of all experience'.

The Professor insisted that 'the *Upanishads*, the *Sūtras* and the *Gita* are integrally related and their teachings are identical though they may stress the mystical, the metaphysical and moral aspects respectively, of the same *Vedic* truths'. And so, his next book was '*The Ethical Philosophy of the Gita*' and is directed to dispelling 'the misconception that Vedanta does not stress the moral values of experience'. The chapter in this book on the 'Problem of Conduct' brings out the biology and the psychology of conduct, the need of its normative purpose and religious orientation. His comparison of the *Gita* metaphysique of morals with Kant's Categorical Imperatives is as instructive as it is revealing.

Two other books of Srinivasachariar '*A Synthetic Study of Vedanta*' and '*Studies in Vedanta*' are remarkable for the masterly treatment of the subjects they deal with. The first chapter in the former entitled 'The Soul of India' is a graphic account of the 'genius' of India as expressed in her life, beauty, love and truth and religion and traces the expression of this unity diversely manifested in Tagore, Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh and Sri Ramakrishna. The chapter on 'The Spiritual Method of the Guru' is the Professor's rendering in modern style of the Bhṛigu Valli of the Taittiriya Upanishad. His description of 'The Synthetic Religious Experience of Sri Ramakrishna' is a brilliant exposition of the life of the Great Master. The *Studies in Vedanta* is a collection of the lectures delivered by the Professor before the University of Madras and the Indian Philosophy Congress. It contains his Principal Miller Lectures delivered in 1935 on *The Inner Meaning of Progress* in which he considers in detail and assesses the value of the various views of Progress held in the West and then attempts 'a re-interpretation of these views largely in the light of Hindu culture in terms of natural evolution or the process of *prakṛti*,

human history or the progress of *puruṣa* and the immanent purpose of God or *Purushotama*'.

The '*Idea of Personality*' was the theme of the Dr Annie Besant Memorial Lecture in 1949-50. Here too as in dealing with other themes including *Mysticism* which is the subject of the Professor's last published book—he adopts his usual *vyatireka-anvaya* method of first refuting wrong views of Personality and then expounding the correct view. In these lectures he expounds his characteristic philosophy which he calls 'Atmanism' and 'Pan-atmanism' drawing out the mystic and social aspects of that theory of Personality.

Aspects of Advaita makes a new approach to the interpretation of that school of Vedanta from the logical and psychological point of view which the Professor calls 'Pure Advaita', from the ethico-religious point of view called 'Practical Advaita' and in between, the cosmological point of view called the 'Pure-Practical Advaita' and he seeks to establish inter-Vedantic understanding on the basis of 'Practical Advaita'.

Among Prof. Srinivasachariar's books, '*The Philosophy of the Beautiful*' and '*Mysticism and Mysticism*' go together. Theories of aesthetics as held in the West and standards of aesthetic criticism are reviewed and estimated in the first book followed by the treatment of Beauty by thinkers like Bosanquet and Croce and the exposition of the Vedantic view in which the Beautiful is identified with the Blissful and the True. This work on *Mysticism* or *Brahmanubhava* says the Professor in the Preface 'undertaken in my old age with failing health completes the scheme of comparative studies in Vedanta begun by me about twenty years ago'. This book is universally acclaimed as a classic on the subject. It is encyclopaedic in its treatment of the theory of mysticism and the forms of mystic experience of the saints of all religions. For historical and comparative study of mysticism, it is unique both in the manner adopted and the facts expounded with a sweep which is as comprehensive as it is complete.

Requested by the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanam, Prof. Srinivasachariar brought out a *Handbook of Hindu Religion* in collaboration with two other scholars for the use of the students of the Summer School of Hindu Religion conducted by it every year. *Sri Krishna* is a small booklet by him about which he says: 'I began to write on philosophy as a synthesis of experience at a ripe old age. But though it is intellectually satisfactory, it does not satisfy the soul. At best it reaches only the gate of God and does not enter into the shrine as every thought of God is not God. Even my work on mysticism is only a glimpse into the Light within and is no real solace. Following the lead of Sri Vyasa who wrote the *Sūtras* and the *Puranas*, I became tired of thought and I seek the feet of Sri Krishna, the Enchanter of Souls and the Stealer of Hearts as my only hope'. We shall mention only the chapter headings to show Prof. Srinivasachariar's deep and abiding devotion to Sri Krishna. After explaining the meaning of

Avatara, he describes the meaning of Purnavatara, goes on to identify the Brahman of the Upanishads as the God of the *Gita*, sees in Sri Krishna the World-Saviour, the Bhuvana-sundara, and the very soul of Vedantic Religion.

