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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## DISCOURSES ON JNANA YOGA

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Self is the condition of all in the universe, but It can never be conditioned. As soon as we *know* that we are It, we are free. As mortals we are not and never can be free. Free mortality is a contradiction in terms, for mortality implies change and only the changeless can be free. The Atman alone is free, and that is our real essence. We feel this inner freedom; in spite of all theories, all beliefs we know it, and every action proves that we know it. The will is not free, its apparent freedom is but a reflection from the Real. If the world were only an endless chain of cause and effect, where could one stand to help it? There must needs be a piece of dry land for the rescuer to stand on, else how can he drag anyone out of the rushing stream and save him from drowning? Even the fanatic who cries “I am a worm,” thinks that he is on the way to become a saint. He sees the saint even in the worm.

There are two ends or aims of human life, real knowing (Vijnâna) and bliss. Without freedom, these two are impossible. They are the touchstone of all life. We should feel the Eternal Unity so much, that we should weep for all

sinner, knowing that it is *we* who are sinning. The eternal law is self-sacrifice, not self-assertion. What self to assert, when all is One? There are no “rights”, all is love. The great truths that Jesus taught have never been lived. Let us try his method and see if the world will not be saved. The contrary method has nearly destroyed it. Selflessness only, not selfishness, can solve the question. The idea of “right” is a limitation; there is *really* no “mine,” and “thine,” for I am thou and thou art I. We have “responsibility”, not “rights”. We should say : “I am the Universe,” not “I am John,” or “I am Mary.” These limitations are all delusions and are what holds us in bondage, for as soon as I think : “I am John,” I want exclusive possession of certain things and begin to say “me” and “mine”, and continually make new distinctions in so doing. So our bondage goes on increasing with every fresh distinction and we get farther and farther away from the central Unity, the undivided Infinite. There is only one Individual, and each of us is That. Oneness alone is love and fearlessness, separation leads us to hatred and fear. One-

ness fulfils the law. Here, on earth, we strive to enclose little spaces and exclude outsiders, but we cannot do that in the sky, though that is what sectarian religion tries to do, when it says: "Only *this* way leads to salvation, all others are wrong." Our aim should be to wipe out these little enclosures to widen the boundaries until they are lost sight of, and to realize that *all* religions lead to God. This little puny self must be sacrificed. This is the truth symbolized by baptism into a new life, the death of the old man—the birth of the new, the perishing of the false self, the realization of the Atman, the one Self of the Universe.

The two great divisions of the Vedas are Karma Kânda—the portion pertaining to doing or work, and Jnâna Kânda—the portion treating of knowing—true knowledge. In the Vedas, we can find the whole process of the growth of religious ideas. This is because when a higher truth was reached, the lower perception that led to it, was still preserved. This was done, because the sages realized that the world of creation being eternal, there would always be those who needed the first steps to Knowledge, that the highest philosophy, while open to all, could never be grasped by all. In nearly every other religion, only the last or highest realization of truth was preserved, with a natural consequence that the older ideas were lost, while the newer ones were only understood by the few and gradually came to have no meaning for the many. We see this result illustrated in the growing revolt against old traditions and authorities. Instead of accepting them, the man of to-day boldly challenges them to give reasons for their claims, to make clear the grounds upon which they demand acceptance. Much in Christianity is the mere application of new names and meanings to old pagan beliefs and customs. If the old sources had been preserved and the reasons for the transitions fully explained, many things would be clearer. The Vedas preserved the old ideas and this fact necessitated huge commentaries to

explain them and why they were kept. It also led to many superstitions, through clinging to old forms after all sense of their meaning had been lost. In many ceremonials, words are repeated, which have survived from a now forgotten language and to which no real meaning can now be attached. The idea of evolution was to be found in the Vedas long before the Christian era, but until Darwin said it was true, it was regarded as a mere Hindu superstition.

All external forms of prayer and worship are included in the Karma Kânda. These are good when performed in a spirit of unselfishness and not allowed to degenerate into mere formality. They purify the heart. The Karma Yogi wants everyone to be saved before himself. His only salvation is to help others to salvation. "To serve Krishna's servants is the highest worship." One great saint prayed: "Let me go to hell with the sins of the whole world, but let the world be saved." This true worship leads to intense self-sacrifice. It is told of one sage that he was willing to give all his virtues to his dog, that he might go to heaven, because he had long been faithful to him, while the sage himself was content to go to hell.

The Jnâna Kânda teaches that Knowledge alone can save, in other words, that he must become "wise unto salvation." Knowledge is first objective, the Knower knowing Himself. The Self, the only subject, is in manifestation seeking only to know Himself. The better the mirror, the better reflection it can give; so man is the best mirror, and the purer the man, the more clearly he can reflect God. Man makes the mistake of separating himself from God and identifying himself with the body. This mistake arises through Mâyâ, which is not exactly delusion but might be said to be seeing the real as something else and not as it is. This identifying of ourselves with the body leads to inequality, which inevitably leads to struggle and jealousy, and as long as we see inequality, we can never know happiness. "Ignorance and inequality are the two sources of all



misery," says Jnâna. When man has been sufficiently buffeted by the world, he awakes to a desire for freedom, and searching for means of escape from the dreary round of earthly existence, he seeks Knowledge, learns what he really is, and is free. After that he looks at the world as a huge machine, but takes good care to keep his fingers out of the wheels. Duty ceases for him who is free; what power can constrain the free being? He does good, because it is his nature, not because any fancied duty commands it. This does not apply to those who are still in the bondage of the senses. Only for him who has transcended the lower self, is this freedom. He stands on his own soul, obeys no law; he is free and perfect. He has undone the old superstitions and got out of the wheel. Nature is but the mirror of our own selves. There is a limit to the working power of human beings, but no limit to desire, so we strive to get hold of the working powers of others and enjoy the fruits of their labours, escaping work ourselves. Inventing machinery to work for us, can never increase well-being, for in gratifying desire, we only find it, and then we ask more and more, without end. Dying, still filled with ungratified desires, we have to be born again and again in the vain search for satisfaction. "Eight millions of bodies have we had, before we reach the human," say the Hindus. Jnâna says: "Kill desire and so get rid of it." That is the only way. Cast out all causation and realize the Atman. Only freedom can produce true morality. If there were only an endless chain of cause and effect, Nirvâna could not be. It is extinction of the seeming self, bound by this chain. That is what constitutes freedom, to get beyond causality. Our true nature is good, it is free, the pure being that can never be, or do, wrong. When we read God with our eyes and minds, we call Him this or that, but in reality there is but One, all variations are our interpretations of that One. We *become* nothing, we *regain* our true Self. Buddha's summary of misery as the outcome of "ig-

norance and caste" (inequality) has been adopted by the Vedântists, because it is the best ever made and manifests the wonderful insight of this greatest among men. Let us be brave and sincere then—whatever path we follow with devotion, we must reach freedom. Once lay hold of one link of the chain and the whole must come after it by degrees. Water the root of the tree and the whole tree is watered. It is of little advantage to waste time to water each leaf. In other words, seek the Lord and getting Him we get all. Churches, doctrines, forms—these are merely the hedges to protect the tender plant of religion; but later on they must all be broken down, that the little plant may become a tree. So the various religious sects, Bibles, Vedas and Scriptures are just "tubs" for the little plant, but it has to get out of the tub and fill the world.

We must learn to feel ourselves as much in the sun, in the stars, as here. Spirit is beyond all time and space; every eye seeing, is my eye; every mouth praising the Lord, is my mouth; every sinner is I. We are confined nowhere, we are not body. The universe is our body. We are just the pure crystal, reflecting all, but itself ever the same. We are magicians waving magic wands and creating scenes before us at will, but we have to go below appearances and know the Self. This world is like water in a kettle, beginning to boil; first a bubble comes, then another, then many, until all is in ebullition and passes away in steam. The great teachers are like the bubbles as they begin, here one, there one, but in the end every creature has to be a bubble and escape. Creation, ever new, will bring new water and go through the process all over again. Buddha and Christ are the two greatest "bubbles" the world has known. They were great souls, who having realized freedom help others to escape. Neither was perfect, but they are to be judged by their virtues, never by their defects. Jesus fell short, because he did not always



live up to his own highest ideal, and above all, because he did not give woman an equal place with man. Woman did everything for him, yet not one was made an apostle. This was doubtless owing to his Semitic origin. The great

Aryans, Buddha among the rest, have always put woman in an equal position with man. For them sex in religion did not exist. In the Vedas and Upanishads, women taught the highest truths and received the same veneration as men.

## A MESSENGER OF THE BELOVED

BY SWAMI VIJAYANANDA

A little bird singing from a neighbouring tree suddenly shattered my dream. . . . It was a beautiful May morning in the Himalayas. I was watching in amazed fascination the magic play of sunshine on a little cluster of white clouds hovering over the majestic snow-peaks. Such a vast and extensive range of snows is seldom seen anywhere. Over six hundred miles long! The divine *Nandâ Devi* towering majestic above the clouds with its sky-kissing domes, the *Trisul* resplendent like a shining silver pyramid, and many other peaks of varied forms and shapes,—how sublime they looked as they shone in infinite tints, now violet, now pink and again crimson! And lo, in a moment the northern sky is flooded with the purest gold! A vision of beauty, so grand, so sublime! And yet men complain that there is no joy, glory or inspiration on this earth! They say the world is old, stale and monotonous. People, devoid of imagination and inspiration, do of course produce dull works from their pen, brush or chisel. But there are others who have revealed delicate secrets of beauty and command eternal homage from mankind. And that master artist, God, who in a twinkle of an eye creates such wonders out of himself,—to call his works dull and insipid, is not that the height of blasphemy? Some say that the author of this creation is God, others that it is mere Nature. But why worry so long as you have these beauties of colour and form spread before you on which to feast your soul? This ambrosial feast—

There! the bird is piping forth its shrill, penetrating cry: "Oh you, what are you doing?"\* So shrill is the song that the hills are echoing it. The whole place is filled with its vibrant notes. The magic colours on the snows and the sky are vanishing away. The shining peaks are enveloped in thick vapours. I start up. My mind is suddenly withdrawn from the feast of nature, and eagerly seeks for a suitable reply to the imperious call.

What am I doing indeed? Is it any good flying on the wings of imagination, forgetting the stern realities of life, the call of duties, the pangs of the soul's imperfections and the thousand shadows that momentarily darken its shining calm, and also, alas, the Face of the Beloved waiting in the inmost heart for my coming,—him, my friend, my lord, my all in all? Only a moment ago, my soul was enjoying the delicious cup brewed from the multicoloured charms of the world. But now it lies empty and broken on the ground. Fallen from the summit of joy, I lie in the slough of despondency.

Yes, my friend, I am doing nothing. I am averse to my Beloved. I have not yet curbed my wayward ego and laid it at his feet. He, my Beloved, masquerading in variegated forms in men and animals and in other infinite guises, has not received my loving homage and service. I have forgotten myself. The

\* A summer bird in the Himalayas, that seems to sing the exact Bengali words, *Tumi kee kachcho goh*, which mean in English, *Oh, what are you doing?*



external has lured me away by its siren charms, and all the while my Lord has been waiting, waiting in the inner shrine. I have been a victim of the senses. Oh, what indeed am I doing?

The bird is calling insistently: "What are you doing?" "What are you doing?" Is it the messenger of my Beloved? Of my jealous Lord who would not brook a single look or heart-beat wasted on any other? Has the bird come from him to see what I am doing? Whether I am a tireless pilgrim on the way to his temple? Did he say when he sent his messenger: "Go and see why he tarries so long and keeps me waiting. Ask of his eyes if he remembers me, of his heart-throbs if he hears my footfalls, and of his breath if he sees my face"? The bird has found me betraying his sacred trust, and is piping out its shrill protest in an unceasing cry—"Oh, what are you doing?" "Oh, what are you doing?"

Friends, such is the infinite grace of my Beloved. He has not forgotten me, though I forgot him. When oblivion blinds the soul and leads it astray, he in his infinite mercy sends his emissaries to enquire after us, to guide us through the dark alleys and intricacies of life. He is ever drawing us towards him, towards his eternal joy and peace. His messengers are everywhere. Every movement in nature is an eager call from his dear lips to hasten our steps towards him. Could we but see and hear! Would not then nature herself keep company with us in our love-tryst with him? And there would be no blunder, no tears, no heart-breaking and no separation.

As it is, we are like parrots imprisoned within the cage of nature. The encaged parrot forgets its pristine nature and the memory of the wild delights of free wings and boundless azure. The rays creeping through its prison bars cloud the joyous affluence of the golden morning. Freedom no more whispers in its ears the rustles of the green leaves. Forgetting its native song, it only mimics the alien voice of its captor. It is a slave, cramped and cribbed.

The bondman, imprisoned within the dull senses and the blind passions and desires, has been reduced to the state of the caged parrot. All his thoughts are concentrated on his little self. Noble aspirations have forsaken him. He craves only for the superficial and mistakes tinsel for gold. He has shut himself within the walls of meanness, jealousy, hatred, greed and lust. Better instincts do not find play in his soul. He has strangled his conscience, his noblest helpmate. He sits in the dark corners of his cage, broken-hearted and bereft of his native effulgence. His powers are gone, and hope and faith no more animate him. Good appears as evil to his distorted vision, the real as unreal and the transient as eternal. Good counsels do not prevail with him. The call of freedom does not reach his ears, and his blinded vision cannot see the far-off beckonings of the eternal. To his embittered soul everything is gall and wormwood. And the anxious footsteps of the Beloved sound in vain before the portals of his soul.

Such alas, we are, bound and shackled and blind!

But let us not lose heart. For hark, the bird is again singing merrily—"What are you doing?" The Lord has not forsaken us. His ever-awake love is watching over us. And anon his light shall shine. Do not his encircling arms ever protect us from eternal ruin? Through darkness and despair the song of his flute is cheering us on to where he waits for us. And his messengers ever call the hour of the tryst.—"Oh, what are you doing? Adorn yourself for the coming of the eternal Bridegroom. For the hour is nigh and the air is thick with his perfume. Come out under the open sky and surrender yourself to his golden smile."

I have come out. The bird sings its merry song. A new light kisses my eyes, and a new delight fills my soul. I hear his oncoming footfalls. The shackles fall off. And behold the snows are again aglow with a celestial light, and the sky is echoing their glad laughter. The



trees nod their heads in glee, and the flowers look at me with wide-eyed approval. Yea, the earth is again

suffused with the light of heaven, and there is no separation between myself and him!

## A REVIEW AND A FORECAST

BY THE EDITOR

### I

It is obvious that religion is in a state of embarrassment and confusion in the modern world,—a fact which no one interested in religion can look on with indifference. Whether people as a whole are lacking in religious spirit or not, it is difficult to say, but that religion as it exists to-day has lost its hold on the minds of men, no one can deny. There is not only a general apathy to religion, but a direct antagonism against it. Persistent efforts are being made in some parts of the world to cure men of God and religion. Religion originates in fear, they say. It makes man a toy in the hands of an imaginary invisible power. It blurs his vision of life, makes him dreamy and stifles his creative impulse. It breeds superstition and engenders narrowness and intolerance. It has torn humanity into contending factions. Bloody wars and persecutions have ensued from religious animosity and bigotry.

Religion no longer wields the power that it once exercised over society and state. Time was when social rules were framed by the religious, when priests dictated duties to the king, when educational institutions were conducted by monks and educational systems were based on religious ideals. From this central position of social and political authority religion has been completely overthrown in recent years. The history of the modern age is to a great extent the history of men's efforts to free themselves from the bondage of religion. Man's thought and conduct are no longer subject to the bindings of religion. The modern spirit to shake off the authority of religion has asserted itself not only in 'progressive' Christian

lands, but also in Muhammadan countries. In many countries religion seems to live in exile like a dethroned king with a few faltering adherents.

### II

It cannot be denied, however, that the revolt against religion is partly reactionary in character. Human nature has rebelled against undue restraint put on man's free will by religious zealots. Not long ago, even in America, apparently the most modern of all countries, man's public and private morals were scrupulously watched by the clergy and the slightest dereliction brought upon even the unwitting offender the severest wrath of the church dignitaries. These were, of course, extreme cases. Religionists, as a general rule, tried to curb man's impulses and desires by the strict enforcement of prohibitive measures. But man's natural inclinations are neither to be suppressed nor to be killed out. They are to be transformed. Inhibition results mostly in violent reaction or dull morbidity. Desires, by themselves, are neither good nor bad. They are colourless. They are good or evil according to the motive behind them. Broadly speaking, man is divided into two selves, the lower self and the higher self, the natural self and the spiritual self. Between these two flows the stream of consciousness. When it turns to the natural self, the will that proceeds therefrom exhibits itself as animal propensities, such as lust, anger and jealousy. The same will, when it arises from the spiritual consciousness, manifests itself as divine virtues, such as love, devotion and sacrifice. The spiritual self of man is his real self. As he becomes conscious



of this, he attains self-possession. His reason awakes, for reason is a function of the higher consciousness. He gains true discrimination. His will becomes subservient to himself. He can choose rightly and act rightly. His physical and mental selves are then instruments at his hands. He can direct them and guide them to higher and greater ends. This is what is meant by self-control, the control of the lower self by the higher self. But the church, instead of establishing man in this self-mastery, tried to make him only a bondsman to external rules and discipline. Ethical rules in order to be effective must be creative in force. They should awaken in man a higher vision of life and soul, fill him with a deeper sense of responsibility and inspire him with nobler aims. They should not prevail simply as protective or prohibitive measures.

That people got tired of the authority exercised over them by religion is true. But that is not the only cause of discontent. They lost faith in religion itself. An intellectual dissatisfaction has long come over men. With the growth of scientific spirit, human knowledge has been derived mainly from experience backed by reason. Experience and reason present to us the empiric reality, the relative truths. But religion has for its special province the truths which are beyond normal perception. They are revealed only to the supersensuous vision of the seers, who are few and far between. The rest of men have necessarily to depend on the authority of the revelations or the Sacred Texts, and follow the course of action laid by them until they can realise the truths for themselves. In spiritual matters, which are beyond common experience the scriptures are therefore held to be the only infallible source of knowledge. Thus in religious conceptions and practice faith occupies the first place. But though perception and reason cannot lead us to the transcendental reality, still it is not contradictory to them. We cannot deny the authority of the revealed truths, but can explain them

in the light of reason. Our faith in them can be well grounded on reason. But few have the inclination or capacity to do that. With the generality of people religion has remained a matter of belief, which has naturally suffered a rude shock from the materialistic and the rationalistic tendencies of the age.

Religious truths have been so differently formulated to suit different mental constitutions that it is sometimes extremely difficult to find any rational basis underlying them. Even those who intuitively perceive the spiritual truths, may not have their reasoning faculty so highly developed as to convince others by arguments of the validity of their experiences. This is why the *Upanishads* say that a spiritual leader should not only be steadfast in *Brahman* but versed in the dialectics of the *Shâstras*. On the other hand, there are few seekers who have the adequate reasoning power to understand the rationale of the spiritual truths. The arguments concerning them are mainly based on psychic facts and cannot be followed without sufficient power of introspection. Hence the extrovert scientific mind cannot possibly enter into them. Then again the same reasoning process does not appeal to all. Another reason why the arguments given by the *Shâstras* do not appeal to the scientific minds is that they have explained the religious truths from the standpoint of popular knowledge, which do not generally conform to the scientific view, for their object was to convey to common people religious ideas which they could best understand from their own standpoint. Moreover, different persons have realised the Truth in different ways. The truths stated by them naturally differ from one another. Few only have a full vision of the Reality. Only they have the highest view-point which can harmonise all. The disagreements of religious views are another stumbling-block to the acceptance of religion by the common reason of men.

