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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## THE MASTER SPEAKS

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN THE BRAHMO SAMAJ OF SINTHI AND BRAHMO DEVOTEES

Sri Ramakrishna has come to Beni Pal's garden at Sinthi. To-day is the biannual celebration of the Sinthi Brahma Samaj. Afternoon of April 22, 1883. Many devotees have come, who are sitting in the southern, covered verandah. The Brahma minister, Becharam, will conduct the evening service. The devotees are asking the Master questions.

*A Brahma devotee* : Sir, what is the means of realizing God ?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : The means is devotion, love of God. And prayer too.

*The devotee* : Devotion or prayer ?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : Devotion first, prayer, next.

“Call on Her as She should be called (i.e. with all the warmth of your heart),

and see if She can remain indifferent to it”—the Master sings this song. He continues : And the Lord's name and glory should always be on one's lips—and constant prayer too. The old brass-pot should be carefully scrubbed and cleansed every day. Cleansing but once won't do. Discrimination, dispassion, the thought that the world is transitory—all these things must remain ever bright in one's mind.

### BRAHMO DEVOTEE AND RENUNCIATION— DESIRELESS WORK IN WORLDLY LIFE

*The Brahma devotee* : Is it good to renounce the world ?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : It is not for all. Renunciation of the world is not for those who have not done with worldly enjoyments. One dram of liquor does not make one drunk.

*The devotee* : They will then lead a family life?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : Yes, they will try to do work there without caring for the result. They should open the cakes of a jack-fruit after greasing their hands properly, so that the sticky substance may not spoil their hands. They must work like the maid-servants of the rich people; they do all the works of their masters, but their minds are in their own houses. This is what is called the desireless work, *i.e.* work performed without attachment thereto. This is also known as the 'mental renunciation.' You are to renounce mentally. The monks are to renounce both internally and externally.

THE BRAHMO DEVOTEE AND THE END OF ENJOYMENT—THE SIGNS OF RIGHTEOUS WOMEN—WHEN DISPASSION COMES

*The devotee* : What is meant by the end of enjoyments?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : Enjoyments refer to those of sex and wealth. Surrounded by things of attraction, it is difficult to keep the mind undisturbed. Wealth, fame, sense-pleasures—one must once have a taste of these. Without this there can be no cessation of hankerings after enjoyment, and, therefore, yearning for God does not come.

*The Devotee* : Are we or womenfolk the source of evil?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : There are both righteous women and unrighteous ones. Righteous women lead men Godwards, and the unrighteous ones make them forget God and drown them in the ocean of worldliness.

Through His illusory Maya the universe has come into being. Within this Maya there are both righteous and unrighteous forces. If you hold to the righteous forces, they will lead you to the company of the holy, to knowledge,

devotion, love, dispassion, etc. The unrighteous forces are the senses and sense-objects, the combinations of the five elements and their contact with our sense-organs—all the objects of enjoyment, *viz.* those of sight, taste, smell, touch and sound. These enjoyments make you forget God.

*The devotee* : If Avidya or the sum total of unrighteous forces makes us ignorant, takes us away from God, why has He created It?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : It is His Divine Play, His Lila. Without darkness the glory of light cannot be realized, without misery happiness cannot be appreciated. Without the notion of the evil there is no notion of the good.

Again, it is because of the peel that the mango grows and ripens; when it is ripe you peel it off. It is because of this peel of Maya that you gradually attain the highest knowledge of Brahman. The Vidya-Maya and the Avidya-Maya (*i.e.* the righteous and unrighteous forces of Maya) are the peels of the mango; both are necessary.

*The devotee* : Well, sir, the worship of God with forms and in images made of earth<sup>1</sup>—is it good?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : You do not recognize God with forms; that is good. With you it is not forms but the ideas behind that matter. You may not accept Radha and Krishna, but just learn Radha's attraction for Krishna, this love of God. How earnestly do these worshippers of God in forms of Kali, Durga, etc. love Him, and how repeatedly do they call upon Him! Just learn this wonderful love from them; it does not matter if you do not accept the images.