And thus Prof. Srinivasachariar has left us gathered to the Holy Feet of his Ishta-Devata, Who was his one and sole thought during his last days. Having fulfilled all his obligations, as son, as husband, father, friend, teacher and author, continuously reading and constantly writing, true to the upanishadic injunction *svādhyāya pravachanābhyām na pramāditavyam*, he was awaiting the liberation of his soul from its mortal coils, welcoming Death like a dear guest (*Kṛitakṛtyāḥ pratikṣhante mṛtyum priyamiva nihiṁ*). He lived a full and fruitful life leaving many a lasting impress in the hearts of his friends, in the pages of his books and in the institutions that he founded and fostered.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Sri Amulya Bandhu Mukherjee is from Calcutta.

Swami Nikhilananda has adapted his poem from the Bengali of Dwijendra Lal Roy.

Swami Maithilyananda is an ex-Editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata*.

Lady Andal Venkatasubba Rao is the joint founder of the Madras Seva Sadan.

Miss K. Rajeswari, M.A., is a Lecturer in Stella Mary's College, Madras.

Miss A. P. Sarada, M.A., is a Lecturer in English, Medical College, Pondicherry.

Swami Tapasyananda is President, Rama-

krishna Ashrama, Trivandrum. His article formed part of an editorial, *What we stand for*, written by him in the VEDANTA KESARI, June, 1935.

Sri S. N. Rao of Ooty is a retired Deputy Collector.

Sri Anthony Elenjimittam of Bombay is an old contributor to this journal.

Captain N. Seshadrinathan, M.B.B.S., D.T.M., is from Madras.

Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan is the retired Professor of Philosophy, Vivekananda College, Madras.

OUR CULTURE AND THE HIMALAYAS

India is very much agitated over the news that the Chinese have claimed a large territory in the Himalayas and have occupied some areas too. The mild Prime Minister even, in spite of his wide sympathies for the Chinese, found it difficult to tolerate this sinister move. He emphatically mentioned the importance of the Himalayas in the life of the nation and the tremendous influence it has exerted on the Indian mind. Apart from the strategic, this argument from the standpoint of culture also will appeal to people very much. We are reminded of a statement made by Swami Vivekananda. Once he was asked in the West, 'Swamiji, how is it that even though the Hindus have discovered a wonderful philosophy of the Absolute they are idolators?' Swami Vivekananda replied, 'Because of the Himalayas'. The assertion looks sudden and dramatic. But when we ponder over the statement and remember the mythology and growth of theistic ideas in India we come to appreciate it.

The mystery and majesty, the beauty and grandeur of the Himalayas have gone deep into our consciousness and have influenced and inspired our life, literature, art, architecture, ritual and religion. The Himalaya, 'the snowy abode', has been conceived by the ancients as the place of the Trinity of Gods. The abode of Siva is Kailasa, His wife Parvati is the daughter of Himalaya. The holiest river Ganga rises from the Himalaya, from the feet of Vishnu and falls on Siva's matted locks. Siva is white like the mountain, *rajata-giri-nibham* as it is said in His Dhyana-mantra. His throat is blue because a snow-peak viewed from a distance appears with 'a band of violet blue haze just below the snowline'. Havel thinks that the seven falls in the Himalayas gave rise to the Puranic idea of Ganga's descent.

Himalaya has been conceived by the yogis as the lotus on the navel of Vishnu. Brahma sits on it and creates the world. Lotus has thus become a great characteristic of Indian art. In every human body Siva is on the head sitting on the thousand-petalled lotus. The *Maha-*

nirvana Tantra gives a spiritual interpretation of the lotus symbol. Lotus has been depicted in artistic creations of Sanchi, Ajanta, Elephanta etc. The Sarnath column is said to be a modified representation of the world lotus. The Hindu temples were erected in imitation of the Himalayas, and the peaks gave the idea of the temple Sikharas. The Kailasa cave at Ellora represents the anecdotes of Siva, including even the Puranic story of Ravana trying to move the Kailasa mountain.