Man's power and prosperity incident to the progress of science are also res-



possible for the decline of religious feeling. The worldly attainments and the emergence of fresh powers to achieve more have opened before men vistas of infinite progress. His desires for sense-enjoyment have increased thousandfold. He is earth-bound. He revels in his material glory. But man's longing for the Eternal cannot grow out of such self-sufficiency. He must realise the bitterness and futility of earthly pleasures before he can have the humility to seek something higher. All religions preach that man's desires can never be fulfilled on earth. For, our possessions are never commensurate with our desires. So it is wise to shake off desires as early as possible and turn to that which can bring lasting peace and bliss. But as scientific achievements have laid open before man a store-house of endless joys and comforts, this injunction of religion no longer appeals to him.

The basis of scientific knowledge is perception, the basis of religious knowledge is superconscious realisation. The difference in the sources of knowledge has created a difference of outlooks. While science has taken a materialistic view of things, religion has taken the deeper, spiritual view. To religion spirit is prior to matter. To science matter is prior to spirit. According to religion man is essentially a spiritual being; mind and body are superimposed on it; they adhere to the real self for the time being as mere adjuncts. Of course, there are minor differences of views as to the exact nature of the self. To science, speaking generally, man is a material-spiritual complex, mind and soul being the later developments of the physical organism. While religion holds man to be of divine descent, science has traced his origin to the bioplasmic cell. Indeed, the constant tendency of science has been, as it were, to disparage man. The other day we read in a well-known American monthly: "Three men, we are reminded, have reduced us to our proper insignificance and put an end to our pri-

mitive dream that we are godlike or that there is any God for us to resemble. They are Copernicus, Darwin and Freud. Copernicus began the revelation of the vastness of the universe and the consequent triviality of our poor molecule of a planet. Darwin showed man's ancestry reaching not up to the stars and their glory, but down to the mud and its fermentation. And Freud has pushed our humiliation into the last pit by the knowledge that what we thought was the light of spirit is only the sickly gleams of funguses growing rank in the cellars of physiology." But it is needless to point out that all these three views represent only half-truths.

Evolution of man is not denied by religion. But according to religious views evolution presupposes involution. The seed cannot grow into the tree unless the tree pre-exists potentially in it. If man can evolve into a god or perfect being, he must be a god involute. The scientists maintain evolution, but do not accept the involution as preceding it. To science man is a risen animal; to religion he is a fallen spirit. These two contradictory views can be reconciled only if the scientists accept involution along with the evolution of man.

According to Freud man's true being is libidinous. Religious feeling is simply the outcome of the suppressed sexual desire. But if sex-energy be the very essence of our being, all desires must necessarily be the manifestations of that energy. How can suppression change their character and transmute them into religious feeling? Sex-desires belong to the animal self. They are carnal. They grow out of the body-idea, while religious tendencies spring from the soul-consciousness. Their source is the divine and immortal spirit. Then the modern sex-psychologists uphold the sublimation of desires. But if the very rudiment of desires be impure and unholy, no process can exalt them into spiritual virtues. The utmost we can do is to eliminate their grossness to a certain extent. We can no way alter their bestial nature. Accord-



ing to religion the pure and divine spirit is the soul of being. That is the main-spring of our thoughts and activities. But the ordinary man who lives in the natural self, cannot receive the inflow of the spiritual energy direct. It acts through his gross mental being which is the repository of latent desires. But as he becomes aware of the true nature of the self, his thoughts and feelings well up from that consciousness. The flood-gate of the divine energy is opened and it is transfused into his whole being. Thus the sublimation of desires conceived by the sex-psychologists differs entirely from that inculcated by religion.

But the above considerations do not prevail yet as much as they should. And as a result pseudo-science is leading men more and more along the path of irreligion.

### III

Will religion live in such a degraded condition or will it die out of the world altogether? Religion cannot die nor can it lose its innate glory and excellence. It is the natural expression of man's being. We can no more get rid of it than we can do away with our very self. In our heart of hearts there is an inevitable craving for the eternal, the immutable. Man can never rest contented with the ephemeral. It can delude him for the time being, but it cannot suppress or subvert his inherent longing for the Truth. So long as there are changes in the world, so long as death and decay are the necessary conditions of life, this instinctive desire for the Real will force itself up time and again and set men on the quest of religion. Science, philosophy and art have the same impulse behind them to discover the Truth. But while science, philosophy and poetry end in a reasoned perception, a conceptual knowledge or an æsthetic apprehension of the Reality, religion leads to its immediate vision. Through religion alone we come in direct contact with the Reality and feel our kinship and become one with it. It penetrates all the layers of our

being and manifests itself in the whole range of life. We live the Truth. Man's eternal relation with the Divine and his union with It have been the key-words of all religions. In the storm and stress of life, these have been man's only hope, solace and inspiration. This is why religion has been the strongest cementing force, the highest motive power, the greatest comforter and the supreme illuminator of life. In all ages and all countries man has paid the greatest homage to religion. Saints and seers have commanded the highest veneration of mankind. The greatest sages were men with spiritual vision. Religion has proved the greatest cultural force. The best literature, architecture, music and poetry have grown out of religious fervour. It has inspired man with the highest altruistic ideals.

Though religion has apparently declined with the growth of science, still it has prevailed through new ideas and conceptions fostered by scientific discoveries. The mysteries and marvels of creation were never before so clearly revealed to man. The wonders of the universe disclosed by scientific investigations have filled many with awe and veneration for a Supreme Intelligent Being. Through their contemplation, they were wafted, as it were, to the very presence of the Creator. These gave them new perspectives to look into the heart of things. Many scientists, though not 'religious' in the narrow sense, were truly spiritual men. Some of them were believers in God and surrendered themselves to His supreme will. T. H. Huxley once wrote to Charles Kingsley: "Science seems to me to teach in the highest and the strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I resolved at all risks to do this. . . .



The absolute justice of the system of things is as clear to me as any scientific fact. The gravitation of sin to sorrow is as certain as that of the earth to the sun, and more so—for experimental proof of the fact is within reach of us all—nay, is before us all in our own lives, if we had but the eyes to see it.”

Philosophy, the science of sciences, has ultimately gravitated towards religion. We generally assume that things exist just as they appear. But critical philosophy has shown that it is not so. They are not real in themselves. They rest on our perception. Just as the external objects are conditioned by our senses, so the internal ideas depend on the nature of our thought. Whatever we perceive, think or conceive is dependent on the knowledge of the subject. Our reason no more than our senses can reveal to us the reality as it is in itself. One has therefore to go beyond mind in order to attain to the absolute Reality. It is the superconscious experience of the seers, in which the relativity of subject and object disappears, that can reveal the Reality. Since the philosophers have apprehended the limitations of reason and its inherent incapacity to disclose the Truth, the study of mysticism has come into vogue in the Western world. The mystic vision is now held to be the only means of realising the highest truth.

Properly speaking, the conclusions of philosophy and science are not alien to religious truths. They await spiritual verities for their fulfilment. Philosophic knowledge is to be supplemented by religious vision. Religion begins where philosophy ends. It is the final goal of science and philosophy. Religion, philosophy and science are inspired by the same love of truth. Religious truths can be better understood in the light of science and philosophy. Scientific and philosophic truths again lead to religious truths when they are carried to their logical conclusion. The modern theory of evolution has a resemblance to the *Sâmkhya* conception of the evolu-

tion of *Prakriti*. But unlike *Sâmkhya* the scientists maintain evolution but ignore involution. It has been shown above that for the sake of logical consistency they should accept both. That one substance pervades the universe is the conclusion arrived at both by religion and science. But according to science it is a material existence, according to religion it is a spiritual entity. The scientific reality is blind though not inert. It can animate but not illuminate. Some modern philosophers have conceived a cosmic life-principle behind the creative order. The creative urge is inherent in it. It disintegrates of itself. Though it is self-moving, it is not an intelligent force. But can unconsciousness bring order and system in the universe? The Indian thinkers also discovered an all-pervasive vital energy which they called *Prâna*, in the creative movement. But behind the *Prâna* they divined a cosmic spirit which guides and controls *Prâna* according to a definite plan and purpose.

The tendency of modern thought has been to find an explanation of a thing in the thing itself. The seed grows into a tree because of a power inherent in it. Darwin's theory of evolution has made man responsible in the first place for his own development. It has turned away our attention from an external Power shaping his destiny to man himself. There must be a latent tendency in man to develop and grow infinitely. Now, if reason, love and knowledge unfold in man, they must be in the very being of man. An urge towards perfection is the motive power behind all human aspirations and activities. Why should man feel a natural attraction for the reality that is beyond phenomena? Why can he not remain satisfied with the finite and the evanescent? He is not contented even to grasp the Reality through intellect or æsthetic imagination; he wants to see it face to face, to touch it. Nay, he seeks to be united with it, to lose himself in it. This feeling of affinity with the Real, the



Eternal, the Divine, is the first blossoming of religious consciousness. Man longs for the Eternal and the Infinite and at the same time feels his littleness, weakness and imperfection. This creates a sense of awe—a blended feeling of attraction and repulsion. It is not fear; for fear always repels, never attracts. Like attracts like. The human self is eternally related to the Divine. Divinity is in its nature. The innate purity, eternity, luminosity and blissfulness of the self have been acknowledged directly or indirectly by all great religions of the world. But in no other religion has this fact been given such prominence as in the Vedanta. This grand old truth is now making its way into the modern mind through the conglomeration of theories and doctrines.

#### IV

The self is of all the most real to us. The reality of everything presupposes the reality of the self. A thing exists because *I* feel its existence. The reality of all other things is judged by referring it to the self. The self is the eternal seer. The external objects, body and mind are all seen by it. The whole world of facts, the entire realm of ideas rest on the consciousness of the perceiver. It is the datum of all experience and knowledge. It is the ultimate reality. It cannot be seen, because it is the seer,—everything is revealed to it. The self is this seer. It is consciousness itself. It cannot be seen, but it can be realised. It cannot be denied, for the denial presupposes another seer and conceives it as seen, which is absurd. The subject can never turn into the object.

The self is pure intelligence. It illumines everything. It is also bliss itself. It is the only true object of love. Whatever we love we love for the sake of the self. I like this body because I project my self on it, and everything favourable to the body becomes dear to me. The wife, children, parents and friends are loved by me, because my self is reflected in them. The feeling of love

is indissolubly connected with the 'my'-idea. The more the self is expanded, the greater is the range of love. Love and bliss are inseparable. Where there is bliss, there is love. Where there is love, there is bliss. The self being bliss itself, evokes spontaneous love.

The pure, blissful, self-effulgent *Atman* is our true self. It is the knower of body and mind. The knower and the known are ever distinct. We perceive ourselves to be the knower, still we identify ourselves with the known, the body, mind, etc. This is absurd. Yet it is a fact. We cannot help it. We can neither conceive ourselves as pure spirit nor think of ourselves as gross matter. The two ideas are as it were woven into one. By identifying the self with body and mind, we have imposed on ourselves all the limitations and imperfections that belong solely to body and mind. Hunger, disease, growth, decay, birth, death, happiness, misery are the properties of body and mind. They are falsely ascribed to the changeless self, the witness of all. We live in mind and body, but we must be reinstated in the purity and blissfulness of self. The whole history of spiritual progress is simply a travel from the body-idea to the spirit-consciousness.

To uphold the pristine glory of *Atman* is the supreme need of religion to-day. One can be religious without faith in God, but not without faith in the essential purity and eternity of *Atman*. A true atheist is not he who disbelieves God, but he who has lost faith in *Atman*. This is another great lesson the modern world has to learn from the ancient sages of India. The *Sāmkhya* system of Kapila denies God, still it has been included among the theistic systems (*Astika Darshanas*) by the Hindu philosophers, simply because it propounds the glory of the *Atman* as declared by the Vedas. There can be no faith in God without faith in the self. He who does not believe in the Divinity of the self cannot have any relation with God. Relation exists between what are alike and of the same nature. That is



why in the *Gitā* Sri Krishna holds before Arjuna the sublimity and glory of *Atman* at the very outset. The faith in the *Atman* is the starting-point of religion. The self offers the first clue to Reality. Turn to whichever direction you may, to the highest heaven or the farthest limit of the horizon, nowhere will you find a loop-hole to Truth. So you must have your foothold secure on the reality of the self, which is so apparent to you, before you can enter into the realm of Light and Bliss eternal. 'This *Atman* is *Brahman*',—reiterate the whole *Upanishads*—pointing inward. We see God within us. Nobody ever realised God outside. Self-knowledge is always involved in God-consciousness. There can be no God-vision without self-realisation. The one is but a phase of the other.

To believe in the absolute purity of the self and to realise its Divinity is the religion that demands acceptance by the scientific mind of to-day. Human nature is never against religion, the religious spirit is ingrained in man's very being. What man gets disgusted with, is the crystallised form, which, however appealing to the people of one age, fails to attract the men of a different age. So religion requires to be reinstated according to the spirit of the age. The present tendency is towards a religion which does not rest on external sanction, which is not to be imposed on man by outer authorities, but should be the outcome of an inward perception, a deeper understanding of reality and a nobler vision of life. Man should be religious out of inner necessity. Self-imposed religion, as self-imposed morality, will seem an impossibility to those who have no faith in the inherent greatness and goodness of man. Religion and morality lose all meaning unless man pursues them on his own initiative. This age requires a religion which does not depend on outer sanctities, but holds life and spirit as essentially sacred. It should not be confined in certain rites, objects, ceremonies, doctrines or dogmas, but

find adequate expression in thought and conduct. The reorientation of life has been the cry of the age. It is the man's outlook on life that the world counts to-day, and not the particular act or belief however righteous it may be. The external distinction of the secular and the spiritual is fast fading away. The stress is laid on a higher conception of reality which should shape the judgment of values and transform human relationships, in fact the whole range of life.

Spiritual life, rightly understood, is not a life of isolation. It does not consist in mere disengagement of the spirit from the contagion of the flesh. The self should realise its aloofness from the physical and the mental being, and at the same time guide and restrain them according to its needs and ends. The spiritual consciousness must be infused into the whole system and expressed in concrete forms. Belief without conduct has no value. Our thoughts and acts are but expressions of self-consciousness. It is the greatest creative factor of life. We are what we believe ourselves to be. He who thinks that he is pure by nature, that wickedness and vice are foreign to him, pure he will be in no time. He who considers himself weak, his ideas and deeds will bear the impress of that mentality. Humanity progresses along the line of self-consciousness. Evolution of life means the evolution of consciousness. The higher the self-consciousness, the greater the life.

The more a man knows himself to be pure and perfect by nature, the more glorified will he be. The more he realises that weakness, ignorance and unhappiness are mere accretions on his ideal self, the greater will be the manifestation of Divinity in him. His thoughts, views, aims and sentiments will be coloured by that consciousness. By and by the world will appear to him in a new light. As he will feel his inward goodness and greatness, he will perceive the same in others as well.



His attitude to the world will consist of the highest and the noblest feelings of love, respect and service. The consciousness 'I am He' must develop its necessary counterpart 'Thou art That'. The two views will grow side by side. Never was humanity so intensely realised as an organic whole as in the present age. Greater emphasis is being laid on the community than on the individuals. The modern faith must harmonise individualism with humanitarianism.

With the knowledge of the self, man's vision of life will be clearer, wider and deeper. He will feel that his self is at the same time the selves of others. It is One Self that exists in all. It is One Spirit that pervades the universe and shapes it from within. The immanence of a formative principle in the world-system is more in conformity with the modern thought than an extra-cosmic God. But the creative force revealed to spiritual vision is not blind energy. Nor is it a moral law. It is the Divine Government that urges everything to ultimate good,—a fact that takes away from the rigours of duty, turns work into worship and elevates altruism to self-dedication.

The world is moving apace. It always looks forward. But it often misses what is under its very eyes. Attempts are being made to prognosticate the future of various aspects of life. We receive forecasts of Art, Science, Religion, Civilisation, Music, Poetry, Labour, Marriage and what not. We for ourselves do not claim any pre-

vision. We have simply tried to envisage what is perhaps too near to see. We have said that faith in the self and the realisation of the self are the religion of to-day. We do not mean thereby that that will be the only existing religion in future, that other faiths will be obsolete or prove abortive. We only mean that this of all others will come into prominence, as it will be embraced by the advanced section of humanity. Different faiths are necessary for different minds, which cannot find inspiration from a single creed. It is the age of synthesis. The faith of the enlightened must harmonise all other faiths. The monism of the Vedanta which declares *Atman* to be Existence-Knowledge-Bliss absolute, is the key to all other religions. It can receive all into its infinite bosom. All faiths, morals and theories are according to it more or less perfect presentations of One Truth. It has been well said by Gaudapâda that the dualistic faiths contradict *Advaitism* as well as one another. But *Advaitism* contradicts none. *Advaitism* is the transcendental truth, *Dvaitism* is its variation. Herein also lies the supreme value of *Advaitism*. Thus, faith in the Self will become more and more the religion of the advanced section of humanity. Not only that. This faith also will find varied expressions even through the existing creeds, however avowedly dualistic. For the Spirit of the Age demands and enjoins it, and none can possibly escape its influence.

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## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

OCTOBER 12, 1919 (*Concluded*).

*Disciple* : "The faithful disciples of Jesus thought that the Heavenly Father would actually come down and establish His Kingdom on earth."

*Swami* : "Why? He said to them : 'The Kingdom of God is within you.'"

*Disciple* : "Of the Christian saints

how wonderful was the life of Saint Francis of Assisi!"

*Swami* : "Yes. He meditated on Jesus so intensely that he got stigmata in his hands and feet, in the same parts as those of the crucified Christ. He suffered from them till death."

*Disciple* : "In Islam also many great saints have been born."



*Swami*: "Yes, certainly. It is because such great souls are born in every religion and realise the Truth that these religions live through ages.

"Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) used to say: 'All come and say: 'Tell us the way, tell us the way,' but none would follow any.'

"It is wrong to say that even when one calls on the Lord earnestly, one will not find Him. There was a boy who called Him as Brother Madhusudana. What was his name?"

*Disciple*: "Jatila."

*Swami*: "Yes, yes, Jatila. He was afraid to go to school all alone through a wood. His mother said: 'You have a brother, Madhusudana. Call Him and you will have no fear.' The boy was convinced that Madhusudana was his real brother. Whenever he felt frightened in the forest, he called his brother Madhusudana and he came and guided him. When the school-master learnt this, he said to him: 'Can you show me your brother?' 'Why not?' replied the boy. They went to the forest. As the boy called, Madhusudana came. But the teacher could not see Him, he only heard the sound of His anklets. Even this was not vouchsafed to the mother. She gave the instruction only to dispel her son's fear, but herself had no faith in it.

"Do you know the story of the milkmaid crossing the ocean of life? A milkmaid supplied milk to the house of a Brahmin pandit. She had to cross a river on the way. As the ferry-boat could not be found at the right time every day, she was very late now and then in her supply of milk, and the pandit's children had to suffer much. So he severely scolded her one day. 'What shall I do, Sir,' replied the milkmaid, 'I do not find the ferry-boat in right time every day, so I am delayed.' The learned pandit said at once: 'Oh, you cannot cross this small river? How will you then cross the ocean of life?' The illiterate milkmaid had not even heard the phrase 'the ocean of

life.' She stood dumb-founded. Then the pandit explained to her that by taking God's name one could easily cross the ocean of life, what to speak of this little river. The milkmaid was much delighted and went away.