*The devotee* : How does dispassion

<sup>1</sup> Keshab, founder of one of the Brahma Samajes, said about it: It is not the worship of an earthen image but of a form of pure consciousness represented as such,



come? and why does it not come to all?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : Unless the desire for enjoyment is spent out, dispassion does not come. You can keep a little child engaged with food and dolls for some time; but when it has finished with them, it says, "I'll go to mamma." Then if you do not take it to its mother, it will throw away the dolls and begin crying for the mother.

THE ABSOLUTE, THE REAL SPIRITUAL  
GUIDE—AFTER GOD-REALIZATION  
RITUALISM CEASES

The Brahmōs do not recognize the necessity of spiritual guides. So the devotee opens the topic.

*The devotee* : Sir, do you hold that without the help of spiritual guides there can be no God-realization?

*Sri Ramakrishna* : The Absolute (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) alone is the real guide. If you see one man rousing spirituality in another, know it for certain that it is the Absolute that is doing so in the form of the man. The guide is, as it were, an expert companion; he leads him taking by the hand. When God is realized the idea of the master and the disciple goes. The proverb says, "That's a rather difficult situation where the two do not meet—the master and the disciple." So Janaka said to Sukadeva (when the latter went for Divine Wisdom to him), "If you want to have the Knowledge of Brahman, then pay my honorarium first. The reason is, when the knowledge of Brahman dawns, all notions of duality such as master and disciple will vanish. So long as God is not realized, the relationship between the master and the disciple subsists.

Gradually evening has set in. Some Brahmō devotees are saying to the

Master, "Now, perhaps, you will say your evening prayer?"

*Sri Ramakrishna* : No, not so. In the beginning, these things must be performed; afterwards the ritualistic paraphernalia are unnecessary.

II

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE BRAHMO  
MINISTER BECHARAM ON VEDANTA AND  
THE TRUTH OF BRAHMAN

After dusk Becharam conducted the evening service of the Adi Brahmō Samaj from the pulpit. It was interluded with devotional music and readings from the Upanishads. Service finished, he came down and engaged himself in a conversation with Sri Ramakrishna.

*Sri Ramakrishna* : With or without forms—both are true of God. What do you say?

GOD WITH AND WITHOUT FORMS—  
FORMS OF PURE CONSCIOUSNESS—  
AND THE DEVOTEE

*The minister* : God without form is like the electric current; we cannot see it but feel it.

*Sri Ramakrishna* : Yes, both are true—God with forms and without forms. Do you know what it is likened to—to say that God is only without forms? In a Rasunchauki (a kind of simple, Indian orchestra) there are two pipers; one of them maintains the main note and do nothing more, though there are seven holes in his pipe. But mark, the other piper plays so many tunes. Those who believe in God with forms are like the second piper. They enjoy God in many ways by establishing various relationships with Him such as those between two calm and quiet persons, between a master and a servant, between two friends, between parents

and children and between the lover and the beloved.

The aim is, anyhow to get at the ocean of Immortal Bliss<sup>2</sup>—whether by singing praise or by being pushed into it, the result is the same. In both cases one will become immortal.

For the Brahmos the simile of water and snow is very apt. The Absolute is, as it were, an infinite ocean. Its waters, in colder regions, are frozen into masses of snow. Devotion is, as it were, the cold which makes the ocean of the Absolute freeze and take shapes for the sake of devotees. The Rishis of old saw those transcendental forms of pure consciousness which senses cannot grasp; they even talked with them. Those forms can be seen (not in these physical bodies but)

<sup>2</sup> Brahman alone is this Immortality, which is in front and at the back, to the right and to the left, above and below—which is spread on all sides . . . .—*Mundaka Upanishad*, II. ii. 11.

through bodies formed of divine love, which are known as Divine Bodies.<sup>3</sup>

Again, it is written, Brahman is beyond mind and speech. In the heat of the sun of Knowledge the masses of snow, *i.e.* forms of God melt away. When the knowledge of Brahman is gained and the Samadhi without the least trace of duality is attained, there remains the limitless, formless Brahman, beyond mind and speech.