Havel considers art as the spiritualization of daily life and as a help to the growth of religious ideas. Art is thus rooted in religion. It is, we see, specially true about Indian art.

In literature too the influence of Himalaya is felt. Himalaya, the mountain, has been considered in the old books as the centre of the world. The *Ramayana* describes Kailasa as *dharanidhara*. Kalidasa describes Himalaya as *devatatma*, divine-souled. The seven Rishis, he writes, praised Himalaya saying, 'Thy mind is as lofty as thy summits'. He again describes Himalaya in *Kumarasambhava* as 'Earth's stately pillar, girt above the cloud' and Mount Kailasa as *Tryambakasya mahasgh*—'like the loud laughter of Siva petrified for aeons'. Kewaguchi compares it to the Buddha.

The Himalaya is a great place of pilgrimage. Thousands march every year to see it. The *Manasakhanda* says:

He who thinks on Himachal though he should not behold him is greater than he who performs all worship at Kashi. In a hundred ages of the gods I could not tell of the glories of Himachal. As the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of Himachal.

Mountain has always and in every country been considered holy and the abode of peace. The *Psalms* say:

'His foundations is in the Holy mountains (87.1) and 'The mountain shall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness.' (72.3)

The mere ascent to Himalaya is a pilgrimage. The yogis consider it as symbolic of spiritual ascent. Manasa-sarovara symbolically, as

literally, means the 'Lake of the Mind'. The river system of India starts from there. This is another reason why it was looked upon with so much love and respect.

Himalaya is intimately connected with the Indian intellectual and spiritual genius. Vyasa compiled Mahabharata here. Sankara wrote his famous commentaries in Kedarnath. Nara-Narayana practised penance in Badri. The Pandavas went to Heaven along the Uttara-patha. Charaka collected his herbs here only and Gandhamadana was here alone. The holy rivers, Alaknanda and Bhagirathi and the sources of Ganga and Yamuna, Gangotri and Yamunotri, along with Kedar and Badri attract thousands of pilgrims every year. The pilgrimage is ennobling, for the Himalaya is the 'lord of the mountains' as the *Raghuvamsa* says, and its immensity and vastness, grandeur and wonder inspire awe and engender humility. The call of the Himalayas has been felt down the ages by spiritual aspirants. It is the call of solitude and austerity, of contemplation and meditation, of plain living and high thinking. The voice of the Himalaya is the voice of Eternity. Its message is that of the interplay of the absolute and the relative. As Sri Aurobindo records in his *Savitri*:

There was a carol of birds and murmur of bees,
And all that is common and natural and sweet.

Yet intimately divine to heart and soul.' (7.4)
'A huge inertness is the world's defence
Even in change is treasured changelessness.' (2.10)

It is looked upon with so much love that, writers become emotional about it, as Nicholas Roerich was when he wrote:

Himalayas! Here is the Abode of Rishis. Here resounded the sacred Flute of Krishna. Here thundered the Blessed Gautama Buddha. Here originated all Vedas. Here lived Pandavas. Here—Gessar Khan. Here—Aryavarta. Here is Shambhala. Himalayas—Jewel of India. Himalayas—Treasure of the world. Himalayas—the sacred Symbol of Ascent.

(*Himalayas*—ABODE OF LIGHT, p. 1)

Nationalism in its ultimate analysis is psychological. As Swami Vivekananda says:

The ultimate unit is psychological. This is much more permanent than the geographical.

(*Notes of some wanderings*, p. 73)

The Himalayas have given us the oneness of India, both geographically and psychologically.

To understand a culture it is necessary to take note of the mythology, religion, art, architecture and literature. The Himalayas, we see, have influenced Indian creative arts down the ages and hence our culture has a fascination all its own. It is because of this that we cannot afford to lose the former, at least for the sake of the latter.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HOMAGE TO SANKARA: By T. M. P. Mahadevan. Published by Ganesh & Co., Ltd., Madras-17. Price Rs. 1.50.