"Henceforth she supplied milk at the right time. She was never late. One day the pandit said to her: 'Now I see you come every day at the proper time. How do you cross the river?' 'Why, Sir? It is you who kindly told me the means. Now I have not to wait for the ferry-boat, nor have I to pay the boatman.' 'How do you mean? Who then takes you across the river?' 'Nobody has to help me, Sir. I come straight down to the river, repeat the name of Hari and walk across the waters.' 'Can you show me?' 'Why not, Sir? Come along.' The pandit did not understand. He followed the milkmaid in suspense. The milkmaid went close to the river, repeated the name of Hari and walked across the river, as if there was no more than knee-deep water in it. As she reached the other side, she turned back and saw the pandit standing wonder-struck on the other side. She cried out: 'How is it? Why are you standing there, Sir? Repeat the name of Hari and come along.' The pandit was startled, and spell-bound he walked down to the river uttering the name of Hari. But as the water became deeper and deeper, he raised his clothes with both hands.—He had no faith at heart, though his lips uttered the name of God. Finding the pandit in such plight, the milkmaid said: 'Oh, you repeat the name of Hari and at the same time raise your clothes? That will not do, Sir.'

"A little self-examination will make everything clear. Lately I witnessed a strange fight within my body. During my recent illness, it was reduced to a skeleton. This muscle that you see now (*touching the calf muscle*), was all gone. All this grew anew afterwards."

*Disciple*: "Do you mean the influenza you suffered from last time?"



*Swami*: "No. It was at Puri. Then there was nothing in the body except bone and skin. I could neither turn aside nor move my limbs. Only the power of speech was left to me. One day I saw that the life within the body was engaged in a severe struggle with another from the outside. The struggle was severe and lasted for a long time. They were in close grip with each other, and now the one and now the other seemed to win. The external one was struggling to snatch away the life from the body, but life would not go. At last the outer one was defeated and went away. So life remained. Had it been defeated, it would have gone away with the other one, and the body would have remained lifeless, that is, I would have died. I was watching the battle in wonder from a distance as it were. As soon as the outer one went away defeated, I said to those who were about me: 'This time I am saved, I won't die.' Then all this flesh grew anew. Before or after this incident, I do not exactly remember when, Swamiji (Vivekananda) appeared to me and said at once: 'What is this? Get up.'"

*Brahmachâri S*: "It was before, Sir."

After the conversation the Swami went into the inner room to have his tiffin before going out for a walk.

*A*: "Did you see how direct was his experience, how forceful are his words? I have been fortunate enough to be in his blessed company for a long

time. I also lived long in the holy company of Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda). If one hears their inspiring words every day and also practises meditation, one can make rapid progress in the spiritual realm. I have perceived it myself.

"When he underwent twelve operations in one day at Puri, even the doctors were frightened. But this sage kept perfectly quiet. He disengaged the mind from the body, which soared far and beyond. I have not heard that so many operations were ever performed without chloroform."

Shortly after Swami Turiyananda went out for a walk and proceeded towards the Hindu University. The disciple followed him and noticed on the way the red little feet of a baby held up in the arms of an Indian mother, and remarked: "This reminds me of the little feet of Gopala as He was lying in the arms of Gopâler Mâ."

*Swami*: "Oh, how wonderful were Sri Ramakrishna's dealings with the brass image of Ramlala! When he spoke to us of these strange happenings, little did we understand him. Ramlala went frolicking to the Ganges to bathe and got into deep water. The Master asked him to come up, but he would not, so he gave him a slap on the cheek. One day the Master wept bitterly, as he said: 'He who was fed with butter and cream by Mother Yashoda, was offered unclean puffed rice by me!' We were struck dumb with wonder."

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## EARLY HELLENIC-CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM AND ITS RELATION TO HINDU MYSTICISM\*

BY ROMAIN ROLLAND

### I

One of my great desires is to see the creation of Chairs of Comparative Eastern and Western Metaphysics and Mysticism in India and Europe. They

should be mutually complementary; for their work is really essential if the

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human spirit is to learn to know itself in its entirety. Their object would not be a kind of puerile steeplechase seeking to establish the primitive chronology of each group of thought. Such research would be meaningless: religious historians who seek only to discover the intellectual interdependence of systems, forget the vital point,—the knowledge that religions are not ordinary matters of intellectual dialectic, but facts of experience, and that although reason steps in afterwards to construct systems upon these facts, they would not hold good for an hour if they were not based upon the solid foundation of experience. Hence the facts must first be known and studied. I do not know whether any modern psycho-physiologist, armed with all the latest instruments of the new sciences of the soul, will be able to attain a full knowledge of them one day, but I am willing to believe it. In the meanwhile such simple observation as we have at our disposal at present, leads us to recognise the existence of *the same religious facts* as the foundations of all great organised religions, that have spread over the face of the earth throughout the march of the centuries. At the same time it is impossible to attribute to the mutual actions and reactions of nations any appreciable effect on their production: for their uprising is spontaneous, they grow from the soil under certain influences in the life of humanity almost “seasonal” in their recurrence, like the grain that shoots up with the return of spring throughout the life of nature.

The first result of an objective study of Comparative Metaphysics and Mysticism would be to demonstrate the universality and perennial occurrence of the great facts of religious experience, their close resemblance under the diverse costumes of race and time, attesting to the persistent unity of the human spirit, or rather—for it goes deeper than the spirit which must delve for it—the identity of the materials constituting humanity. Before any

discussion of the comparative value of ideological structures erected by religion and metaphysics in India and Alexandria (to take for example the case with which we are here concerned), it is necessary to establish the fact that at bottom the illuminations of Philo, the great ecstasies of Plotinus and Porphyry, so like the Samâdhis of Indian Yogins, were identical experiences. Hence the term Christianity must not be used to the exclusion of the other thousands of mystic experiences, on whose basis it was built up—not in one feverish birth, but by a series of births throughout the centuries, fresh shoots sprouting from the ancient tree with each spring.

That is in truth the heart of the problem. Once these great experiences have been established, compared and classified, Comparative Mysticism would then and only then have the right to pass on to a study of systems. Systems exist solely to provide the mind with a means for registering the results of enlightenment and to classify in one complete and co-ordinated whole the claims of the senses, reason and intuition—(by whatever name we may choose to call the eighth sense or the second reason which those who have experienced it call the first). Systems are then a continually renewed effort to bring about the synthesis of what a man, a race or an epoch has experienced (by the use of all the various instruments at the disposal of knowledge). And of necessity its own particular temperament is always to be found in each system.

Moreover, it is intensely interesting for all kinds of minds, morally akin but scattered through space and time in different countries and different ages, to know the varieties of their own thought, produced by all these different temperaments, which are simultaneously the limits and the womb of force. India and Europe are equally concerned to enrich themselves by a knowledge of all the forms developed by the same mental or vital power, a



theme upon which their diverse races, epochs and cultures have embroidered their own variations.

Hence to return to the subject that is occupying us here, I do not believe that modern Indian Metaphysics can remain any longer in ignorance of Alexandrine and Christian Mysticism—any more than our Western intellectuals can be allowed in the future to stop their study of the “Divine Infinity” at the borders of Greece. When two types of humanity as magnificent as India and Greece have dealt with the same subject, it is obvious that each will have enriched it with its own particular splendours, and that the double masterpiece will harmonise with the new spirit of universal humanity we are seeking to establish.

In these pages I can do no more than to point out the way to the intelligence of my readers. And here where I am addressing myself especially to the Vedântists of India, I wish to give them at least a glimpse of the characteristics wherein Mediterranean Mysticism and their own are alike and wherein they differ. I shall particularly insist on the chief monument of early Christian Mysticism—the work of the Pseudo-Denis, because as it came from the East it already had those characteristics which it was to impose upon the metaphysical physiognomy of the West during six centuries of Christianity.

## II

It is generally conceded that the Greek spirit, while eminently endowed for art and science, was almost a closed book to the idea of Infinity, and that it only accepted the idea with mistrust. Although the Infinite is included in principle by Anaximander and Anaxagoras, they give it a material character and stamp it with the imprint of scientific instinct. Plato, who in his *Republic* touched in passing on the conception of the Idea of Good superior to being, essence and intelligence, did not dwell upon it and seemed

to regard it merely as an idea of perfection and not of infinity. To Aristotle, the infinite was imperfect. To the Stoics it was unreal.<sup>1</sup>

It is not until we come to the first century that we find Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, brought up in Greek thought, introducing into it the notion of Infinity derived from his people and attempting to hold the balance between the two currents. The balance, however, remained an unstable one, and all through his life Philo oscillated between the two temperaments. In spite of His being indeterminate, the God of the Jews kept a very strong personal flavour, which Philo's nostrils could not dispense with. On the other hand his Greek education allowed him to analyse with rationalist precision the obscure powers of his prophetic people, which had brought them into contact with God. His theory of ecstasy, first by withdrawal into oneself, then by the flight of the ego and the total negation of the senses, reason and even being that they might identify themselves with the One, is, in the main, exactly the same as that practised always by the Indian in the East. Philo eventually sketches an attempt to attach the Infinite to the finite by means of intermediary powers, from whence emerges the “second God,” the Word, “the only Begotten Son of God.” With him, perhaps unwittingly (for he remained stamped with the thumb of his rough modeller, Jehovah), the Infinite of the East entered the Mediterranean world.

A hundred facts testify to how great an extent the East was mingled with Hellenic thought during the second century of our era. Let us recall only three or four of the most characteristic: Plutarch quotes Zoroaster and devotes a whole treatise to Egyptian mythology. The historian, Eusebius, was a

<sup>1</sup> It must not be forgotten that during the Alexandrine epoch there was still a connection between India and the Hellenic West. But the history of thought has not taken it into account and even to-day is very insufficiently aware of it.



witness to the interest felt in his day in Asiatic philosophies and religions. One of the first builders of Alexandrianism, Numenius, who extolled Pythagoras above all other Greeks, probed for the spirit of his age into the past and believed that Pythagoras had spread in Greece the first wisdom of the Egyptians, the Magi, the Indians and the Jews.<sup>2</sup> Plotinus, a Greek of Egypt, departed with Gordian's army, in order to study Persian and Indian philosophy. And although Gordian's death in Mesopotamia stopped him half way, his intention shows his intellectual kinship to the Indian spirit.<sup>3</sup> But at the same time he was in communion with the Christians. One of his listeners was a Doctor of the New Church: Origen; and they mutually respected each other. Plotinus was not merely a book-philosopher. He was, at the same time, both a saint and a great Yogin. His pure image, reminiscent of Ramakrishna in certain characteristics, deserves to be more piously kept in memory by both the East and the West.

<sup>2</sup>Numenius, whose influence over Plotinus was of capital importance, "had directed all his efforts," says Eusebius, "towards a fusion of Pythagoras and Plato, while seeking for a confirmation of their philosophical doctrines in the religious doctrines of the Brahmins, the Indians, the Magi, and the Egyptians."

<sup>3</sup>His theory of reincarnation bears the stamp of Indian thought. All actions and thoughts count. The purified and detached are not reborn into the corporeal, they remain in the world of the mind and of bliss, without reason, remembrance or speech; their liberty is absolute; they are made one with the Perfect, and are absorbed in It without losing themselves in It. Such bliss can be obtained in the present by ecstasy.

His theory of matter and his definitions of it evoke the Hindu Mâyâ.

His vision of the universe as a Divine Game, where "the actors constantly change their costumes," where social revolutions, the crash of empires, are "changes of scene and character, the tears and cries of actors," is the same as the Indian.

Above all, his profound science of "deification", identification with God by the path of Negation, is, as I shall show, one of its most magnificent expressions and might have come from one of the great Indian Yogins.

It would be lacking in the respect his great work deserves, to summarise it here. But I must enumerate its most striking characteristics that are analogous to Indian thought.

### III

Plotinus' First Being, who is "before all things" no less than in all that comes after Him, is the Absolute. Absolutely infinite, indeterminate, incomprehensible, He can only be defined by negation. "Let us take all things from Him, let us affirm nothing about Him, let us not lie by saying that there is anything in Him, but let Him simply be."

He is above good and ill, act and knowledge, being and essence. He has neither face nor form, neither movement nor number, neither virtue nor feeling. We cannot even say that He wishes or that He does. . . . "We say what He is not: we cannot say what He is." . . . In brief Plotinus collects the whole litany of "Noes", so dear to the Indian mystic (and the Christian) to express the Absolute. But without the self-satisfaction mingled with conceit and puerility that most men bring to it, Plotinus impregnates it always with his beautiful modesty, a fact that makes it very touching, and that I should say is more Christlike than are many Christians (such as the author of *Mystic Theology*, which I shall examine later).

"When we say," he writes, "that He is above being, we do not say that He is this or that. We affirm nothing, we do not give Him any name. . . . We do not try to understand Him: it would in fact be laughable to try to understand that incomprehensible nature. But we, being men, with doubts like the sorrows of childhood, do not know what to call Him, and so we try to name the Ineffable. . . . He must have indulgence for our language. . . . Even the name of the One exposes no more than the negation of his plurality. . . . The problem must be given up, and research fall into silence, What



is the good of seeking when further progress is impossible? . . . . If we wish to speak of God, or to conceive Him, let us give up everything! When this has been done, (let us not add anything to Him but) let us examine rather whether there is still not something to be given up. . . ."

In the path of negation has India ever said anything more perfect or more humble?

Nevertheless, it is not a question of negation. This inconceivable Absolute is the supreme and superabundant Perfection, whose continual expansion engenders the universe. He is suspended to it by love and He fills it entirely: for, without ever emerging from Himself, He is present everywhere in His entirety. In the effort of the human spirit to distinguish the successive degrees of this divine procession of worlds, the mystic Greek in a splendid outburst of enlightened enthusiasm salutes Intelligence as the first born of God, the best after Him, itself "a great God" "the second God," the first Hypostasis, which engenders the second, the Soul, the one and the multiple, the mother of all living things. There follows the unfolding of the whole world of the senses, within the bounds whereof Matter is found, which is the last degree of being, or rather of non-being, the Infinite negative, the absolute and unattained limit at the opposite antipodes of the thrust of Divine Power.

So, this Absolute, which our minds can only approach through negation, is affirmed in all that is. And It is in ourselves. It is the very basis of our being. And we can be rejoined to It by concentration. Yoga, the great path of Divine union, as described by Plotinus, is a combination of Jnâna Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. After a first and long stage of purification, the soul, as it enters the phase of contemplation, should renounce knowledge as a starting-point. "The soul withdraws from the One, and is no longer one entity when it acquires knowledge. Know-

ledge in effect is a discourse, and a discourse is multiplicity. In order to contemplate the first Being a man must be raised above knowledge."

Ecstasy begins. And the door of ecstasy for the Hellenic spirit, always tenacious of its rights, is Beauty. Through it the inflamed soul soars towards the light of the Good, above which there is nothing.

The description of this ecstasy is like the descriptions<sup>4</sup> of both Hindus and Christians: for there is only one form of union with the Absolute, by whatever name the mind tries first or last to clothe the Absolute. According to Plotinus the soul ought to empty itself of all form and content, of all evil and good, of all thought of union with That which is neither form, nor content, nor evil, nor good nor thought.<sup>5</sup> It should

"This admirable conception drawn from the most sacred fibres of the West with its passion for Beauty, has its source in our divine Plato:

"In the domain of love," said Socrates to the Stranger of Mantineus, "to do well one must pass from the love of a beautiful form to the love of all beautiful forms or to physical beauty in general; then from the love of beautiful bodies to the love of souls, beautiful actions and beautiful thoughts. In this ascension of the spirit through moral beauty a marvellous beauty will suddenly appear to him, eternal, exempt from all generation, all corruption, absolutely beautiful: consisting neither in a beautiful face, nor in any body nor in any thought nor in any science; not residing anywhere but in itself, whether in heaven, or on earth, but existing eternally in itself and for itself in its absolute and perfect unity." (*Banquet*: summary).

Therein is contained a Yoga of Beauty where Bhakti to a certain extent is joined to Jnâna. I do not say that it is peculiar to the West, for we have traces\* of it in India, but it is the form which of all others is natural and dear to us.

[\*We should say, plenty of it.—Ed.]

<sup>5</sup> Not to know but to be—is also taught by the Vedânta: "Knowledge is," said Vivekananda, "as it were, a lower step, a degradation. We are It already, how to know it?" (*Jnana Yoga*: "The Real and the Apparent Man").

This is also the famous doctrine of the *Docta Ignorantia*, belonging to Christian mystics: the knowledge above all knowledge.



even empty itself of the thought of God in order to become one with Him. When it has reached this point, He appears within it, He is it. "It has become God or rather it is God. A centre which coincides with another centre." . . . They are one. There is perfect identity. The soul has returned to itself.<sup>6</sup>

No man in the world has described it with such power and psychological detail as St. Jean de la Croix in his famous treatise on the *Dark Night*—the double Night: of the senses, and of the spirit. "First relinquish all feeling, secondly all knowledge,"—St. Bonaventura had already said.

<sup>6</sup> Plotinus often experienced this great ecstasy, according to the definite testimony of Porphyry:

"To him appeared this God who has neither form nor face, who is above intelligence. I myself, Porphyry, once in my life approached this God and was united with Him. I was seventy-eight. This union formed the sum total of Plotinus' desires. He had this divine joy four times while I was staying with him. What then happened was ineffable."

So it is of the greatest interest to know from the mouth of Plotinus himself what were his impressions during that state. The most striking is the anguish of the soul as it approached Divine Union, for it was unable to sustain the intensity long. "Certainly here below each time that the soul approaches that without form, it shrinks, it trembles at having before it only that which is nothing."

And as I read these lines I think of the mortal terror of young Vivekananda during his first visits to Ramakrishna, when the enlightened Master made him aware for the first time of the dizzy contact with the formless Absolute.

"The soul," continues Plotinus (and the rest of his description would serve for Vivekananda's experience), "returns with joy . . . it lets itself fall until it meets some sensible object whereon to stop and to rest. . ."

J. A. Symonds says the same thing: "It (trance) consisted in a gradual but swiftly progressive obliteration of space, time, sensation, and the multitudinous factors of experience . . . But the Self persisted, formidable in its vivid keenness, feeling the most poignant doubt about reality, ready, as it seemed, to find existence break as breaks a bubble round about it. And what then? The apprehension of a coming dissolution, the grim conviction that this state was the last state of the conscious self, the sense that

I have said enough to awaken in every Hindu the desire to know more of this great fellow Yogin, who, in the last hour of Greece, in her majestic sunset, wedded Plato to India. In this divine marriage the male Hellenic genius, as he embraced the female Kirtana—the inspired Bacchante—imposed upon her thoughts an ordered beauty and intelligent harmony, resulting in one of the most beautiful strains of spiritual music. And the great Christian mysticism of the first centuries was the first-born of this union.

In the following pages I shall try to paint, however imperfectly, a portrait of the most beautiful type, in my opinion, of this early Christian thought, springing from this marriage of East and West: Denis (Dionysius) the Areopagite.

#### IV

I have often had occasion to notice analogies and even traces of kinship between the conceptions of Hindu and Christian mysticism at their highest moments. This likeness is the more striking as one approaches the source of Christianity;<sup>7</sup> and I want to demons-

I had followed the last thread of being to the verge of the abyss, . . . stirred or seemed to stir me up again. The return to ordinary conditions of sentient existence began by my first recovering the power of touch. . . I was thankful for this return from the abyss. . . ." (One of the many contemporary witnesses quoted by William James in his chapter on Mysticism in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*).