The true nature of Brahman cannot be expressed in words; there one becomes silent. Who can express Infinity in words? However high a bird might rise, it finds higher regions above it. What do you say?

*The minister*: Yes, sir, Vedanta says so.

<sup>3</sup> Led by the Lord I got the holy divine body (*i.e.* body that makes one worthy of Divine association) and the body made up of the five elements dropped off, its Karma having been worked out.—*Srimad-Bhagavatam*, I. vi. 29.

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## TO TAKE A PRACTICAL POINT OF VIEW

BY THE EDITOR

### I

An experienced teacher in giving advice to his disciples takes care to place before them not what are the highest principles of life but what is best for them according to the latter's capacity. For, by placing before the disciples an ideal which is beyond their capability to reach, the teacher will increase their discontent and despair, but give them no real help. So the teacher comes down to the plane of the disciples, takes account of their possibilities and gives them a lift from the position they are

in. And as the disciples gain in strength and grow in possibilities, a harder task and a higher ideal is put before them till, this way, they realize the highest.

Many lives have been made miserable and much disappointment has been caused, because the highest ideal was at once put before the disciples. The disciples after some attempts to reach the ideal all of a sudden, were only overwhelmed by the enormity of the task before them, and gave up the hope altogether for any self-improvement. Not only that. As a reaction they lived a worse life than what they had



done before any thought of religious quest came to their minds. And in religious life there is nothing so disastrous as to have a reaction of spirit.

As a safeguard against this we find that insistence is given by Hinduism on *अधिकार* (one's capacity) and *स्वधर्म* (one's real nature). Man must undertake a task according to his capacity, and he must be always true to himself. The man who puts his hands to a work without taking account of his capacity is decried in the Gita as a Tamasik worker. And the man who is false to himself can never expect to have any progress in any sphere of work, much in religious life. One indispensable requirement for building up religious life is the transparent sincerity. Without having that one will try only to raise a castle on the foundation of quick-sands.

From this standpoint it is perhaps justifiable that the highest truth should not be told to one and all. Certain minimum qualifications are required for admission into any institution; why not apply the same principle in the religious field also? There has been much controversy as to whether the Vedantic idea that only Brahman is true and the world is false—has not done a great harm to the Indian national life. But that sublime truth was meant only for those who had satisfied four difficult tests, and not for the masses. Supposing it contained germs of danger to national life, the fault was not with the truth but the indiscriminate way in which it was preached. Similar is the case with the controversy whether Sannyasa or work is better. If one thinks that Sannyasa is not an indispensable necessity for the realization of one's religious object, one need not and should not take to Sannyasa. If one genuinely feels that works and worldly duties are not conducive to one's spiritual growth, one

need not keep oneself bound to work. It is a question of temperament and outlook. Both classes of persons mentioned above are right if they are sincere and true to themselves.

We find that there is much discussion in the later commentaries on Vedanta as to whether work alone leads to Freedom. In the highest state, when man finds himself identified with the Absolute, it is true, there is no possibility of work. But what about those who have not realized the highest? Even among those who have realized the Self, there are some who come down to the lower plane, moved by the common sufferings of humanity, and work for it. Ordinary persons who talk of giving up work have their eyes on the highest state, though they have not realized that condition. On realizing the Absolute man finds that any work is impossible for him. Even worship, meditation, etc. are considered as works, and these too fall off in the case of men who have realized the Self. For, who will worship whom, who will meditate on whom, when the worshipper and the worshipped become one and there remains no trace of distinction between the meditator and the object of meditation? Those who have not realized that condition or do not like to remain in that condition must have to work in some form or other.