This slim little book is the fourth in the series of books which Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan is bringing out in reverent commemoration of the great Bhagavatpada Adi Sankara. The book represents this year's homage to Sri Sankara even as the Morning prayer, the *Isavasya Upanishad*, and the *Kena Upanishad* were designed to represent the homage to the great teacher for the years 1956, 1957 and 1958. These earlier volumes have been deservedly popular both among the learned and the lay.

In the book under review, Dr Mahadevan gives us a short account of the life and teachings of Sankara designed to introduce the lay reader to

the central teachings of the great Acharya, avoiding details and controversies both about the life and about the doctrines. Appended to this account are English translations with text in Sanskrit and Roman, of Totakacharya's famous verses and Sankara's own *Gurvashtakam*.

In his account of the life of Sankara, Dr Mahadevan takes the view that the date 788 A.D. assigned by some modern scholars is more acceptable and that there is a 'fair measure of certainty' that Sankara came after Bhartrhari (800 A.D.) and before Vachaspati Misra (841 A.D.). He does not argue the question on the basis of evidence, having regard to the limited scope of the book. But it would have been useful if he had also mentioned the fact that whatever 'scholars' may find acceptable to them or

not, the great South Indian Sankara Mutts have fairly authentic traditions taking the date of Sankara to Centuries before Christ.

The account of the philosophy of Sankara on pp. 32-38 is succinct and lucid. At a time when arrogant irreligion stalks the land, every effort to restate the fundamentals of the gospel of Advaita is a valuable service to mankind. We therefore welcome Prof. Mahadevan's book heartily and wish it all success. And finally, it is a real pleasure to congratulate the publishers, Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Ltd., for the consistently high standard of book production that they maintain in this as in all their other books. The illustrations are altogether admirable.

S. R.

THE PAGEANT OF LIFE: By B. G. Kher. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pages 305. Price Rs. 4).

The Navajivan Trust has done a very creditable service to the reading public by publishing the writings, speeches and occasional articles to dailies, of the late B. G. Kher, who was more than once the premier to the Government of Bombay. Not only was he known for his eminence in public life but for his elegance of expression in all his utterances. When such a person's mind dwells upon the various aspects of life, naturally his reactions gain a certain amount of attraction by their genuineness as well as individuality.

Under five sections have been grouped here his many reflections, tributes to departed leaders like Gokhale, Sastri, Sarojini Naidu, Sister Nivedita, Tilak, Vivekananda etc., his broadcast talks and other observations made upon the pageant of life. One clearly perceives in these pages the breadth of his outlook, the core of his culture, his varied interests, his sincere endeavour to uplift the backward in society and above all his apparent effortlessness in giving a shape to his many and varied thoughts.

One who reads the volume will be not only impressed with the matter but the manner as well. The mind of the man is beautifully and clearly impressed upon every page here.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN.

IN THE COMPANY OF THE SAINTS: (Sant Samagam in English) compiled by Mukulbhai Kalarthi. (Navajivan Publishing House Ahmedabad. Pp. 56. Price 40 nP.)

This little book, conceived on the model of the first books of English Prose, gives a short account of the life and teachings of Narasimha Mahata, Dadu Dayal, Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram and

Ramdas and also extracts from their writings. The style is easy and captivating; and the publication may well serve to rouse the interests of our youngsters in things spiritual and turn them Godward.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

The following books are also published by the Navajivan:

The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 34. Price 25 nP.

India of My Dreams: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 339. Rs. 2.50.

Birth-Control: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 38. Price 40 nP.

Gandhian Techniques in the Modern World: By Pyarelal. Pp. 66. Re. 1.

A Nation Builder at Work: By Pyarelal — pp. 69. Re. 1.

Glances at Islam: Valji Govindji Desai. Pp. 72. Price 60 nP.

The Miracle of Calcutta: By Manubehn Gandhi. Pp. 103. Re. 1.

Non-Violent Way to World Peace: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 51. Price 35 nP.

Woman's Role in Society: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 35. Price 25 nP.

Communism and Communists: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 24. Price 20 nP.

The Message of the Gita: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 40. Price 25 nP.