But a great mystic like Plotinus had hardly set foot again on the earth than he longed for that from which he had fled . . . The deadly vertigo did not cease to attract him. The soul that has once tasted the terrible Union, yearns to find it again, and it must return to the Infinite.

<sup>7</sup> The blind fury of certain neophytes of modern literary Catholicism in the West in their denunciation of the danger of the East, is a fit subject for irony. They make it the antithesis of the West, forgetting that the whole faith they proclaim comes to them from the East, and that in the ritual of the first centuries, as decreed by Denis the Areopagite, the West is represented by doc-



trate it to my Eastern readers. They will profit by it more than my Western readers, for as I have already stated, they are all too ignorant of the marvellous treasure of European Christian metaphysics.

Whatever the polemics that have been delivered round the name of the Areopagite—whether Denis or Pseudo-Denis<sup>8</sup>—they matter little to us here, for all accounts agree that his writings fall authentically in the period about 532 or 538, and from that date their authority became law in the Christian Church and was invoked by Popes, Patriarchs and learned doctors in the Synods and Councils of the seventh and eighth centuries down to the ninth century when they were triumphantly installed in Paris by Charles the Bald, who had them translated by Scot Erigene, whence they impregnated the mystic thought of the Western Church. Their power is attested by St. Anselm, by St. Bonaventura, and by St. Thomas, who wrote commentaries upon them; the great doctors of the thirteenth century put them above the writings of the Church

tors of the faith as “the region of shades”, making the catechumen “hold up his hands as a sign of anathema” and “blow on Satan three times.” (Cf. *Book of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, II 2. 6).

<sup>8</sup>For a thousand years this greatest master of Christian mysticism was supposed to be Denis the Anchorite, a member of the Athenian Areopagus at the time of St. Paul who converted him about 5 A.D., and later Bishop of Athens (he has even been identified with St. Denis of France). First Laurence Valla, then Erasmus, then the Reformation brutally wronging his legend, and being wickedly desirous of discrediting the work, which was sufficiently powerful to lose nothing, they changed the name of the author and sought to make it anonymous. Modern research seems to have agreed that he who wrote those books lived about 500 A.D., and that at all events, although he may have been earlier than this date (according to the testimony of some learned disciples of his in the ninth century, when they revived a controversy in existence about 400 A.D. on the subject of the authenticity of his writings), he cannot possibly have been later than Justinian who quoted his authority.

Fathers; in the fourteenth century the mystic furnaces of Meister Eckhart, and of Ruysbroeck still more, were fed on their fires; again at the time of the Italian Renaissance they were the delectation of the great Christian Platonists, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola; and they continued to be the substance of our Bérullians, our Salesians,<sup>9</sup> and the greatest mystics of the seventeenth century in France, as the recent works of Abbé Brémond have shown.

Hence whatever the name of the architect, they form the monumental substructures of all Christian thought in the West during the ten most important centuries of its development. And they are more than that to the man who has eyes to see—they form one of the most harmonious cathedrals that has grown out of that thought and that still remains a living witness to it.

Its singular value is that it stands just at the junction of East and West, at the exact moment when their teachings were united.<sup>10</sup> Whether its architect has borrowed his art from Alexandrine masters or whether they borrowed it largely from him,<sup>11</sup> the result is the same for us: a union of the highest Hellenic thought and the purest Christian thought, a marriage regularly consecrated in the eyes

<sup>9</sup>I would remind the reader that these names designate the French religious school of François de Sales, or of Bérulle, in the seventeenth century.

<sup>10</sup>If the date 500, as generally accepted to-day, is the central point of the career of Denis, he must have seen the end of Alexandria and the closing of the Neo-Platonic school of Athens in 529. Therefore, in a sense he closed the eyes of Greek philosophy.

<sup>11</sup>It is certain at least that they both arise from the common metaphysical depths, wherein the wealth of Platonism, early Christianity, and the ancient East were mingled, and that from this treasure the first five centuries of our era drew with open hands. It was a period of universalism of thought. According to the tradition (based on one of his extant letters), Denis visited Egypt in his youth with a friend, Apollophanes, who followed the Sophist philosophy, and had remained a pagan, and in the letter Apollophanes, who never forgave him his conversion to Christianity, accuses him of “parri-



of the Church and acknowledged by her throughout the West.

Before tasting its fruits, I must remove from the minds of my readers the impression of discredit thrown in advance over the old master by the unfortunate word *Pseudo*, which has in it the taint of falsehood. For instance a beautiful picture called a "false Rembrandt" is still scorned, because the idea of false implies imitation! But if it pleases an artist to put his work under somebody else's name who never left any work behind him, is that an argument against his originality? At most such a scheme might lead to suspicion of the masked man's honesty. (But this is less explicable after a study of Denis'

works : for if there is one impression left by them, it is that of the most complete moral integrity; it is unthinkable that so high a mind could have stooped to subterfuge, even in the interest of his faith; and I would prefer to think that after his death, others exploited him.) At all events and in spite of quite definite interpolations and retouches in the original text, that text still presents from end to end—in treatises and letters—a unity and harmony, which leave on the memory of those who have read them an indelible impression of the serene face of the old master, familiar and more vivid than that of many living people.<sup>12</sup>

(To be concluded)

## SWAMI BRAHMANANDA THE SPIRITUAL SON OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BY SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA

(Continued from the last issue)

In the summer of 1885 Sri Ramakrishna had a throat trouble which gradually developed into 'clergyman's sore throat' and ultimately into cancer as diagnosed by the physicians called in for his treatment. The disease was ascribed to the undue exercise of the vocal organs. After his meeting with Keshab Chandra Sen in 1875 his name and fame spread far and wide. The number of visitors rapidly increased, and they came at all hours of the day for spiritual enlightenment and solace. He talked to them unceasingly on reli-

gion and God. He attended religious functions in Calcutta and other places. All these meant too much strain on his physical system, especially because the regularity of food and rest could hardly be observed under the circumstances. Even when the symptoms of disease clearly manifested themselves, he could not be persuaded to take the much-needed rest, but worked as untiringly as before to deliver his message to those who flocked to him daily in increasing numbers from all quarters. The illness was aggravated and proved obstinate.

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In September, 1885, he was removed to Shyampukur in Calcutta for better treatment. The devotees, poor as most of them were, made every possible arrangement for his treatment, diet and attendance. Some of the young devotees headed by Narendranath attended him day and night leaving aside for the time being all thought of home, study and other concerns. Rakhal also threw himself heart and soul into the service of the Master. On the night of the annual festival of Kali which fell on the 6th November that year, the devotees headed by Girish Chandra Ghosh perceived the holy presence of the Divine Mother in Sri Ramakrishna and worshipped him as such. Rakhal, too, was in the party and offered flowers at the feet of the Master. Though suffering physically, Sri Ramakrishna lived constantly in the beatific mood. The physical ailment could not touch the real man in him. Three months passed, but there was no sign of improvement. Now it was thought advisable to remove him from the close atmosphere of Calcutta to an open and quiet place in the suburb. Accordingly a garden house was hired at Cossipore, a little to the north of the City. Sri Ramakrishna occupied the new premises on the 11th December, 1885. Here the entire band of young disciples rallied round him and served him with utmost care, love and devotion. Most of them stayed with him day and night. The work was done in the most organised way under the leadership of Narendranath. But the physical condition of the Master made no marked progress. The coming end was apprehended by all. But the Master, though shattered in health, set himself to the task of completing his work with incredible enthusiasm. He distributed his spiritual treasures more and more liberally. The words of wisdom and blessings instinct with the pathos of the approaching end flowed freely from day to day. He watched his disciples more keenly than ever. He gave them all necessary instructions individually as well as collectively. At the

intervals of service he called his young disciples to his side and engaged them in meditation, study, discussion and devotional chants. His unbounded love for them and their whole-hearted devotion to him were manifested in the united service they rendered him in his last and protracted illness, cemented their bonds of mutual love and attraction and laid the foundation of the Brotherhood which was to embody in later days the conjugate ideals of renunciation and service. Besides these spiritual forces working at the basis, the first decisive step towards the formal establishment of the Order was taken by Sri Ramakrishna himself. The oldest member of the group, in consideration of age, was Gopal senior (afterwards Swami Advaitananda). He was so seized with the spirit of renunciation in the divine company of Sri Ramakrishna that he sold all he had, and with the little money thus acquired he intended to distribute some *geruá* (ochre) cloths and *rudráksha* rosaries to *Sannyásins* on the occasion of the Gangasagar Mela, a religious fair held every year in the middle of January at the mouth of the Ganges. He expressed his desire to the Master. Pointing to his young disciples Sri Ramakrishna said: "You won't find anywhere better monks than these. So distribute your cloths and things among them." Gopal placed a bundle of ochre cloths at the feet of the Master, who distributed them among his young disciples, Narendra, Rakhal, Yogin, Niranjan, Baburam, Latu and others. One evening the Master made them go through a ceremony and permitted them to receive food from the houses of all irrespective of caste. Once Narendra, Rakhal and a few others were asked by him to take begging bowls and beg their food from door to door. Rakhal and Latu went forth into the neighbourhood of Dakshineswar to beg. They all collected some raw materials which they cooked under the trees in the garden. The food was then offered to the Master. He was glad to take a grain of rice, saying:



“Well done! The food is very pure.” Thus the young men were initiated into monastic life by the Master himself, though the full significance of this step was not realised by them at the time.

Gradually the catastrophe was drawing near. On the morning of the 15th March, just four months before the final event, as Rakhal was shampooing the feet of the Master, he entreated him with the utmost solicitude, saying: “Do speak to the Mother, so that your body may abide some time longer. Pray, do not leave us behind.” Sri Ramakrishna replied: “The Mother shall do Her will.” “Your will has become one with the Mother’s,” interrupted Narendra. “Yes, it is lost in the Mother’s. I cannot find it out,” replied Sri Ramakrishna. The devotees did not press the point further. Rakhal’s understanding of the Master’s personality was as deep as his love for him. One evening while talking with M., author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, and Sasi (afterwards Swami Ramakrishnananda) on the Master’s spiritual greatness, he thus expressed his views of the Master: “He is like a tower from which everything can be watched and known but which none can approach or reach.”

Sri Ramakrishna passed away on the 16th of August in the year 1886. The disappearance of the Master created a profound void in the hearts of the disciples which nothing but the direct vision of the Eternal Spirit could fill up. They became restless for the realisation of God. An intense *Vairāgya* seized them all. Rakhal and four other *Gurubhāis* went to Brindaban to find immediate solace in the holy associations of the place.

About a month after the disappearance of the Master, a house was engaged at Baranagore, where the first monastery of the Ramakrishna Order was started with Gopal senior who had already renounced the world. In a short time Narendra, Sasi, Sarat, Baburam and Niranjan abandoned their homes and became its permanent inmates. Rakhal,

Kali and Tarak returned from Brindaban in the course of a few months and joined the monastery. Latu and Yogin followed them in a year. The rest of the young disciples, Sarada, Subodh, Gangadhar, Hari and Tulasi, shortly reinforced the number, which rose to sixteen. The holy relics of the Master were preserved in the monastery and a regular worship of him as the *Guru* was instituted according to the rules enjoined in the *Shāstras*.

The entire brotherhood was inspired by the one supreme ideal of God-realisation set up before it by the Master. Fired with zeal for the beatific vision, they not only forsook their homes but severed all earthly relationships. With extreme difficulty they subsisted on the generosity of a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. All thoughts of food and raiment were drowned in the all-absorbing passion for God-vision. Days and nights passed in prayer, meditation, worship, study, discussion, sacred chants, fasts, vigils and vows. The slanders and threats of the outside world and the entreaties of parents and friends to go back home, all went unheeded. One day Rakhal’s father came to the Baranagore Math to persuade him to return home. But Rakhal silenced him with these words: “Why do you take so much trouble to come to me? I am quite happy here. Now bless me that I may forget you and you may forget me.”

Naren was the central figure of the group. His striking personality, intense love for the *Gurubhāis* and inspiring words of renunciation kept the fire incessantly burning within them. Rakhal’s attraction for Naren had always been intense and regardful. At the feet of the Master, the friendship of their early age had been fused with the most exalted sentiments of mutual appreciation, faith and respect. One of the younger *Gurubhāis* was once inclined to return home. Rakhal, who was lovingly called by Narendra and the rest of the *Gurubhāis* their ‘Raja’, dissuaded him, saying: “Why do you want to go home? Where will you go leaving Naren? Have you ever found



so much love anywhere else? I can also live at home if I like. Why have I been lying here? It is for the supreme love of Naren."

True to the trust placed in him by the Master on the eve of his passing away to take care of his children and train them as monks so as to form the new order of *Sannyāsins* conceived and inaugurated by himself, Naren proposed to his *Gurubhāis* that they should perform the ceremony of formal *Sannyāsa*. It was accordingly performed and Sri Ramakrishna's disciples came to be known by their monastic names. Rakhal became Swami Brahmananda, Yogin Swami Yogananda, Baburam Swami Premananda, Sasi Swami Ramakrishnananda, Hari Swami Turiyananda, and so on. After the ceremony Naren read out to the *Gurubhāis* the dialogue of Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi from the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*. In the course of a few months they grew tired of living in a fixed place together. Their hearts were panting for solitary *Tapasyā* and unrestrained freedom of itinerant life. Rakhal who was pre-eminently disposed to solitary meditation, expressed off and on a deep longing to undergo severe austerities and make an intense struggle for the realisation of God. He often thought of going to the sacred and quiet banks of the Narbada and plunging into deep meditation there, forgetting the outside world. Not a year passed after the disappearance of the Master, when many of the disciples left the monastery one by one to strike out into the unknown paths of the *Parivrājaka* life. Only Sasi (Swami Ramakrishnananda) with a few of his *Gurubhāis* remained in the Math beside the sacred relics of the Master.

Swami Brahmananda set out on the *Parivrājaka* life in the latter part of 1889. He was accompanied by Swami Subodhananda. They first went to Benares and lived in a solitary garden. There the Maharaj (the term by which he was henceforth designated by the followers of Sri Ramakrishna) used to

live on one meal a day, begging his food generally from the *Chhatras*. He practised meditation and *Japa* till about 3 o'clock in the morning. He also read religious books. After a month's stay there, they proceeded towards the Narbada and gradually reached Omkarnath where they remained for about a fortnight. There also the Maharaj practised hard *Tapasyā*. Then they went to Nasik and stopped there for three days. Their next destination was Bombay, where they lived for a fortnight on *mādhukari bhikshā*, i.e., morsels of food collected by door-to-door begging in the same way as bees gather honey from flower to flower. At Bombay they boarded the steamer for Dwarka, which they reached in three days. There is a river there called Gomti, where the pilgrims used to bathe as an act of religious merit; but each of them had to pay a tax of rupees two for this privilege. The Maharaj refused to pay the tax and he held that the sea was much holier than the river. And although a merchant pilgrim offered to pay for him, still he went to the sea for his bath and not to the river. The merchant also did the same. The merchant was so struck by the spiritual grandeur of the Maharaj that he invited him to his place for meal, and when he went there, he and his family worshipped him with flowers and sandal paste and gave him a copy of the *Bhagavat Gitā*. He entertained him with a sumptuous feast. For three days he served him in this way. He was a very big merchant and had agents in many parts of India. He offered the Maharaj letters of introduction to those agents so that they might take care of him whenever he visited those places. But the Maharaj refused them, and said that he did not require them and that the Lord in whose name he had renounced the world would Himself look after him. The merchant also offered him some money so that he could travel in a carriage. But this also he refused. He said: "I want neither money nor carriage; I shall walk." Next they



visited Bet-Dwarka. While returning from there the Maharaj felt hungry and sent Swami Subodhananda to beg some dates from a *Dharamshâlâ* (rest-house). The people there gave him some four seers of dates. When Swami Subodhananda brought them to the Maharaj, the Maharaj asked him to return the greater part of the dates, but the people at *Dharamshâlâ* refused to take them back. So he kept only two *chatâks* of dates and distributed the rest among the poor. On returning from Bet-Dwarka they stayed another four days at Dwarka, after which they went to Porbander. There they stayed in a *Dharmashâlâ*, where the Maharaj was visited by many people and held conversations with them on many religious topics. After staying about four days at Porbander, they went to Junagad. From there they went to Girnar hill. Then they went to Ajmere and thence to Pushkar, where they lived about a fortnight. Their next place of visit was Brindaban. There they resided in Kala Babu's *Kunja*, the temple established by the ancestors of Babu Balaram Bose, the great householder devotee of Sri Ramakrishna.

At Brindaban the Maharaj practised very hard austerities. He lived generally on *mâdhukari-bhikshâ*. For many days he took only one meal in twenty-four hours. He used no shoes. He had no warm clothings for the winter. The *Vaishnava* saint Vijaykrishna Goswami was then at Brindaban. He had visited Sri Ramakrishna many times at Dakshineswar and had great admiration for him and his disciples. He often enquired about the Maharaj and occasionally invited him to dine in his place. One day he offered him a mosquito curtain, having come to know that the Maharaj had none to protect himself from the swarms of mosquitoes which infested the place. The Maharaj once made a short trip to Muttra with Vijaykrishna Goswami and his party.

The Maharaj used to get up at midnight and practise meditation and *Japa* till morning. At this Swami Subodhananda once said to him : "The Master

looked upon you as his son. You are the veritable son of the Lord. It does not become you to sit up like a beggar seeking His grace." The Maharaj replied : "What you say, brother, is true. The Master loved us so dearly that he gave us everything he had to give. Still we have not attained Peace. This shows that it now lies with us to do the rest for the fulfilment of the life's object. Uddhava was Sri Krishna's dear friend, yet Sri Krishna said to him : 'If you want to properly realise any spiritual truth, you must go to some solitary place in the Himalayas and practise *Tapasyâ*. I can grant you some miraculous visions, if you like. But that won't be enough. It is much greater to contemplate and meditate on Him.' Indeed, without meditation and contemplation none can know anything about God." Pressed with the thirst for God the Maharaj often went from village to village in Brindaban, in the spirit of the cowherds of Vraja searching for Sri Krishna in the agony of separation. As he walked, he would at times become so immersed in the thought of God as to forget where he was and where he had been proceeding to. He felt no inclination to take food. And the night was occasionally passed under the tree.

But his spirit of renunciation and craving for solitary spiritual practice did not allow him to settle long at Brindaban. In the latter part of 1890 he went to Kankhal, a more quiet and sequestered place on the bank of the Ganges at the foot of the Himalayas, which has been famous as a peaceful retreat for *Sâdhus* from time immemorial. But he had not stayed long at Kankhal when Swami Vivekananda, accompanied by Swami Turiyananda and Swami Saradananda, whom he had met in the course of his travels in the Himalayas, came to see him on his way down to the plains. From Kankhal they all went together to Meerut *via* Saharanpur to meet Swami Akhandananda, who had preceded them thither on account of illness. They reached Meerut late in the autumn of



1890. In a few days Swami Advaitananda (Gopal senior) also came to Meerut and joined the party. Once again the *Gurubhâis* were exceedingly happy in one another's company and lived together in Meerut for more than three months. They spent the days in meditation, study, discussion and devotional songs as in the Baranagore Monastery. One day, in the latter part of January, Swami Vivekananda gave out to his brother-monks that he would again turn a solitary monk. Accordingly he went to Delhi leaving them behind. The *Gurubhâis*, unwilling to miss his blessed company, followed him thither shortly. But the Swami again requested them to leave him alone, as he wanted to pursue his course without the least hindrance. Even the attraction of his *Gurubhâis* was considered by him a bonadge. So he bade them farewell and left Delhi.