## II

It is commonly supposed that those who want spiritual progress must give up all works, and take to a life in which there is no outward activity. So when persons get a longing for religious life, they usually think that all works are a source of bondage to them. They think that the best course for them should be to spend their whole time in the contemplation of God. As



they find that circumstances are against the realization of that dream, they spend their energies, which ought to have been better utilized, in fretting over their lot. But the law of nature is that a man finds himself in the circumstances which are exactly suitable for his growth—however hard they may seem to be for the time being. The very fact that a man cannot transcend the limits of some circumstances proves that they are needed for his progress and development. As soon as he will outgrow them, he will find himself in a changed condition. So it is only the idlers who complain that circumstances are not in their favour and sigh for a condition which is not theirs.

In spiritual life progress is determined not by the amount of labour, but by the degree of earnestness one has put into one's work. By constantly fighting with unfavourable circumstances one will find that all of a sudden they have changed for him, and he is in a condition which is necessary for the next stage of development. If a man has attained a mental condition when he can spend his whole time in abstract thoughts, external works will automatically fall away for him and he will not have to spend any energy on them. But if he gives up all works before his time, he will make his whole life barren and, as such, miserable.

Experiences have shown that many persons who had thought that theirs was the life of quietude, had not to wait long to find out their mistake. As such, it is better that a man does not believe himself too easily when the thought occurs to him that work is a hindrance to his spiritual progress. One easily mistakes Tamas to be Sattva and ignores the fact that really Sattvik persons are very rare. Very often it will be found that those who complain of works as being obstacles in their path, do so be-

cause of a fear to face the difficulty which they involve. Such renunciation of work is clearly classed as Tamasik by Sri Krishna in the Gita. A coward who gives up work simply because of the difficulty which it entails will have no better luck if he keeps himself isolated. He will find himself in greater difficulties. The man who greatly fears, will always find himself surrounded by objects of fear.

### III

The real problem is how to turn work actually into meditation. Man should not and cannot give up work easily, but the works usually done by men do not conduce to spiritual growth. They are rather a source of bondage than of liberation. Many persons, working because of their desires and attachment, outwardly profess that they are doing Karma-Yoga as taught in the Gita. If Karma-Yoga were so easy to practise, the condition of the world would have changed. No less harm has been done by those who talk glibly of Karma-Yoga than by those who prematurely give up work. Sincerity is the touchstone of life, and all insincerity acts like a corrosive substance on it. Ordinarily, people talk of Karma-Yoga, but live a life of self-aggrandisement—a life devoted to the pursuit of sense-pleasures or of name and fame. They think that Karma-Yoga can be practised without any effort or struggle or any serious thought behind it. By their outward profession of Karma-Yoga, they try to hoodwink the world, but do the greatest harm to themselves. Those who fail and struggle in spiritual life have some chance, but those who fail and become consciously blind to their weakness have absolutely no chance of recovery.

If God pervades all, God can be worshipped as much in temples, mosques



and churches as by serving His created beings. It is only an orthodox belief that God can be worshipped merely through rituals. What transforms rituals into worship? It is the thought behind them. Certain forms and rituals help one to think easily of God. Here lies their value. The same thing might be said of the service of humanity. The highest aim of religious practices is to realize God and to realize Him in His all-pervasiveness. If that be so, an aspirant may begin by worshipping God in His created beings. Thereby he will find a more living touch of God. It is only tradition which has given so much sanctity to rites and ceremonies. But exactly the same turn can be given to 'service.' People ordinarily think that the service of humanity is undertaken only from humanitarian motive. But the service can be transformed into actual worship if the above method is followed.

Here we must take note of the fact that mere social service is not religion. People have got a very hazy notion about religion, and they usually mix it up with humanitarian and social works. Social services in their own way are good. They mitigate the misery of the suffering people and improve the condition of society. They create an atmosphere of good-will and fellow-feeling, which conduce to the peace and happiness of society. And those who undertake them, get their heart expanded and selfishness undermined or destroyed. But they cannot be equal to religious practices,—direct methods of realizing God—unless that particular motive is behind them and definite methods are followed to that end. A man may undertake social works from attachment; or from the hankering after name and fame, or from a feeling of spontaneous love for others; he may also do them in order to find out the

Divinity which is behind every individual. Thus motive means a great deal in the pursuit of religion.