Population Control: By M. P. Desai. Pp. 53. Price 50 nP.

Mahatma Gandhi — Correspondence with the Government 1944-47: Compiled by Pyarelal. Pp. 375. Price Rs. 6.

My Socialism: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 56. Price 35 nP.

Towards New Horizons: By Pyarelal. Pp. 221. Price Rs. 2.

What Jesus Means to Me: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 49. Price 35 nP.

Here are a few more books published from different places.

Thus Spake Rama Tirtha: By Swami Rajeswarananda. Published by Swami Kesava Tirtha, Ramatirtha Sevashramam, Piduguralla Post, Guntur Dist., Andhra Pradesh. Pp. 175. Price 87 nP.

The Yoga of Wisdom: By Swami Gyanananda Saraswati. Published from 'Gyana Niketan', Malakhedi, Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh. Pp. 45.

Purification of the Mind: By Jehangir M. Shapoorjee. Pp. 13.

To The Lord and Lover: By Har Krishan Singh. Published by Sri Aurobindo Yog-Mandir, UNA (Punjab). Pp. 24. Price 35 nP.

Sahityadalli Bandhamoksha (in Kannada): Published by Sahitya Niketan, Luseli. Pp. 12. Price As. 2.

Sri Sankara-Digvijaya-sarah (in Sanskrit): By Srinivasa Kedalapah. Sri Navabharati Karyalaya, Rajkot, Saurashtra. Pp. 18.

Darshan (Periodical in English and Marathi): Edited by Swami Prabhananda and Shri A. R. Nadkarni. Published by Shri P. S. Kamat, President, Shri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Karwar. Pp. 52.

The Universal Mother (Periodical): Organiser Sreenivasdas Poddar, 14, Queen Park, Calcutta-19. Pp. 22. Price Re. 1.

Dhammapada — A Practical Guide to Right Living: Translated by Venerable Bhikkhu Buddhakarakhita. Published by Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore. Pp. 150. Price Rs. 1.30.

The following books have been brought out by the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Institute, Rishikesh, Himalayas. The books are by the well-known Swami Sivananda, if not otherwise mentioned.

Essence of Principal Upanishads: Pp. 203. Rs. 2.

Doon Lectures: Pp. 268. Price Rs. 3.

Life and Teachings of Lord Jesus: Pp. 222. Rs. 3.

Maha Yoga: Pp. 32. nP. 25.

Self-Knowledge: Pp. 388. Rs. 4.

Children's Divine Treasure: Pp. 316. Rs. 3.

The Guiding Lights: Letters. Pp. 445. Rs. 5.

Practice of Ayurveda: Pp. 497. Rs. 5.

Jyotisha aur Adhunik Vichar-Dhara (in Hindi): Pp. 175. Rs. 3. By B. Venkataraman.

The Letters that transform: Pp. 96. Re. 1. Selected by Swami Raghavananda.

Sivananda — Poet, Philosopher & Saint. Pp. 199. Rs. 3. By Savitri Asopa.

Brahmacharya Sadhana: (in Hindi) Pp. 222. Rs. 3.

Hints on Meditation: Pp. 16. nP. 25.

Sadhana: Pp. 551. Rs. 15. A very substantial book about different methods of Sadhana.

Survagita Sara: Pp. 334. Rs. 5. A good collection with translation of devotional and philosophical portions from Mahabharata, Yoga Vasishtha etc.

DEVI PUJA: By T. V. Kapali Sastry. (Publisher: M. P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Price 50 nP. Pages 30.)

This pamphlet gives the story of the Devimahatmya and points out that the worship of the Goddess during Navaratri is done throughout the country. The learned author provides the translation of the wellknown Devi-sukta as well as notes on the personal features of the deities as mentioned in the Devimahatmya. S. S.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NEW DELHI

REPORT FOR 1958

Religious classes, lectures, and celebrations of birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other teachers formed important features of the activity of the centre. It runs a Library and Reading Room, a general Outdoor Dispensary and a free Tuberculosis Clinic. During the year under review the Dispensary treated 49,476 cases of which 14,027 were new cases. The clinic treated 108,644 patients of which 1937 were new cases, 531 indoor cases were treated of which 282 were women.