After the Swami's departure, Swami Brahmananda intended to make a pilgrimage to Jwalamukhi in the Punjab and asked Swami Turiyananda whether he was willing to accompany him. Swami Turiyananda readily agreed. They visited Jwalamukhi and travelled over many places in the Punjab for nearly two years, such as Kangra, Pathankot, Baijnath, Gopalpur, Guzranwala, Montgomery and Multan. As they did much of the journey on foot, they stayed for short or long periods in various places which they found suitable for the practice of *Sâdhanâ*. During the travel Swami Turiyananda had a serious attack of fever and was nursed back to health with much care and difficulty.

From the Punjab they moved to Karachi. Then they went to Bombay. From there they proceeded to Mount Abu in Rajputana and remained there for some time. At Mount Abu the Maharaj practised intense *Tapasyâ*. The place is famous for a beautiful Jaina temple and is also sacred to the Hindus. It is a fine resort of *Sâdhus*. When Swami Vivekananda was going to Khetri from Madras on the eve of his departure for America in May, 1893, he

unexpectedly met his two *Gurubhâis* at Abu Road Station. The Swami was exceedingly glad to meet his beloved brother-disciples immediately before his journey to distant America. His feelings were roused. And he expressed to them his deep agony of mind at the sight of the dire distress of his countrymen during his travels throughout India. To alleviate their sufferings and to save India were what virtually possessed him now. He said to his *Gurubhâis*: "I have now travelled all over India and lately in the Maharashtra country and the Western coasts. But alas, it was an agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and the misery of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears. It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion among them without first trying to remove their poverty and their sufferings. It is for this reason,—to find some means for the salvation of the poor of India—that I am now going to America." The preaching of religion was not the Swami's main object in attending the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He spoke of it to his *Gurubhâis* in such a way as if he knew beforehand that it was all for him. He further said: "Whether I understand religion or not, this (*touching his heart by the hand*) is expanding immensely by witnessing the condition of the miserable, downtrodden and ignorant people." These passionate statements of the Swami made a deep impression on the minds of Swami Brahmananda and Swami Turiyananda, who were importuned by him to return to the Math and help him in the great cause of the regeneration of India. Not long after they met Swami Akhandananda in Rajputana, to whom they communicated these words of Swami Vivekananda. The very report of the moving words and sentiments of the Swami so influenced Swami Akhandananda that he at once decided to devote himself to the service of the people of India. As early as 1894 he conceived the idea of opening schools for the backward masses and corresponded with the Swami and his



brother-disciples for their approval of his intention.

From Mount Abu Swami Brahma-nanda accompanied by Swami Turiya-nanda went to Ajmere and visited the sacred *Tirtha Pushkar* a second time. Next they came to Brindaban. There they underwent intense *Tapasyâ* generally at Kusumsarowar in the countryside. Though they lived together, yet each remained so rapt in his own spiritual mood that no words would pass between them sometimes for a week or more. After six months' stay at Brindaban they went to Lucknow. It was now more than five years that they had been absent from the Math. At Lucknow Swami Shivananda (the present President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission), on his way to Kedarnath, came to meet them under instruction from Swami Vivekananda to send them to the Monastery at Calcutta. But they still wanted to live the life of wandering monks for some time more. So after staying nearly six months at Lucknow they came to Fyzabad, where there was a Bengali lawyer who possessed many religious books. They stayed with him evidently to study those books. On his way back from Kedarnath Swami Shiva-

nanda came and met them at Fyzabad. Then they came back to the Math before the winter of 1894-95.

The Math had been transferred from Baranagore to Alumbazar about the end of 1892. Here, too, the Maharaj continued his spiritual practices in the same strain. During the daytime he was mostly engaged in telling his beads. In these days his appearance was remarkably sober and serene. An ineffable radiance shone over his face. His eyes were wonderfully lustrous. His very person seemed to emanate spirituality. Several young ardent souls had by this time joined the Monastery attracted by the all-renouncing ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. Many other earnest seekers of truth occasionally came to the Math to associate with the monks. The Maharaj would often sing to those who came in close contact with him devotional songs in a rapturous mood. One of his favourite songs in those days began as follows (we give an English rendering): "Pledge the very life, O mind. Can gems be found in ankle-deep water? Dive into the bottomless depths, if you want to take hold of the Real Man."

(To be continued)

## PROFESSOR BENOY KUMAR SARKAR ON MODERN ECONOMIC LIFE

BY SHIV CHANDRA DATTA, M.A., B.L., F.R. ECON. S.

### LEADERS IN THE ECONOMIC WORLD

The discovery of steam and its application to the textile industry in England in the eighteenth century marked the advent of modern industrialism. Hence England is the pioneer in the establishment of modern economic life (*Arthik Unnati*, 1330, p. 350). Subsequently the U.S.A. and Germany followed in the footsteps of Great Britain and gradually shaped their economic life more or less after the pattern of Great Britain. These

three countries occupy to-day the first rank in the modern world ('a trio of the first class') as regards economic achievements. France follows just a little behind. There are many European countries whose achievements are as remarkable as those of the four just mentioned, but who are insignificant because of their smallness. These are Switzerland, Belgium, Norway, and Sweden. Japan, Russia and Italy occupy the second rank in the industrial and economical world. Countries like Turkey, the Balkans,



India, etc. are gradually evolving their economic life along the lines chalked out by the pioneer nations of the industrial world. (*Greetings to Young India*, p. 66).

There is a constant change and flux in the respective positions of those countries. Countries which were very backward at one time, are advancing at almost breakneck speed, while countries once advanced are proceeding slowly. Prof. Sarkar points out that about 1875 Germany was behind Great Britain by about forty or fifty years. But in about 1914 Germany had almost overtaken her and 'was indeed on the point of crossing her'. Japan was fifty years behind Eur-America in about 1886. But in 1929 Japan has reached the stage at which Eur-America was in about 1905. Russia after the War was very much behind Eur-America. But to-day Russia has almost caught up to the pioneer races in point of economic achievements. (*The Journal of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce*, Vol. III, pp. 140, 142-143).

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN ECONOMIC LIFE

Prof. Sarkar makes a clear-cut distinction between mediaeval, agrarian and semi-feudal economic life and modern economic life. What are the characteristics, then, which distinguish modern economic life? These are to be found scattered in various places in his speeches and writings. We present them here in a systematic form for the enlightenment of the reader :

##### 1. THE UTILIZATION OF THE NATURAL FORCES

The modern age tries to economize human energy as much as possible and to utilize natural forces in place of human energy in the work of production, transportation, etc. The beginning was made with steam. From steam the moderns have proceeded to the utilization of petrol and electricity. The use of electricity is still in its infancy and there are undreamt-of possibilities before

it. "Since the year 1913, the world's use of electric current has been almost quadrupled. And yet, the age of electricity has only just begun. Whether we turn to the railways, to agriculture or to the household, we find electrification still in its infancy, while as a means of communication, whether by cable or by wireless, electricity opens out a limitless prospect of development." (*J. B. N. C.*, Vol. II, p. 175).

##### 2. PUTTING EVERY BIT OF MATERIAL TO THE BEST POSSIBLE USE

The fundamental impulse that seems to urge modern mankind in its activities is that Nature is to be made to serve man as a master in the latter's efforts for the satisfaction of his diverse material wants. (*Vartaman Jagat*, Volume on Japan, p. 297). Hence not only are the forces of Nature being utilized, but man is producing the most valuable commodities from the ordinary raw materials. The achievements of modern scientists have made possible the utilization of ordinary raw materials in ways undreamt-of by our forefathers. Valuable and various dyes are being extracted from coal, artificial silk (the manufacture of artificial silk is a thriving industry in Great Britain, Germany, etc.) is being manufactured from wood-pulp, salt-petre is being manufactured from the air, and so on. The manufacture of artificial pearl is another example of the same type of endeavour. The zest of modern man is so keen and his capacity so unique for the profitable utilization of every bit of material, that there is hardly anything in modern industry that can be regarded waste product. (*Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II, p. 535). To the modern industrialist nothing is worthless enough to be thrown away.

##### 3. COMPETITION

Competition is no mean feature of modern industrial life. The number and variety of industries in the modern world are almost countless. Numerous companies or firms participate in each



particular industry in each country. Hence, each particular company has to compete with rivals both within and outside the country, in selling its products either in the home market or abroad. This competition has been made the keener because of the growing industrialization of the backward countries during and after the War. Keen competition also prevails among the labourers, among the capitalists, among the different nations and also between the labourers on the one hand and the capitalists on the other.

#### 4. CO-OPERATION OF VARIOUS TYPES— INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION— WORLD ECONOMY<sup>1</sup>

Co-operation on a vast scale never before realized in the past history of the world, forms a no less important feature of modern economic life. Labourers to-day organize themselves in trade-unions, and nation-wide as well as international organizations. Big industries combine and co-operate on a national and even an international scale when they find that competition leads them to loss and ruin and co-operation to greater efficiency as well as less struggle. The various states of the world are co-operating internationally for various economic purposes. The various commercial treaties, the customs-unions, the schemes of preferential tariffs, etc. are illustrations of international economic co-operation among the various states. (*Political Philosophies since 1905*, p. 243). The League of Nations with its economic counterparts—the International Economic Conference and the International Labour Conference—also illustrate the same economic co-operation. International Conferences like the various International Monetary Conferences (1872, 1881, and 1892), the World Congress on Population (1927) and Conference on the Scientific Management of Labour (1927) are also tangible embodi-

<sup>1</sup> On this topic Chap. 17 of Prof. Sarkar's *Greetings to Young India* will be found useful and informative.

ments of the efforts for international economic co-operation. (*Political Philosophies since 1905*, pp. 79 and 240).

The vastness of the import and export trades of the modern world, the dependence of the backward countries upon the advanced ones for most, if not all, of their finished products, the dependence of the advanced ones upon the backward countries for most of their food-stuffs and raw materials, the dependence of the advanced countries upon each other for various finished goods, raw materials and services, etc. constitute another notable aspect of the vast scale of modern international economic co-operation. The economic tie between the various parts of the modern world have already become so tight and their economic relations so intimate that we may say that leaving the stages of domestic, village or national economy far behind us, we are living right in the midst of what is understood by world economy. This stage of world economy represents another element in the internationalism in modern economic life.<sup>2</sup>

#### 5. THE INCREASING USE OF MACHINERIES

The modern era is 'the era of machines'.<sup>3</sup> In modern factories almost

<sup>2</sup> The help that the backward countries of to-day have been taking at every step from foreign capital, foreign experts, and foreign example constitutes another no insignificant item in international economic co-operation. American leadership has been modernizing China, and India is being modernized by the British. Japan has sat at the feet of Euro-American nations for decades together in order to learn the processes of modernizing her economic life. Russia and Turkey have been mainly taking the help of Germany (though they do not neglect the help of others) for the speedy industrialisation of their country. The Balkan States have been borrowing foreign capital for their industrialisation. The rationalisation of German industries after the War has been mainly effected with American capital. Russia also is trying to get foreign capital to modernize her economic life. (These are some of the numerous examples occurring in Prof. Sarkar's speeches and writings).

<sup>3</sup> *J. B. N. C.*, Vol. II, p. 171.



everything is done with the help of machines. Prof. Sarkar mentions that on his visit to the Clarendon Press in England he was struck with the sight of so many machineries that he felt himself present in the midst of a vast laboratory of machines. (*Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II, p. 345). In connection with his visits to the many paper factories, weaving factories, tailoring factories and steel works in England, he remarks that in modern factories about everything is done with machines and that very little has got to be done by the human hand. The human hand has got only to put in the raw materials at one end and take out the finished products at the other. New machines are being constantly invented in the modern world, e.g., electrical machines with the discovery of electricity. The efficiency of the old machines also is being daily enhanced, e.g., the 70 p.c. increase in the efficiency of the sewing machines in post-War Germany.<sup>4</sup> The machine-building industry is itself a great and expanding industry in almost every advanced country. In Germany the machine-building industry is the third in importance and employs 16 lakhs of labourers.<sup>5</sup>

In 1914 Prof. Sarkar was a half-hearted admirer of modern machineries. At that time he used to think that machineries make slaves of the labourers. (*Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II, pp. 491, 575, 611). But recently his views have undergone an almost revolutionary transformation. At present he is of opinion that machines serve as a powerful tonic for the purification of the national blood and that the greater the absorption of machineries in the national system, the stronger will the country be.

#### 6. LARGE SCALE PRODUCTION AND WIDELY EXTENDED DIVISION OF LABOUR

Production in the modern world refers mainly to large scale production on the basis of a widely extended

division of labour and with the help of machineries at almost every stage of production. Small scale production is more an exception than the rule and exists in those industries only which are not susceptible of large scale production. The movement for large scale production has in recent times taken the shape of that for Trustification because of the Rationalization made possible through production on a larger scale. The urge behind the movement for Trustification is that of the cheapening of goods because of the lower costs of production. Trustification also implies the capacity to spend lavishly for research and experiment. (*Economic Development*, pp. 62 and 63). The movement for Trustification, already common in the U.S.A., received a tremendous filip in post-War Germany owing to the very calamitous condition of the various industries which felt compelled to amalgamate in order (a) to prevent competition, (b) to gain the benefits of the lower costs of production brought about by more intensive specialization among the amalgamating factories and (c) to attract capital from the U.S.A. and also from within Germany.<sup>6</sup> Trustification has also proceeded apace in Soviet Russia where in various industries numerous giant state trusts exist to-day. (*J. B. N. C.*, Vol. II, pp. 1-27). The movement for Trustification is also making headway in Great Britain. (*J. B. N. C.*, Vol. IV, p. 11).

One of the best illustrations of Trustification is that of the Siemens Rheinelbe Schuckert-Union in Germany which is a huge vertical and horizontal trust which produces coal, ore, wrought iron, plate, rolled wire and tube, machine tools, screws, rivets, springs, knobs, studs, railway materials, automobiles, carriages, boats, electricity, etc. and which employs about 2 lakhs of workers. (*Economic Development*, pp. 60 to 62). The steel trust established in Germany

<sup>4</sup> *J. B. N. C.*, Vol. II, p. 171.

<sup>5</sup> *J. B. N. C.*, Vol. II, p. 165.

<sup>6</sup> *J. B. N. C.*, Vol. II, pp. 1-27 and *Arthik Unnati*, Vol. I, pp. 854-858.



in 1926 controls about 50 p.c. of the steel produced in that country. (*J. B. N. C.*, Vol. II, p. 168).

Prof. Sarkar draws our attention to the following advantages of Trustification: (1) it lowers prices because of the allotment of different kinds of production among the various factories and also because of the shutting down of the inefficient ones; and (2) it helps to partially solve the problem of industrial crises by making it possible for the persons in control of the industries to prevent greater production than what the market can consume, etc. At the same time Trustification is shown to be bringing many evils in its train: (1) the trusts constitute a sort of economic imperialism, 'an empire of industries' so to say, where the industrial magnets at the head have every opportunity of compelling the consumers to pay cut-throat prices because of the monopolistic nature of their control; and (2) that, in future, when Trustification has been well established, the constructive powers now called forth in their establishment may cease to appear and the incentive for progress and invention may disappear giving place to routine work and clerical labour. But he points out that this danger has already attracted the notice of the Westerners and that they are already up and doing in finding measures for meeting this evil. (*Arthik Unnati*, Vol. I, pp. 859-61). The first evil also is being sought to be removed through anti-trust legislation and public ownership of or public control over important industries.<sup>7</sup>

#### 7. THE COMPLEXITY OF MODERN PRODUCTIVE PROCESSES

Modern production is a very complex process involving the co-operation of various agents. Those referred to by Prof. Sarkar are the following: (1) The technical function. "Herein lie the production, manufacture and transforma-

tion of one kind of goods into another, including the utilization of waste products." (2) The commercial function. "It comprises sale, purchase, exchange, etc. of the wares on the most convenient terms." (3) The financial function. "How to attract and command capital to an enterprise constitutes a tremendous factor in economic development. Here one touches the sphere of credit and banking." (4) Insurance. "In modern times the security of goods and persons has moreover become an essential necessity. Not only have the commodities to be insured against waste, loss, destruction, etc., but the working men also must be assured the wages and means of combating insanitary conditions, accident, old age and death." (5) Accounts. "Accounts play a mighty role in the history of every factory, trading house or other undertaking. One has to be on the look-out for the periodically regular statistics of prices, wages, costs and output as well as the exact schedule of goods, markets, bank-rates, balances, and so forth." (6) The administrative function. "The functions of the economic general staff in each enterprise consist not only in giving the right 'officer' the right place but also in mobilizing the right classes of 'men'—the hands and feet—for the discharge of their proper functions." (7) Chemical engineering. The struggle for supremacy between Chemists and Engineers has been removed by the creation a new class of technical experts called Chemical Engineers. Chemical engineering is playing a mighty role in modern production. (8) Industrial research. "The vital problem in this domain is essentially one of inventing and instituting the necessary economics so that goods may be delivered at the lowest price-level and with as little waste of human energy as possible." "Industrial research has been achieving wonderful results in human inventiveness and brain-power. But these acquire a significance solely because they serve to make the life of the people, the teeming millions, less

<sup>7</sup> *Political Philosophies since 1905*, pp. 79 and 210 and *Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II, p. 601.



disagreeable and more happy.”  
(*Economic Development*, Ch. 45).

8. THE RISE AND ADVANCE OF THE  
MODERN WORKING CLASSES

The birth of the modern working classes out of lethargic, sluggish and superstition-ridden mediaeval peasants and the gradual advance made by them constitute another important characteristic of modern economic life. The organization, the discipline and the training imposed on the working classes while working in close mutual proximity in huge modern factories equipped with high class instruments and machines, have sharpened their intelligence, and called forth and developed their capacity to act in a disciplined and organized manner. These qualities have enabled the modern working classes, at one time occupying the lowest state in social life, to demand and obtain better treatment from the society, the state and their employers. Hence, the modern world, in spite of its present capitalistic basis, records an advance on the part of the working classes.<sup>8</sup> Labourers to-day have been endowed with the power of managing their factories along with their employers in Germany, Austria, and Czecho-Slovakia. (*Political Philosophies since 1905*, p. 216). They are sharing in the profits of industrial enterprises in New Zealand simply because their contribution is manual just as that of the shareholders is financial. (*J. B. N. C.*, Vol. I, p. 529). The syndicates in Italy have been endowed with the power of entering into collective agreements with the employers and of controlling their own affairs, the state reserving to itself

<sup>8</sup> Cf. in this connection the nine principles of labour adopted by the League of Nations in 1919: (1) labour not a mere commodity; (2) right of association among both employers and employees; (3) wages adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life; (4) eight-hour day; (5) weekly rest of 24 hours; (6) abolition of child labour; (7) equality between men and women *re.* payment; (8) equitable treatment of employees; and (9) inspection in which women are to take part.

the power to intervene in case of disagreement between the employers and the employed and to frame general legislation. (*Political Philosophies since 1905*, pp. 238 and 239). And this tendency of sharing in profits and in the management of factories has also shown itself in the U.S.A. and Great Britain. (*Arthik Unnati*, Vol. I, pp. 156-157).

9. INCREASING URBANISATION

The increase in the number and size of modern cities of the class of London, New York, Berlin, Paris, Chicago, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, etc. and the conversion of rural centres into municipal towns are another feature of modern industrial life. Cities with vast populations, with up-to-date means of communication and transportation, with modern comforts, luxuries and amusements did not exist before the advent of modern industrialism either in the East or in the West. (*Arthik Unnati*, Vol. I, p. 351). They have developed wherever modern commerce and industry have established themselves and they are conspicuous by their absence in countries or tracts which still exist in mediaeval economic conditions. The origin of modern cities thus is solely due to modern industry and trade, *e.g.*, the development of the town of Manchester<sup>9</sup> is due to the cotton industry and the cotton trade, that of Glasgow is due to the development of the ship-building industry (before the Industrial Revolution both Manchester and Glasgow were but petty and insignificant towns—*Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II, pp. 514, 515 and 590). Osaka is characterised by Prof. Sarkar as ‘the Manchester of Asia’. The reasons why Osaka has grown to its present importance are: (a) coal and iron are available near at hand in the Kiuchiu

<sup>9</sup> Prof. Sarkar points out very felicitously that Manchester is the centre of British industrialism, the home of British Socialism and the stronghold of the British co-operative movement. (*Vide Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II, p. 614).



Islands; (b) goods can easily pass by the canals; and (c) the Chinese and Korean markets are near at hand. (*Vartaman Jagat*, Volume on Japan, p. 879).

Modern cities have given rise to new social, economic and sanitary problems. But these also are being tackled very ably by the moderns. Modern housing schemes, modern town-planning systems (endeavouring, among other objects, to preserve rural features in urban surroundings) and the variety of functions undertaken by modern municipalities (e.g., those undertaken by the Manchester municipality—the running of tram-cars and electricity and gas-works, construction of better houses, providing free soap and water for unclean children, compulsory inspection of unclean children, erection of ideal wards, establishment of convenient hotels for sojourners in the town, subsidizing societies for child welfare, etc.)<sup>10</sup> show the heroic determination of modern Eur-Americans not to be baffled by any evil however great.

#### THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN ECONOMIC LIFE

What are the factors which have raised the economic life of the modern countries to the level at which it exists to-day?

Prof. Sarkar lays stress on three great factors: (A) the efforts of the state (especially in the shape of advanced economic legislation), (B) the development of banking, and (C) the existence of a wide-spread system of technical, commercial and agricultural education.

The third factor will be discussed elaborately in a separate article. Here we shall consider only the first two factors.

#### (A) THE EFFORTS OF THE STATE

Prof. Sarkar is not unmindful of the part played by resourceful individuals in the up-building of modern economic life.

<sup>10</sup> *Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II (on Great Britain), pp. 594—599.

He himself is in favour of private initiative and approves of Governmental interference in matters which cannot possibly be cared for by private individuals. (*Greetings to Young India*, p. 150). But, his work, *Economic Development* is but one long song of praise of the very great part modern states are playing in the economic betterment of their respective countries.

The economic activities of the modern state as pointed out by Prof. Sarkar are manifold and may be classified as under

#### (i) THE STATE AND INDUSTRIES

The modern state tries to help industries by protecting them from forceful competition either by imposing duties on goods imported from abroad or by conferring bounties on goods produced within the country. It also tries to oust the foreigners from control over industries within the country (Cf. Turkey's success in reducing foreign control over her railways, banks and shipping—*Economic Development*, Ch. 34). But at the same time it does not hesitate to take foreign help whenever, wherever and to whatever extent necessary to push on the economic development of the country. The Japanese Government did not hesitate to take the help of foreign experts in order to train up the Japanese in the arts of modern agriculture, industry and banking. The Russian Government, while trying to be exclusive and self-sufficient, has found it to her interest to permit foreign firms to participate in her international trade (*Economic Development*, p. 119) and also to establish factories within her borders (*Economic Development*, p. 117). The post-War development of the mercantile marine in Italy is the achievement of the Mussolinian Government. (*Economic Development*, pp. 256 and 257).

The state has been acting as a mighty agent in the industrialization of countries like Russia, Japan, etc. Russia is being rapidly industrialized to-day by the autocratic and centralized



Russian State. (*J. B. N. C.*, Vol. III, pp. 141-143). Japan, which was almost a nonentity in the international stage till the end of the nineteenth century, established her claim to the rank of a first class power after the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, simply because of the process of modernization that had been set on foot by the Japanese Government since 1868. The Japanese Government helped in modernizing Japan chiefly in the following ways: (a) by enlisting the services of foreign experts for short periods (Prof. Sarkar noted during his visit to Japan in 1915-16 that the number of foreign experts had very much dwindled by that time); (b) by sending students, bank officials, etc. for the best training in Eur-America; and (c) by starting new industries and then handing them over to private individuals. (*Vartaman Jagat*, Volume on Japan).

#### (ii) THE STATE AND AGRICULTURE

The modern state is trying to improve agriculture (a) by introducing better land-laws in order to deprive the landlords of their lands and then to distribute them among the peasants (e.g., in Germany, Denmark, Great Britain, the states of Central and South-eastern Europe); (b) by extending the use of electricity in the villages (e.g., in France); (c) by establishing experimental stations to demonstrate up-to-date methods of cultivation to the peasants (e.g., in Japan); (d) by establishing intimate relationship between agricultural schools, colleges and universities on the one hand and the practical farmers on the other (e.g., in Great Britain); (e) by extending financial help to the agriculturists through the medium of Co-operative Societies or otherwise (e.g., in France, Bulgaria; proposal of such state help in Great Britain—*vide Economic Development*, pp. 364, 366); (f) by protecting the industries which utilize the raw materials produced by the farmers and thereby indirectly helping agriculture (e.g., the protection of the sugar industry in Hungary has

enabled the sugar manufacturers to settle minimum prices with the beet-growers and also to extend large premiums to them—*Economic Development*, p. 306); (g) by promoting agricultural research; (h) by importing the best agricultural knowledge from abroad (e.g., in Japan).

#### (iii) THE STATE AND TRADE

The modern state tries to encourage export trade by conferring bounties on the producers, by standing guarantee for loans to producers, and by extending loans to the exporters (*Cf.* the Overseas Trades Acts and the Trade Facilities Acts of Great Britain—*Arthik Unnati*, Vol. I, pp. 154-155). It tries not only to encourage the export of industrial but also of agricultural products (e.g., in 1924 Hungary was lowering her railway freight rates and began the manufacture of locomotives because of the lack of sufficient rolling stock—in order to push on her exports of agricultural products. Prof. Sarkar also points out that at that time the exportability of agricultural products was being scientifically studied in Hungary—*Economic Development*, pp. 304 and 305). But the export of agricultural products is being encouraged only when the minimum requirements of the country have been satisfied (e.g., Poland had calculated that she required 16 lbs. of sugar per head for home consumption, hence in 1924 export of sugar was allowed only after this minimum quantity had been kept within the country—*Economic Development*, p. 134). The various Exhibitions—local, national and international—which are increasing almost daily in number, vastness and variety, are but an attempt on the part of the state (and also of the Mercantile Associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc. in some cases) to push on both internal and international trade by bringing the buyers and sellers together. Industry and commerce cannot thrive without finance. That finance is provided by banks. In every modern state the banks are subject to



greater or less degree of control by the state.

(iv) THE STATE AND THE EFFICIENCY  
OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The modern states are not merely organizations for the maintenance of peace and order within the community. They are also great social service organizations. (*Vartaman Jagat*, Vol. II, p. 601). No doubt private social service organizations in Eur-America are not few or insignificant. No doubt also that it is these private organizations that very often show the first initiative. But the activities of the modern states in the direction of social service are so vast, so varied and so important that the efforts and achievements of the private organizations pale into insignificance.

The modern state aims at turning every individual into healthy and efficient agent of production in all possible ways. Hence, whatever seems to hamper the efficiency of the individual is promptly removed.

No better illustration can be found of the paternalistic activities of modern states than Germany.

"Germany is the pioneer of industrial insurance." Hence, we first take up the achievements of Germany in that sphere :

"State insurance was completely developed in Germany in the decade between 1881 to 1890. Since then it has comprised three great branches : (1) insurance against sickness ; (2) insurance against accidents ; and (3) insurance against permanent disablement."

"For the sick insurance (law of 1883) two-thirds are paid by the employees and one-third by the employers. Against old age and disablement (law of 1889) the state bears a part of the burdens of insurance together with the other two parties. But the employers are exclusively responsible for the accident (law of 1884)."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> So far as accident and sickness insurances are concerned, the Government does not in-

"Within two decades of the legislation Germany had 11½ million people on the sick insurance lists. There were over 23,000 sick benefit societies under imperial or local control, 18¾ millions were insured against old age and disablement and 18½ millions against accident. The accident insurance really covered almost one-third of the entire German people."

As regards old age and permanent disablement,—"Two classes of people are compelled to insure : (1) all working men, assistants and apprentices in every branch of trade above the age of 16 ; (2) employees in offices, engineers and shop-assistants, pilots, also teachers with limited incomes.

"By old age is meant the 70th year. At this age every German obtains from the Government an annual pension of 50 gold marks (Rs. 37) and from the insurance fund a sum not exceeding 230 gold marks (Rs. 170).

"For permanent invalids also the Government's contribution is 50 gold marks per year. From the insurance fund they obtain a sum not exceeding 450 gold marks (Rs. 320).

"Accident includes death. As the problem of the *widow and the orphan* is attended to by this law, one can easily guess what a tremendous *sense of security* and economic staying power is felt in everyday life by 33 p.c. of the entire population in Germany.

"In case of the employee's death while at work in a factory, the law provides that the employer is to pay the expenses of the funeral. A pension is also assured to the relatives. The widow obtains 20 p.c. of the actual earnings of the deceased or of the average local wages. Each child until the age of 16 also obtains pension at the same rate." (*Economic Development*, pp. 124-126).

Prof. Sarkar quotes Prof. Schumacher on the effects of industrial insurance in Germany : "The result of all these

cur any expenditure, but credit is due to the Government for passing the necessary legislations.



measures is that Germany is to-day ahead of all other countries in the matter of arrangements for the protection of life and health. We largely attribute the most remarkable feature in the modern development of our German nation, of modern German life, to this industrial insurance legislation." (*Economic Development*, p. 124).

Industrial Insurance was first introduced in Great Britain by Lloyd George in 1908-1911. His scheme embraced the following items: old age pension, minimum wage, national insurance. (*Political Philosophies since 1905*, p. 206). It was also adopted for the first time in France in 1924.

Other paternalistic activities of the German Government since the War are the following: (a) maintenance of 68,000 cripples, 8,67,000 widows and 1,05,000 orphans; (b) a scheme for spending 600 million gold marks on public works (mostly canalization) in order to prevent unemployment; (c) extension of lavish grants (88 million gold marks) to charitable institutions; (d) helping middle class people in distress by exten-

sion of subsidies, reduction of prices and so on. (*Economic Development*, pp. 112-118).

The various factory laws passed in almost all the modern states for the protection of the labourers and especially for the protection of the women and children represent further endeavours in the same direction.

The achievements of the Italian Government in partially tackling the the problem of malaria with the expenditure of Rs. 56 lakhs per year for 55 years (1886 to 1921), in order to drain or pump vast stretches of unhealthy tracts, even though there was no prospect of any financial return, shows to what extent a modern state can go in order to promote the health of its people. And it is pleasing to reflect that the Italian Government was repaid not only with higher land revenue from the reclaimed tracts but also with the better health and enhanced efficiency and vitality of the men and women of the land who are the source and the creators of wealth. (*Economic Development*, Ch. 18).

(To be concluded)

## THE UPANISADIC VIEW OF TRUTH

BY DR. MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR, M.A., Ph.D.

### INTRODUCTION

The Upanisads deal with and describe the nature of the ultimate reality, the Absolute, not evidently so much by reasoning or dialectics, as by inner experience and realisation. The dialectics are few in the pages of the Upanisads. But they are full of the records of the intuitions and experiences of seers, and these have enriched their value as inspiring texts. Logic may convince us, but intuitions and experiences inspire us. The interest in the Upanisadic study is intensified because of the finer vistas of intuition and feeling they open in the seeker. The correct searchings of the seers, the definite answers to the intensive queries about the ultimate reality,

exhibit the deep and varied spiritual experiences which cannot fail to strike the imagination, excite wonder and admiration and silently inspire the realisation of Truth.

The Upanisads lose their meaning and significance to those who are anxious to find a developed philosophy in them, but when the search changes from a rational enquiry to a mystical penetration, their import and depth are felt and realised. They exhibit the highest intuitions and experiences of spiritual life.

### BRAHMAN

A treatise on mysticism would naturally refuse a categorical setting of the conception about being, and would rather prefer to read the development of the



conception through life's experiences and intuitions, not because it is the demand of the mystic spirit to shut out the intellectual measurement of truth and reality, but because this has been specially the method of pursuing truth in the Upanisads. The Upanisads appeal more by the spiritual intuitions and psychological revelations than by a set form of philosophy, and though they have been the basis of the later philosophies, still it cannot be doubted that in them life and spirit has been of a greater concern than systematisation which has been thrust upon them. The texts read like gospels of revelations and intuitions, and in many places it has been shown how life is felt in its subtle delicacies of movement, and spirit in fine intuitions. And since the inspiration has been direct, logic has hardly a place in the Upanisads, though no doubt they are richly suggestive that way also.

That this is the natural conclusion can hardly admit of any doubt; and when this has been lost sight of and the life's quest has at last its refuge in the intellectual understanding, the Upanisads have been the fruitful ground of combatants, eager to raise side-issues and concentrate their efforts and energies upon them. This demand of logic has risen when it has not been able to follow life's move and intuition in all its phases, and their demand has the invariable effect of confining the spiritual quest to a definite phase of expression. But spiritual life denies in its soaring such confinement most eloquently, for its constant tendency is to feel life and spirit in their fullness and overwhelmingness and not in partiality. The Isa Upanisad has rightly characterised the spirit to be complete and full. And therefore it has been beautifully laid down :

"This is full, that is full, the full originates from the full. When the full is taken away from the full, the full remains."

This couplet expresses the mystic promise in the most effective way. Life is actively energising for the fullness.

Spirit cannot bear division, it cannot tolerate incompleteness. Fullness is its being, and since it is the only being, it cannot conceive the world of spirit either in being or in expression as incomplete and partial. Hence spirit is the fullness of being both in transcendence and in immanence. It is inexhaustible.

The fullness is perceived in the yonder and in the beyond, in the widest expansion and commonalty of spirit, it is perceived in itself beyond expression in transcendence. Life's move is in spirit, its stay is in spirit. Spirit is all, spirit is in all. Spirit is beyond all.

Though the effort has been the presentation of spirit in its fullness, still it has been necessary to conceive the spirit in transcendence, and the spirit in immanence, in reference to the expression or concentration. Spirit-in-itself is transcendent, spirit is immanent in reference to the order of expression.

This has led us to conceive Brahman-in-itself and Brahman-in-relation. The former can be called the Absolute, the latter Isa.

This fullness of transcendence goes beyond the fullness of immanence. Thought and language both fail to understand it and express it. So unique a presentation is this height of existence that there is no means of indicating it save by a negative method and process. The positive intuition of it is impossible. Whatever meets the senses or the intellect, is not Brahman.

Our approach to the study of the Upanisads will be mainly analytical of the spiritual experiences revealed therein. This analytical study can alone find out the most sacred spiritual convictions about the nature of reality.

We can at once see that the conception of the Visvadeva in the Vedas could not satisfy the Upanisadic seers. The reception of the finer vibrations of supramundane life in its wide diffusion in supramental visions, cannot silence the quest of the teachers, for it is supposed to be still external. It can set up fine vital and mental currents, but cannot touch the inmost being in us. The search



in the Upanisads is the search of the inmost being, the being above and beyond the world of revelation, internal and external.

The Upanisads transcend the limits of expressions and realise truth in transcendence of the cosmic stirrings, the vital and mental urges.

Their importance and appeal are enhanced by the reference to the Absolute. The relative world with its vast experiences and possibilities cannot make a lasting claim on our attention, for they are bounded and passing. The relative has a value in so far as it draws our attention to the Absolute by waking up the sense of a contrast. The relative is limited, the relative is transitory. It calls for the unlimited, the permanent, as its background. When the fullest promises of the relative existence have been exhausted, the real search for the Absolute begins; when the delights and joys of the relative order have had their fullest trial, then alone the worth, the value and the meaning of the Absolute as the only enduring can be apparent to us. In this sense the enquiry into the Absolute and the quest of its security of being can seriously begin, only when the satisfactions of the values in the relative order, gross or fine, have had their fullest trial. This is not often clearly understood and the intellectual synthesis of the relative and the Absolute is often attempted. The relative joys and values are given an absolutistic meaning and impress, and the fountain of our experience and life is connected with the absolute spring. Our experience has a demand over us, and life clings to it so keenly that it often refuses to accept the breaking of the continuity between the natural and the supernatural, between the relative and the Absolute.

But this attitude gets a rude shock if a penetration is made into the recesses of our being, where the sense of a freedom at once convinces us of the twofold character of the relative and the absolute existence. This freedom is unique, it is not the freedom of eased mentality and highly strung vitality, it

is not the freedom of an embracing synthesis; it is the freedom from the mutations of life, freedom from the reciprocities of intellectual life, freedom from insistent vital and mental demands. It is the freedom of transcendence.

The Upanisadic search is after the real and the enduring beyond the temporal; this real is Brahman in the Upanisadic terminology. The freedom which awaits the realisation of Brahman is freedom from the relative values and concepts.

The chief attraction of the Upanisads lies in adducing the conception of Brahman as the Absolute. The seers are penetrative enough to go beyond the veil of relative existence to the One Absolute which denies division and completely transcends the relative existence.

The Upanisadic method has been chiefly mystical penetration, and the penetration has been keen enough to reach complete transcendence. The text conceives the vast as the state of existence, from which the relative order of the senses and mentality drops completely.

The Chhândogya has it: "The manifold has been in the beginning as 'Sat' (existent) and the Sat has been one without the second." No doubt, the texts make rich references about the emergence of the cosmic system out of Brahman, but this emergence should not be referred to the Absolute which transcends everything, including the desire and act of creation. The Absolute is. (Katha, II, vi, 12, 13). Nothing more can be said of it, no definition is possible of it, for it is beyond knowledge (Kena, II, 3), beyond any categorical thinking.

"It moves, it moves not, it is far and near, it is in, it is out." The intellectual attempt to positively define it completely fails.

#### WHAT THEN IS BRAHMAN?

The word "Brahman" has been used to indicate the vast, the unbounded,



*i.e.*, the Absolute. In the texts the word has been used in many places identifying it with the forces of nature, the inner psychoses, the vital principle, etc., and this has been perplexing to the accurate study of the Upanisads.

Hence a clear analysis of the passages in which the word occurs is necessary for clarified understanding. The texts use the word in different senses in diverse contexts, and if the context is forgotten, confusion is inevitable.

The understanding is helped at the outset if we remember the doctrine of transcendence and immanence of Brahman as taught in the Upanisads. Brahman is the soul of the appearance, it denies the appearance. It is in it, it is out of it. Such contrarieties are only possible if Brahman is viewed in and without relations to the world of phenomena in the same sense. Immanence of Brahman is relative to the cosmos. Transcendence is not. And, therefore, the passages covering immanence have not the same importance as the passages covering transcendence. This distinction is to be borne in mind to help a clear understanding.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DISTINCTION IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

The conception of Brahman in and out of relation to the immanent life has an important significance in spiritual life. It accepts the possibilities of spiritual life and expression in the relative and absolutistic consciousness. The experiences may differ, they may be of different character, they may have different values, but still it cannot be denied that they are potent in life. And intellectual considerations may persuade us to accept the one and deny the other; but such considerations seem to be a categorical determination which has no value in spiritual life. The Upanisads recount the spiritual experiences in life with and without expressions; and if the finality is fixed upon any one of them, it is because the gratification and the blessedness which are the promise of

spiritual urges are more complete in the one than in the other. But this distinction does not take away the full value from the life in its partial expression and incomplete fruition.