In 1958, 39 Tulsī Ramayana discourses with a total attendance of 35,100 were held. The Library had 10,751 books, 14 newspapers and 103 periodicals. 10,580 books were issued in 1958. The Sarada Mahila Samiti started in the Mission premises a Sarada Mandir, which is a spiritual and moral education class for children. It had

60 children on its roll. The management thank the donors and subscribers and other friends for their kind co-operation.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, CALICUT

REPORT FOR 1957-58

The above centre runs a Secondary School, a Lower Primary School and a Students' Home for boys. At the end of 1958 there were 18 divisions to accommodate 803 students in the Secondary School. Poor students received encouragement by way of clothing, books and fee concessions. The strength of the Primary school in 1958 was 439. The Students' Home had 61 students in 1958. The Charitable Dispensary treated 51,165 patients in 1958. Daily about 400 children and patients received milk. Celebrations of the festivals such as Navaratri, Sivaratri, etc. and birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda were

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MYLAPORE, MADRAS-4

observed in the Ashrama. The members of Sri Sarada Sangha conduct a girls' hostel. It is proposed to build a Community Hall. The management convey their sincere thanks to the well-wishers and friends for their help and request them to continue the same in future.

**RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM,
RANGOON**

REPORT FOR 1958

This is the biggest Hospital of its kind in the Ramakrishna Mission and is run mainly on charities and donations. It provides medical relief in a wider circle, with the available latest remedies, even to those coming from the remotest corners of Burma.

This Hospital consists of an indoor section and an outdoor dispensary with various wards, such as cancer, eye, ear-nose-throat, X-ray, physiotherapy, venereal diseases and a well equipped clinical laboratory besides medical and surgical wards. It functions under the guidance of well-qualified doctors and nurses. A Surgical Unit has also been opened.

The total expenditure was K. 3,51,810—07 while the income amounted to K. 2,94,983—10. The Managing Committee, in view of the accumulated deficit in its finance, express their difficulty in

keeping up the present standard of efficiency unless the Government and the public come forward and strengthen their hands with necessary funds.

**RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SOCIETY,
RANGOON**

REPORT FOR 1958

The activities of this Centre are mainly cultural and religious. The Free Library had 23,177 books and it issued 30,758 books during the year. The Free Reading Room had 23 dailies and 125 periodicals with an average attendance of 225. The total number of scripture classes during the year was 76 and the average attendance was 22. The Cultural Study Group had several discussions on educational, cultural and religious subjects. The Society organised 32 public lectures, 16 film shows on cultural and educational subjects, 3 musical evenings and published the Burmese translation of 2 books during the year and accommodated 15 parties in the Guest House. The Society proposes to expand its activities on different cultural fronts.

The Managing Committee while thanking their friends and sympathisers appeal for more funds, for general maintenance and further improvement.

Prof. P. N. S. Passes Away

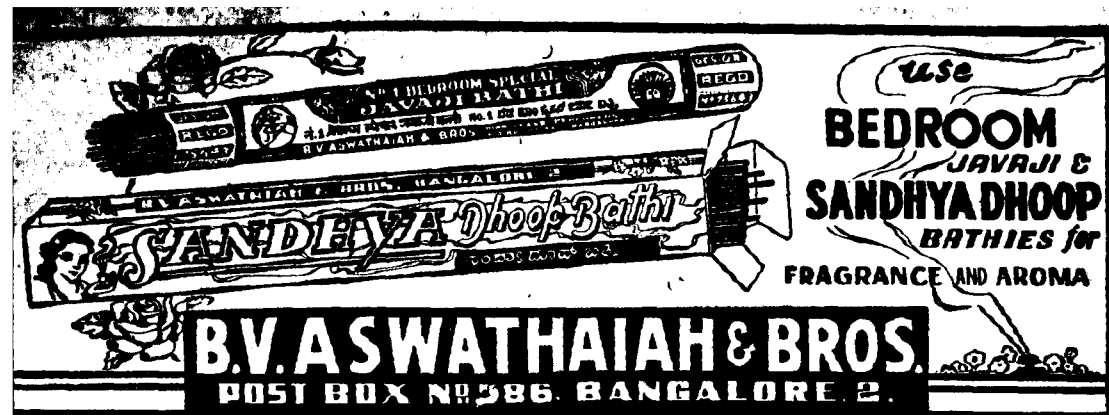
We are sorry to announce the passing away of Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar in Madras at 10.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 4th November, after a brief illness. For some years now he was having occasional fits though the rest of the time he was intellectually quite alert. On the 3rd he had a similar fit, and passed away on the 4th, at the age of 81.