The Upanisads are careful to unfold an evolution of spirit in its immanent expression, and since this expression is due to self-alienation of spirit, it can offer only partial satisfaction even in its fullest development.

The spiritual fruition in the Upanisads, therefore, has a twofold meaning. It may mean a self-opening and reception of the cosmic spiritual life through nature and society and in its visitation in the soul.

But this unfolding of spiritual consciousness is evolution in spirituality, but should not be confounded with emancipation in transcendence. The spiritual consciousness in the start is the acceptance of the cosmic life through the fine and the finer planes of existence. It is the stage of the ever expansive dynamism, and so long as the spiritual life energises in the concrete, it enjoys the finer revelations of spirit through nature and soul and yet transcends them in the world of the finest expression in itself. The spiritual vision has in it still the concrete outlook, for experiences, however fine, are still confined to the original limitation of consciousness in expression and immanence. Spiritual life is, therefore, essentially dynamic, and howsoever expansive and rich it may be, it cannot transcend the original restriction. And, therefore, the highest philosophic truth which such experiences can indicate and imply, will be naturally an all-inclusive existence. It lies in everything. It transcends everything, for nothing can exhaust its being. Its being extends far beyond the ethereal expanse, far beyond the highest heavens.

The Svetâsvatara eloquently describes the vision of the all-inclusive spirit in its widest commonalty. The all-pervading spirit is represented as the Cosmic Person, encompassing the endless existence in its embrace ;



“The person with its thousand heads, thousand eyes, thousand feet, surrounds the earth on all sides and stands ten fingers’ breadth beyond.”

“The person, in truth, this wide world is, whatever has been, and whatever will be; also ruler of immortality, and whatever grows up by food.”

“It has a hand and foot on every side, on every side an eye, and head and face, it has an ear everywhere in the world. It stands encompassing all.” (Hume’s translation of the Svetâsvatara, III, 14, 15, 16).

“The God who is in fire, who is in water, who has entered into the whole world, who is in plants, who is in trees—to that God be adoration, yea, be adoration!” (Svetâsvatara Upanisad, II, 17).

Again we have in the Rik Veda (*Vide* Wilson’s Rik Veda Samhitâ, Mandala 10, Eighth Astaka, Fourth Adhyâya, Sukta, VI):

1. “Purusa, who has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, investing the earth in all directions, exceeds (it by a space) measuring ten fingers.

2. “Purusa is verily all this (visible world), all that is, and all that is to be, he is also the Lord of immortality, for he mounts beyond (his own condition) for the food (of living beings).

3. “Such is his greatness, and Purusa is greater even than this, all beings are one-fourth of him, his other three-fourths (being) immortal, (abide) in heaven.

4. “Three-fourths of Purusa ascended; the other fourth that remained in this world proceeds repeatedly, and diversified in various forms, went into all animate and inanimate creation.”

Though these texts eloquently describe the all-permeating nature of the Absolute, in the gross and the finer forms of existence, still they do not give us the conception of transcendence. Hence these texts have value for the spiritual life in initiating the cosmic sense of the cosmic being. They are, in short, the vision of the Reality in forms, or the

vision of the formed reality (Murta), they do not indicate the understanding or the vision of the formless.

The Brihadâranyaka has it: “There are assuredly two forms of Brahman: the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the stationary and the moving, the actual and the yon.” (Hume’s Translation, III, 1).

The texts bring out clearly the conception of the formless, which is, therefore, as a conception more advanced and subtle than the presentation of Brahman as Murta. This makes way for the perception of the finest essence of existence immanent in all existence.

But even this is not enough as the true indication of the Upanisadic teaching. For as a source of spiritual inspiration the Upanisads see far beyond such poetic inspiration which feels the animation of nature by spirit, and go deeper in declaring the identity of existence in nature and man.

The spiritual life, therefore, is not merely the reception of spirit in wise passiveness through the finer forces active in nature and man; it is not the sense of the vastness and overpoweringness of existence; it is, as the Brihadâranyaka points out, the feeling of the exact identity of spirit beyond the dynamic of nature and spirit. The text reads: “As an identity is it to be looked upon, this indemonstrable, enduring being; motionless beyond space, the birthless soul, Atman, the great and the enduring.”

This perception of the enduring as seated in the soul (*Yo esa antahhridaya*) is the promise of the Upanisads. The self-opening does not only move the fine dynamism of our being making it receptive and responsive to the finer forces active in us and in nature and to their correspondence and unity in the Godhead, but it finally helps that penetration which feels the identity of existence in Atman. The self-opening is succeeded and displaced here by self-realisation, and the finer dancing of life by silence of wisdom. The wisdom which the spiritual dynamism carries with it, is the re-



velation of the finer oscillation of life and spirit in the deep of our being, the subtle joys and music in the life of nature, the rhythm and harmony of the cosmic life in and beyond the formed (Murta) existences. But it is to be distinguished from the wisdom which is obtained in the deep abyss of our being, the knowledge of identity. Transcendent wisdom then presents a unique experience which cannot be otherwise obtained. It is the wisdom of the formless, the shapeless.

In the life of realisation, the Upanisads lay more stress upon the truth of transcendence than upon the immanent spiritual life. It is not because the Upanisadic seers do not see and feel the finer delights and truths of supra-mental existence in the dynamic divine, it is because they feel the truth of all truths, the truth beyond the immanent immensities. The supra-mental truths hold true in the order of expression, and as such are truths which lie beyond the surface existence. They reveal realms of harmonies, beauties and sublimities; but they can have no access into the silence of the Deep. It is beyond the reach of the sensuous or the super-sensuous mind.

The word "truth" is confined to this aspect of transcendence in the Upanisads, both in ontological and spiritual sense. Not that it is the fixity of existence amidst the diversities of changes. The dynamic divine is no less fixed an existence, for no one seriously conceives it to be vanishing into nothing. It might have occasional withdrawal of its expression, but the occasional withdrawal of its play in the cosmic drama does not reduce it to nothing. It is the source and fountain of all life, both streams of thought, wisdom and power, and therefore it will be idle to deny its truth outright and to refuse its spiritual influence and power. But when the emphasis is laid upon the transcendent aspect of truth, it is done in the clear conviction that the transcendent is Truth without the least limitation, it is the sole truth, the bare and the naked truth. The trans-

cedent is truth-in-itself. The dynamic divine is truth in relation to the order of revelation in the supra-physical and physical planes of existence. The truth implied in them cannot be the same. The dynamic divine is truth in relation to the orders of revelation and creation, it cannot be truth in the sense in which the transcendent is truth. But this should not for a moment be construed to thinking that there are two forms of truth, actually different, if not quite conflicting. The transcendent alone is truth, the dynamic divine is the transcendent presented in the aspect of relation. The same thing is seen, but interpreted differently. The intellectual necessity of thinking in the terms of a first cause presents the transcendent as the dynamic divine manifested in mental and supra-mental universe, in the physical and the vital planes of existence. But when the intellectual curiosity is displaced by truth-vision, the distinctness, native to conceptual thinking, dies away, and the transcendence is presented in its undivided oneness.

The supra-intellectual perception of truth gives us the consciousness of the undivided sameness of being at every point of existence, and hence presents the essence of truth which cannot be apprehended if the mind allows itself to be worked by the concepts it has developed in the course of evolution. The truth out of all reference to the order of expression is, therefore, truth in the metaphysical sense. It is the highest truth in spiritual sense also, in so far as its value is greatest because of its being the essence of being, and because of its being ever present and most intimate. The highest truth in spiritual sense is never distant, is never far; it is ever present, ever inmost. The least difference, the least mediacy makes truth foreign to us, and makes a *rapprochement* between the seeker and the sought impossible. And when, therefore, truth is sought in the ever-growing experience, mental or supra-mental, the face of truth can never shine before us, for it is not there in its pristine purity and undiminished radi-



ance. The sense of distance still troubles us, the sense of reception bespeaks the difference, but truth denies difference and can neither be sought nor received, for in the unbounded expanse of its being it exists in its transcendent purity for ever. It can never be received, nor be sought.

Truth then in its highest sense is that which is, which can neither be presented nor received. It is the presentation of the absolute fact, and in this presentation it goes beyond the sense of the fullness of life, the completeness of power and the highest security of our finite being. It is the overshadowing of the concrete life and consciousness. The stretches of the finer vision into the immensities of life and the occasional depths of feeling which so often pass for the highest religious beatitude should not be confounded with the intuition of the Absolute.

Hence the spiritual truth of the Absolute is to be distinguished from the spiritual truth of the dynamic divine. The one is true because of its being the highest fact, the maximum existence beyond limitation; the other is true because of its influence and power. But they are not to be distinguished as two forms of truth,—the highest fact in self-alienation appears as the highest unity

of existence pregnant with knowledge and power.

In view of the above distinction, it is natural to characterise the highest truth in two ways : truth in its transcendence, and truth in its self-expression. Truth in its transcendence is truth absolute free from the limitation of expression. Expression implies a concreteness and concentration. It is the spiritual life and expression in time, but it cannot present the aspect of spiritual life which transcends time and expression in time.

To distinguish the truth in transcendence as different from truth in self-expression, it is natural to indicate as *Neti, Neti*, not this, not this. The highest spiritual experience seeks to describe the greatest spiritual truth in negative terms, in the terms of denial of all that meets us in the sensuous and the supersensuous realisation. *Neti Neti* indicates the impossibility of knowing the unknowable. Positive knowledge is in a sense a limitation, for it implies the duality of the percipient and the perceived, the experient and the experienced. *Neti Neti* denies this possibility of knowledge, it denies the possibility of indicating the truth by clear characterisation. All characterisation is thought-description, and truth evades the grasp of thought.

(To be concluded)

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### CHAPTER XVI

#### SPECIAL INSTRUCTION

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

आचक्षु शृणु वा तात नानाशास्त्राण्यनेकशः ।

तथापि न तव स्वास्थ्यं सर्वविस्मरणादृते ॥ १ ॥

अष्टावक्रः Ashtavakra उवाच said :

तात Child नानाशास्त्राणि diverse scriptures अनेकशः many times आचक्षु speak शृणु hear वा or तथापि still सर्वविस्मरणात् through forgetting all कृते except तव your स्वास्थ्यं Self-abidance न not ( अस्ति is ).



1. My child, you may often speak<sup>1</sup> upon various scriptures or hear them. But you cannot be established<sup>2</sup> in the Self unless you forget<sup>3</sup> all.

[The key-note of the Advaita Vedanta is that the Self alone exists and that all else is false, unreal. The unreal, manifold universe is constantly engaging our mind and hence we cannot have the knowledge of our Self. To be fully established in one's Self, the condition must be reversed.

<sup>1</sup> *Speak etc.*—The *Sruti* has repeatedly said that “the Self is not to be realised by the power of speech, by a vast intellect or by the study of the Vedas.” It is a question of actual experience and not of mere intellectual knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> *Established etc.*—when the self will know the Self and nothing else. In our present condition, we are not in our own self. We are dwelling in the body and mind and the various things of the world. Wherever our self-consciousness is, there we are.

<sup>3</sup> *Forget etc.*—That is, one must be conscious of the Self alone and should not perceive anything else. This is a state which can be attained by destroying Ignorance which is the cause of the manifold universe. A deep sleep state or a similar condition induced artificially, in which all is forgotten, is not meant.]

भोगं कर्म समाधिं वा कुरु विद्म तथापि ते ।

चित्तं निरस्तसर्वाशमत्यर्थं रोचयिष्यति ॥ २ ॥

विद्म O sage भोगं enjoyment कर्म work समाधिं mental concentration वा or कुरु do तथापि yet ते your चित्तं mind निरस्तसर्वाशं with all desires extinguished अत्यर्थं That which is beyond objects रोचयिष्यति will like.

2. O Sage, you may enjoy,<sup>1</sup> or work, or practise mental concentration. But your mind will still yearn<sup>2</sup> for That<sup>3</sup> which is beyond all objects and in<sup>4</sup> which all desires are extinguished.

[<sup>1</sup> *Enjoy etc.*—All these occupations indicate that the Self has not yet been realised.

<sup>2</sup> *Yearn etc.*—The mind cannot have lasting satisfaction in enjoyment etc.

<sup>3</sup> *That etc.*—The Self is meant. It is above all quests of life and mind.

<sup>4</sup> *In etc.*—Therefore, it cannot be realised until all desires have been destroyed. The state of Self-knowledge does not permit the existence of any desire in the mind.]

आयासात् सकलो दुःखी नैनं जानाति कश्चन ।

अनेनैवोपदेशेन धन्यः प्राप्नोति निर्वृतिम् ॥ ३ ॥

सकलः All आयासात् from effort दुःखी miserable कश्चन anyone एनं this न not जानाति knows अनेन this उपदेशेन by instruction एव verily धन्यः blessed one निर्वृतिं emancipation प्राप्नोति attains.

3. All are unhappy because<sup>1</sup> they exert themselves. But none knows this. The blessed one attains emancipation through<sup>2</sup> this very instruction.

[<sup>1</sup> *Because etc.*—All exertion presupposes desire—the desire to attain things not possessed at present. Desire, both satisfied and unsatisfied, is a cause of misery. Satisfied desire brings on at first satiety and afterwards more desires and so the chain is lengthened. The unhappiness of unsatisfied desire is obvious.

<sup>2</sup> *Through etc.*—This instruction is enough ; for if anyone carries it out in life, that is to say, becomes inactive (not outwardly only, but also inwardly by eradicating all desires which are the spring of action), one attains Self-knowledge.]



व्यापारे खिद्यते यस्तु निमेषोन्मेषयोरपि ।

तस्यालस्यधुरीणस्य सुखं नान्यस्य कस्यचित् ॥ ४ ॥

यः Who तु ( expletive ) निमेषोन्मेषयोः of closing and opening the eyelids व्यापारे in the activity अपि even खिद्यते feels pain तस्य of that आलस्यधुरीणस्य of the master idler सुख happiness न not अन्यस्य of other कस्यचित् of anyone ( भवति is ).

4. Happiness belongs to that master idler<sup>1</sup> to whom even<sup>2</sup> the closing and opening of eyelids is an affliction, to none<sup>3</sup> else.

[<sup>1</sup> *Master idler*—The man of Self-realisation, who is completely inactive.

<sup>2</sup> *Even etc.*—These also presuppose some body-consciousness. The man of Self-knowledge feels even that little body-consciousness as a limitation and painful.

<sup>3</sup> *None etc.*—One must be absolutely detached from body and mind to be truly happy.]

इदं कृतमिदं नेति द्वन्द्वैर्मुक्तं यदा मनः ।

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षेषु निरपेक्षं तदा भवेत् ॥ ५ ॥

यदा When मनः mind इदं this कृतं done इदं this न not ( कृतं done ) इति this द्वन्द्वैः by the pairs of opposites मुक्तं freed ( भवति is ) तदा then ( मनः mind ) धर्मार्थकाममोक्षेषु in work of religious merit, prosperity, desire of sensual enjoyment and spiritual emancipation निरपेक्षं indifferent भवेत् becomes.

5. When the mind is freed from such<sup>1</sup> pairs of opposites as 'this is done' and 'this is not done', it becomes indifferent<sup>2</sup> to religious merit, worldly prosperity, desire of sensual enjoyment and liberation.

[<sup>1</sup> *Such etc.*—The idea of duty is meant.

<sup>2</sup> *Indifferent etc.*—One who has gone beyond all idea of duty, does not care for the fourfold objects of life.

The sense of duty arises from desire. Without desire, no duty. The fourfold objects of life presuppose desire without which they are meaningless. Even liberation is not an object of desire with one who has attained true Knowledge.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

We hope to continue *Discourses on Jnana Yoga* by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA two months more. . . . SWAMI VIJAYANANDA who contributes *A Messenger of the Beloved* to the present issue, is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. The little piece was written by him while he was staying at Mayavati and was struck by the strange cry of the bird to which he refers in course of his article. . . . Our article this month, *A Review and a Forecast*, may be looked upon as comple-

mentary to our article last March, *Through the Dark to the New Dawn*. . . We draw the readers' special attention to ROMAIN ROLLAND'S article this month, *Early Hellenic-Christian Mysticism and Its Relation to Hindu Mysticism*. As they will see, the subject is an important and absorbingly interesting one. . . . SHIV CHANDRA DATTA, M.A., B.L., F.R. ECON. S. pursues the subject which he took up last April, in the present article, *Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar on Modern Economic Life*. Mr. Datta dealt in his last two essays, pub-



lished in April and May *Prabuddha Bharata*, with the economic views of Mahatma Gandhi. He now takes up the views of Prof. Sarkar. Prof. Sarkar is a well-known scholar and author, who has travelled almost all over the world, and has both a theoretical and practical knowledge of the economic conditions of most countries. He is one of the few Indian scholars who have propounded any constructive view of what India's economic future should be. Mr. Datta is, therefore, justified in presenting Prof. Sarkar's views to our readers. Prof. Sarkar is just now in the Munich University, Germany, lecturing on Indian Economics. . . . DR. MAHENDRA-NATH SIRCAR, M.A., Ph.D., contributes *The Upanisadic View of Truth* to the present number. Our readers will find him as erudite and profound as ever.

### COMMUNISM AS A RELIGION

We Hindus always believe that religion is a constitutional necessity of men. If we are deprived of our existing religions, new religions will grow to take their place. This fact has been strikingly demonstrated by Russian Communism. Our readers must be aware how Russia has been leading an anti-religious campaign for some time with disastrous results to the Christian Church in Russia. Tremendous protests have been made against this in Europe and America. Both the Roman and the Protestant Churches have raised their voice of indignation against the Bolshevik atrocities. But this does not appear to have produced much effect in Russia. The campaign against religion is an imperative necessity with Communism. "Religion is the opium of the people," said Karl Marx. Marx also said: "Destroy the social world of which religion is the spiritual aroma and you destroy religion. . . . Religion is the flower that covers the chains. Destroy the flowers and the chains will be seen." Communism is convinced of the truth of Marx's words. There are two ideas in them. One is that if the present politico-econo-

mical system is destroyed, religion will also decay. The other is that if religion is directly attacked, it will expose the "chains" hidden by religion and thereby the creation of the new system will be hastened. Russian Communism is earnestly carrying both lines of attack. This is the significance of the Russian struggle.

It cannot be denied that religion has oftentimes allied itself with the powers that be, especially in the West, and especially so in Russia where the Czar was the head of both the State and the Church. Religion has made another mistake. For good or for evil, it has often lent its colour to socio-economic and political institutions, customs, conventions and systems, which naturally cannot be either perfect or permanent. If these were not sanctified by religion, people could easily reform or reject them with the growth of knowledge and experience. But religion made them sacred. And now the evils of these really secular institutions have been transferred to the account of religion, and religion is considered guilty of them. The bitterness of the Bolshevik Russia against religion is mostly due to this. Religion has indeed, in the West, often stood against the progress of science and secular improvement. We in India have been more fortunate in this respect, though it is true that the connection of religion with the socio-economic institutions in India also has not been quite fortunate. In this respect, India may well take warning from the anti-religious propaganda of Communism. There is a section of Indians, orthodox they call themselves, who raise the cry "Religion in danger!" whenever any reform in the social body is proposed. Unless they learn wisdom betimes, religion will really be in danger. The tendency of India is to allow the greatest possible liberalism in religion. Had it existed in Russia, there is great doubt if to-day Communism had taken the attitude it has done against religion. The fundamental thesis of Communism is not wrong: it wants to ensure equal opportunities and rights for all in the



body politic. All must have equally the blessings of life. Though in details we may disagree with the Communists, we also sincerely want that all should have, as far as possible, equal rights and privileges in life. But this is only the outer aspect. Life does not consist in socio-economic, political or intellectual activities. There is another side, in which life finds satisfaction only in realising itself as Eternal Being. Attempts at this realisation have not any necessary quarrel with equality of all in the secular life. To us, therefore, real Communism is not the antithesis of spiritual life. The two can well exist together, and with excellent results.

Unfortunately Communism, as it is operating in Russia to-day, is too headstrong. But perhaps we should not pronounce any judgment as yet. It is an experiment, and rapidly changing. What form it will ultimately take, cannot be estimated now. There is a chance that a new religion may evolve out of Communism itself which is so hostile to religion now. Prof. John Dewey writes in a recent issue of *The Current History*: “. . . Communism has itself become a religion that can tolerate no rival. . . . When I refer to the religious character of Communism I mean that it commands in its adherents the depth and intensity of emotional fervor that is usually associated with religion at its height. Moreover, it claims intellectually to cover the whole scope of life. There is nothing in thought and life that is not affected by its claims; it has, one might say it is, a body of dogmas as fixed and unyielding as that of any church that ever existed. History records many instances of the persecution of one religious faith and its followers by those of another religion when it gained power. What is going on in Soviet Russia is something of the same kind. No one can understand it who thinks of it as a persecution of religion by a strictly political power. To get its real meaning one must align it in thought with the great struggles between rival religions that have marked history.”

This statement may appear surprising to many. But it is nevertheless fundamentally true. Whenever any thought or movement claims our all, absorbs our whole being, it necessarily becomes religious in character, however strange in form. And Communism is doing this. It is true that there are many Communists to whom it is not yet so deep and apparent. But if Communism succeeds in growing strong and deep, it must necessarily evolve an outlook on life and a code of behaviour, which ultimately must have a mystic aspect as any religion. But before that happens, Communism will, of course, have much changed.

A Russian writer has contributed a thoughtful article to the latest number of *The Hibbert Journal*, under the title, *Russian Communism as a New Religion*. In this he has very cleverly pointed out the similarities between established religions and Communism. “In what does the religious nature of Communism consist? First of all in its fundamental prerequisites. The religious method is primarily belief—belief in something unconditional, absolutely correct and true, belief in revealed truth. All religions are marked by this feeling . . . The religious man has no right to doubt.” Communists also implicitly believe in their ideal. We may ask: How can we have a religion without a God? But there are actually such creeds, *eg.*, Confucianism. Communism “originated as a typical moral teaching, as a derivative of the ancient Christian philanthropic idea. Its primary theme . . . has an astonishing resemblance to the old leitmotiv of Christianity—the religion of the oppressed, of the proletariat.” “Communism came into the world as the moral doctrine of the oppressed.” But there is a difference between it and Christianity. “The moral centre of Christianity lies in a humble attitude to the hostile natural process. The kingdom of this world is declared to be the kingdom of evil, and by way of compensation the idea of a heavenly kingdom is introduced, the kingdom of the



oppressed who are defrauded in this life. Christianity is therefore the typical religion of the downtrodden class, which expects consolation but has not the strength to rebel. Communism, born under other conditions, is also the religion of the persecuted, but in this case they rise against their enslavers and will not submit. It is the religion of revolt and its morals are the morals of revolt. Therein consists its resemblance to Islam, its unlikeness to the religions of non-resistance—Christianity and Buddhism. The Mohammedan idea of a holy war is repeated in the idea of a civil war against the oppressing class, which is the moral basis of the religion of the Commune." "Christianity held out to sinners and persecutors the terrors of the Last Judgment; Islam menaced the infidel with a holy war; Communism proclaims a world-revolution, a sort of Last Judgment of the proletariat on the bourgeoisie of the world."

Every creed has its holy books, its saints and its characteristic science, art and culture. Communism also does not lack them. "The 'Holy Scriptures' in the form of writings of Marx and Lenin, the epistles of these or the other 'holy fathers' and 'apostles,' the works and opinions of prominent Communists, become the sources of opinion, exactly reproducing the scholastic period of the religious thought of Christianity, when authority also reigned. Marx was the Aristotle of the movement, and the rôles of the saints are played by Communists of distinguished merit." "The idea of a Communistic science is created—a proletarian science, a proletarian art."

Then there is the ritual. "Already it is created—this ceremonial or ritual. Already processions of Communists march through Moscow; already heretics are cursed in some places and extolled in others. . . . Already emblems and badges have appeared, and the ikons of the fathers of the Communist Church adorn the clubs—those temples of the new religion. Already there are preachers and apostles (agitators), who are sent abroad into all lands to preach the new Gospel

and seek new adepts. . . . Already the deification of the actors of the early period has begun. . . . Lenin is now a legend. . . . Deification gives rise to the idea of eternity. . . . When the founder dies, his death provides a reason for the creation of a Pantheon, or the establishment of an Olympus for the new deities. A tomb or sacrophagus appears, and 'imperishable relics.' The act of worship begins, preceded, imperceptibly to the faithful themselves, by a new belief that their deceased leader or prophet still lives in some other sphere. All this, too, actually exists: we have the mausoleum of Lenin—that Moscow parody of the Egyptian pyramid, that stone of the Kaaba in the Communist Mecca—and in it rest the relics of the founder of the Religion, the first prophet, and, perhaps, deity." "The Communist religion already has its new generation, thinking in terms of Communism, with a logical organisation of thought quite incomprehensible to us, with an unfamiliar view of the reductions of logic; but again, to the historian it is a well-known picture—the early Middle Ages, with its system of compulsory conversion, threats, and repressions by the ruling church; with its careful attention to the education of the young in the spirit of religion."

From what we have quoted above from the Russian writer, it will be clear that Communism has undoubtedly a religious colouring. The similarities discovered may not all be essential, may be mere chance coincidence. But there is no doubt that the attitude of mind of the votaries of Communism is certainly religious. Knowing the atrocities committed in the name of Communism, we may feel shocked to consider its mental outlook as religious. But has there not been also much persecution and bloodshed in the name of recognised religions? The similarities between religions and Communism, however, do not entitle us to call the present-day Communism as actually religious. That would be preposterous. There are various reasons why it cannot be called a religion yet. But the *mental outlook and attitude* has



certainly religious potentialities. There is undoubtedly an attempt in Communism to view life and being from a new angle of vision. This impulse may lead its votaries to a deeper philosophy by and by. Whether it does so or not, what we have to note is that this impulse is not destined to be frittered away without producing deep effect on the mind and life of humanity. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly said that the future lies with the Sudra, the working class everywhere in the world. The Russian Communism is a remarkable portent of its awakening. It is undoubtedly going to remould human society on a different basis. No sane man will deny that there is much that should be done in alleviating the conditions of the masses in every country. The question is what method should be adopted to inaugurate the new era in every country. In India we have always proceeded through evolution and not revolution. Should we not try to give the Sudras their own as promptly and as naturally as possible? That will save India from all the disasters of a revolution.

Whenever there is a strife between classes for material possessions, the spiri-

tual considerations go to the wall. Communism is a menace to all civilized communities, because in its present form and mood, it tends to disrupt the finer things of life, cultural and spiritual. The remedy does not lie in denying the claims of Communism *in toto*, but in admitting its legitimate appeal and harmonising it with our cultural and spiritual heritage. The latter must be purged of their class favoritism, and all the privileges, secular and spiritual, should be given to the masses as soon as possible. Swami Vivekananda was quite alive to this need. Hence his doctrine of the worship of the *Daridra-Nârâyana*. That way only can religion and the modern politico-economical and social tendencies be reconciled. To look upon every one, and especially the poor, as veritable God and thus give them all the rights and opportunities in the spirit of love and worshipful service, is to truly create the religion of Communism. The salvation of Russia lies in following its present outlook to its uttermost limit in the domain of reason and experience. Thus it will not only save its secular Communism, but will invest it with a real spiritual value, and thus make it a blessing to mankind.

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## REVIEW

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: A STUDY.**  
By D. V. Athalye. Swadeshi Publishing Company, Poona City. 280 pp. Price Rs. 4/-.

The book is an appreciative, though critical, estimate of Swami Vivekananda's career and genius. The account is based, as acknowledged by the author, on the writings and the speeches of the Swami and his lives published by the Ramakrishna Order. The life-story has been so narrated as to exhibit the growth of the Swami's personality. The Swami was great, in the author's view, not only as a world-preacher but also as a nation-builder. "The regeneration of India and through her the regeneration of the world,—this was the dream of the Swami and this was what he was sent on earth for."

The author has given a succinct review of the Swami's lectures on the four Yogas,

which are, in his opinion, a compendium of Hinduism at its best. They embody the principles of universal religion. They restate Hinduism so as to suit the modern mind. They show that the sublime truths of the Vedanta are in conformity with the highest ethical ideas as well as scientific and metaphysical conceptions.

The author's account of the Swami as a patriot-saint and national worker is also interesting and illuminative. The Swami changed the whole outlook of national life. He not only gave plans and projects for its reconstruction, but adopted practical measures to carry them out. His understanding of India was far deeper than that of any other nationalist of the age. He was equally conscious of her glories and shortcomings and pointed them out with the insight of a prophet. In the concluding



chapter a brief outline of the reform movement of modern India has been given to estimate the Swami's greatness as a social reformer.

The author has taken exception to a few remarks of the Swami which are of minor importance and have no direct bearing on his teachings. So far as we have seen, the author's difficulties arise from one-sided view of the Swami's position and want of proper knowledge of the subject in hand. Space forbids us to launch into discussion here. The only question that deserves attention is the author's contradiction of the Swami's statement that "the Hindu mind was ever deductive and never synthetic or inductive." But we hold, in spite of the author's arguments to the contrary, that the Swami was fundamentally correct.

The book is, however, an admirable attempt to present to the general reader a short but comprehensive view of the Swami's life and teachings. It is to be regretted that the printing is not good enough and there are many typographical mistakes in the book. The price also appears to be too high.

**THE STORY OF BARDOLI.** *By Mahadev Desai. To be had of the Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad. ix+368 pp. Price Rs. 2-8 as.*

Swami Vivekananda would compare the Indian masses to a sleeping Leviathan and it was his belief that they were destined to do wonders, if only they could be awakened. His prophetic vision was fulfilled in the successful fight that the meek and mild peasants of Bardoli in Bombay offered to the great British Government which left no stone unturned to put them down. The peasants of Bardoli were subjected to ever-increasing taxation till the last enhancement of 30 p.c. rent in the year 1928 proved to be the last straw. When all legitimate steps to redress their grievances failed, they took to Satyagraha. The peasants refused to pay the enhanced rent and got ready to mutely suffer all consequences for that. At first there were doubt and diffidence whether such a step on the part of the peasants was not too bold and the Government also thought that the movement would soon fizzle out. But it gradually gathered strength: the timid became bold, the vacillating became determined, the weak became hopeful of success in their righteous cause. After about six months the Government agreed to redress their grievances.

The condition of the Bardoli peasants was

no better than that of their brethren in any other part of India. They were timid and fearful, divided by castes and many conflicting interests,—there were also to be found some black sheep amongst them. But what is the reason that they could show such a bold and united front? It is that when appeal is made to the religious and moral sentiment of the Indians, they at once start up. The Bardoli peasants were convinced that theirs was a righteous cause and as such God was with them. And they remained perfectly non-violent, for the simple peasants could easily understand that evil cannot be conquered by evil, hatred cannot be cured by the return of hatred and they resisted the indignation of the powers that be with humble meekness.

The success of the movement was no less due to the capable leadership of the 'Peasants' Sardar' as S. J. Vallabhbhai Patel was lovingly called. Now, what was the secret that lay behind the power of Mr. Patel? It was nothing but his burning love for the peasants and an overmastering passion to help them out of their woes.

India has got many lessons to learn from the Satyagraha of Bardoli, and those who want to lead the country can ill afford not to study it closely. The thrilling story of the Satyagraha and as also other incidental details are given in the present volume in a fascinating style.

**THE RELIGION OF BURMA.** *By Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya. The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. ix 438 pp. Price Cloth Rs. 3-4, Board Rs. 2-12 as.*

It is Rhys Davids and the author of *The Light of Asia* that have made Buddhism popular in the West. Among other Westerners who have devoted their whole attention to the spread of Buddhism in the West, the name of the present author stands prominent. Born of English parents, Mr. Allan Bennett, afterwards known as Ananda Maitriya, was attracted to Buddhism early in life and embraced the faith at about his eighteenth year. Afterwards he came to the East, diligently studied Pali, became a scholar in Buddhist scriptures, and renouncing the world entered the Order as a Bhikkhu in Burma, where he passed some valuable years of his life. As such Ananda Maitriya is a very fit person to write about Buddhism as also the Religion of Burma.

According to him, the Buddhism as pre-



vailing in Burma, Ceylon and Siam, should not be classified as belonging to the Hinayan or the Southern School of Buddhism, as "the terms 'Northern' and 'Southern' as applied to the different types of Buddhism are misleading. . . ." In his opinion "The native, and correct designation of the pure form of Buddhism now prevalent in Burma, Ceylon and Siam is *Theravada*, 'The Tradition of the Elders' or as we might justly render it, the Traditional, Original, or Orthodox School." In the present volume the author gives not only the religious condition of

Burma but also the main principles of Buddhism *as understood by him*. A genuine lover of Buddhism, Ananda Maitriya brings in the vision of an idealist in observing things and manners, and finds more beauty in whatever he sees than will meet a passing observer. But as he also made a determined attempt to *live the life*, here and there in his writings there is a practical touch, which is compelling and will give the book a value all its own. The involved style of the author is unfortunately a little setback in sustaining the reader's interest in the book.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SWAMI VISHWANANDA IN KARACHI

A correspondent writes from Karachi:

Swami Vishwanandaji, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay Branch, paid a visit to this city during last May. The Swamiji came at the invitation of an ardent admirer of the Mission. This is perhaps the first time after a lapse of nearly a quarter of a century that a highly cultured monk of the Ramakrishna Mission blessed this part of India with his visit, and as was to be expected, people of all castes and communities of this cosmopolitan city took advantage of his presence to listen to the eternal and inspiring message of Hinduism from one of its enlightened exponents.

Swamiji delivered a series of 9 lectures on the various phases of Hinduism and concluded his programme by a discourse on "Universal Religion," holding forth the eternal and universal character of the Sanatana Dharma. This theme may be regarded as a silken thread linking up the whole series and formed a fitting end to the lecturing tour.

The audience at these lectures was really encouraging, looking to the fact that new ground had to be broken by the Mission in Karachi. Now that a contact has been established, it is hoped that Swami Vishwanandaji and other monks of the Ramakrishna Order will visit this city more often and cater for the spiritual welfare of the Hindus here.

### R. K. ASHRAMA, PATNA

The report of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bankipur, Patna, for the period from January 1926, to March 1929, is a record of many useful activities. The following are

some of them: (1) 750 Scriptural classes were held in four different parts of the City. (2) Musical classes were held in the Ashrama. (3) Private interviews were given by the Swamis to outsiders. (4) The Ashrama conducted a magazine, "The Morning Star," in English and also a Bookstall. (5) Lecture tours were undertaken by the Sannyasins. (6) The Vivekananda Boys' Association was formed to educate students. (7) The Turiyananda Library issued 1,000 books during this period. (8) 20 students were taught in the Vivekananda Night School, and (9) The Ramakrishna Students' Home, a college students' hostel run on the lines of a Brahmacharya Ashrama, did much service to its inmates.

For the consolidation and immediate expansion of its works the Ashrama requires a permanent residence of its own on a suitable site, at least two bighas in area, which may accommodate a monastery, a lecture hall, a house for students, a charitable dispensary, a library and a playground and a gymnasium for boys. The land and buildings will cost, it is estimated, at least Rs. 40,000/- and the upkeep of the Ashrama another equal sum. We earnestly appeal to the generous public and to all lovers of humanity to place this highly useful institution on a permanent basis by donating liberally. All help may be sent to *Swami Avyaktananda, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bankipur, Patna*.

### R. K. MISSION SEVA SAMITI, HABIGANJ, ASSAM

The annual report for the years 1928 and 1929 of the R. K. Mission Seva Samiti at Habiganj, Sylhet, was duly to hand. The Samiti was established some nine years back and has been doing good work. In addition



to holding regular daily religious classes at the Ashrama where two monastic members live, keeping a library and reading room open for the public, and celebrating birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the Samiti conducts four Night Schools in some Depressed Class villages of the sub-division, where more than a hundred boys and girls are given literary education. In addition, it has opened two charitable dispensaries in two villages and has one in its Ashrama. It conducts a Shoe Factory in a cobblers' village for the benefit of its inhabitants, and has established a Co-operative Society there in order to free them from the clutches of money-lenders. Last year the Samiti did excellent service during the Assam floods. The Samiti is also of great service to the town and the outlying villages,—it helps variously the needy and the poor by gifts in kind or cash, by nursing the sick and cremating the dead. And it is exerting a healthy influence on the civic life of the town, not to speak of its spiritual benefit.

The Samiti has no house of its own and no permanent funds, for both of which it appeals to the generous public. Work can be greatly expanded if funds are provided. All help may be sent to *Secretary, R. K. Mission Seva Samiti, Habiganj, Sylhet, Assam.*

#### VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, JAMSHEDPUR

The report for the year 1928 is to hand. On account of the labour troubles during the year under review, the membership decreased from 510 in 1927 to 416 in 1928. The various activities of the Society, religious, educational, etc., were continued as usual. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other prophets were duly celebrated. The Society conducted 4 free schools, teaching 120 students, and 13 boys resided in the Society's Students' Home, which is also an orphanage. The number of

resident workers in the Workers' Home was 11. Philanthropic works of various kinds were undertaken during the year under review. Nursing the sick, helping the poor and the needy and cremating the dead are the special features of the work of the Society. Total receipts, including previous year's balance, were Rs. 4,300-8-1 and the expenditure was Rs. 3,394-9-0. The present needs of the institution are a hall and a library. The Society appeals to the public for funds to enable it to take up this important work without delay. We hope the generous public will help the Society. All remittances may be sent to the Secretary.

#### CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, SHYAMALA TAL

The fifteenth annual report for the year 1929 of the above institution is to hand. The report shows the good progress made by the dispensary during the year. The dispensary is located in an out of the way place in the Himalayas. The service done by such a charitable dispensary to the hill people who go almost without medical treatment, deserves public support and encouragement. During the year under review the number of persons treated was 1,493, of which 13 were admitted in the Indoor Hospital. In order to cope with the increasing number of patients, the urgent necessity of a separate building was keenly felt. In response to the appeals made the previous year for building fund, the sum of Rs. 900/- was received. The authorities have begun the construction of a two-storied house on the plot of land bought for the purpose. The masonry work and the roofing have already consumed Rs. 1,723-7-9. The work is yet to be completed. A sum of Rs. 1,500/- is still required. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by *Swami Virajananda, Secretary, Shyamala Tal Charitable Dispensary, C/o The Vivekananda Ashrama, Shyamala Tal, Deori P.O., Via Champawat, Dt. Almora, U.P.*