Prof. P. N. Srinivasachariar served as a teacher in P. S. High School, Mylapore, for some time and later joined the Pachaiyappa's College, as Professor of Philosophy. He became the Principal of the Pachaiyappa's College in 1935, which position he held till 1939. He had been a member of the Madras University Syndicate and was connected with several educational institutions and temples. After his retirement he lived in a

small house as a Vanaprastha and became a centre of attraction for the entire locality.

Prof. P. N. S., as he was popularly called, came to know Swami Vivekananda and intimately moved with Swami Ramakrishnananda. He was also intimately connected with the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order for the last 60 years. Our journal was specially dear to him. He was also the joint editor of the *Vedanta Kesari* for some time. He was a great supporter of the idea of synthesis met with in the realisations of Sri Ramakrishna. He wrote about a dozen books on Indian philosophy. A short account of his books has been given by Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan earlier in this issue. With his death the world of philosophy and the Ramakrishna movement lose a great exponent and enthusiastic friend. May his soul rest in Peace!

The birthday utthipuja of Holy Mother Sarada Devi falls on Tuesday, 22nd December, 1959.



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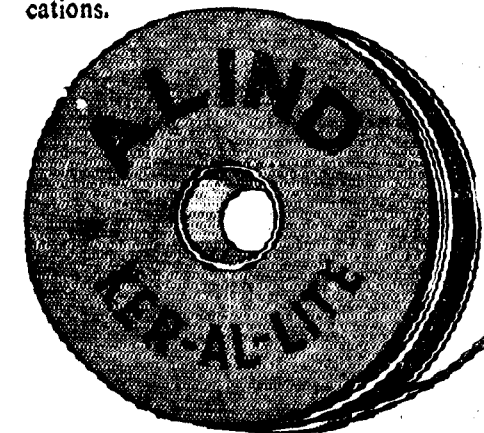
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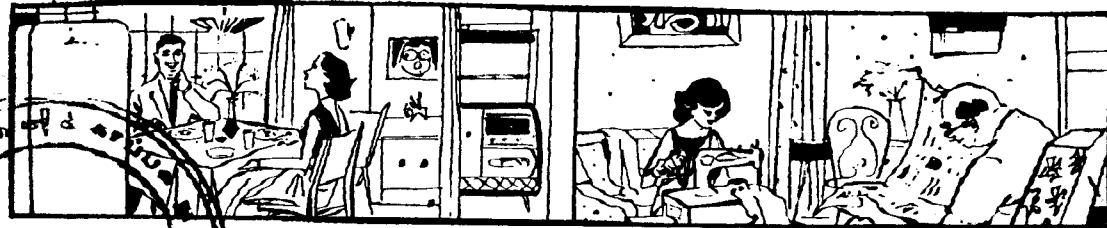
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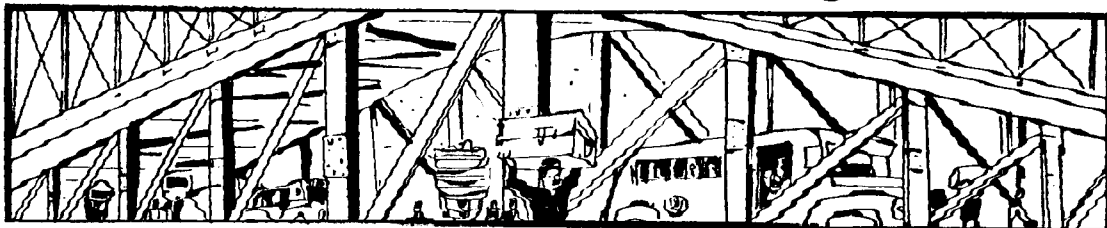
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