In the future religions of the world service of humanity will play a great part. Rites and rituals are receiving less and less attention; their utility is being questioned by many, and they often cannot stand a scientific enquiry. But nobody will doubt the value of service as a means of spiritual progress. There are many persons who do not care for orthodox religion or credal God, but they bow down their head in adoration of those who devote their life to the service of others. They do not care for even prophets and saints; but they at once respond to the call of service. Is it the unconscious sense of religion which prompts them to do that?

Even individual works can be turned into worship if they are done in a right spirit. If flowers can be offered to the feet of an image thinking that the action will please God, why could not one's works, demanded by one's station of life, be offered in the same spirit? The life of a devotee from sunrise to sunset is one continuous offering to the feet of his Beloved. He does everything for the sake of the Lord. Thus even his selfish actions are transformed, and they assume a spiritual colour. The devotee who follows this method has not to make any conscious effort to restrict or regulate his actions. He simply associates all his actions with the name of God, and thus gradually comes to a stage when it becomes impossible for him to do anything wrong or evil. Thus without undergoing any hard and austere penance he may attain to final illumination. It is, therefore, said that of all the paths in religious life, the path of devotion is the easiest to follow. It requires only sincerity. The devotee is to depend sincerely on God, and God will take care of him.



## IV

But the path of devotion is not the only path in religious life. Some persons are temperamentally unfit to follow the path of devotion. As for instance, one who is too much of philosophical and critical temperament may not like all the play of emotion of a devotee. To him all the feelings aroused by the name of God in the heart of a devotee are foolish sentimentalism. He believes that there is only one Ultimate Reality and everything else is false. Even to such a man, work is not without its utility. If he thinks that the whole life is a bondage, because he cannot attune his thoughts always to the Highest, he must make use of his bondage to go out of it. According to his conception the world is a play of Maya and all works are meaningless, but in spite of all his intellectual beliefs he cannot help doing works. Because he is in the domain of Maya, he must work. So it is better to work in such a spirit that he may go beyond the pale of Maya.

Man finds himself separated from the Ultimate Reality, because of the existence of desires in him. Man's life is moved by desires and desire is the spring of all his actions. But even knowing this intellectually, he cannot all at once free his mind from desire, and so he cannot be free from actions. So he should better do all his actions with a conscious idea that though as a matter of fact his real nature is above the reach of actions and all that, he works, simply moved by desires, and he is separate from them. By constantly working this way, he will be able more and more easily to identify himself with the Absolute, till at last Knowledge will dawn on him. When there is a flood-tide in a river, it overflows its banks and covers a vast area with water; at the time of ebb-tide it withdraws the

waters gradually and it is some time before the river attains its normal condition. In the same way due to the existence of desire man finds his thoughts scattered in all directions,—and every thought is a spur to him to action—but it is only by regulating his will and thoughts that he can realize the Self. The world is an illusion. But for whom?—Only for him who has realized the Absolute. For the rest it is a hard reality and only through severe struggles the illusion can be broken. Thus no man is exempt from actions—except the blessed few who have known the Absolute.

It may be said that a Jnani should constantly discriminate between the real and the unreal and need not undertake actions. But he will not have to take up actions deliberately, his inherent tendencies will lead him to actions. And so it is better that he should work not like drum-driven cattle, but like a master, giving his actions a right turn. Actions undertaken by a Jnani will not be works in the ordinary sense of the term but a method of discrimination between the true and the false. It is a wrong idea that one can pursue the path of discrimination only when living away from human society. By doing so, one will only increase the inner struggle in the hope of escaping from external actions. And it is better for one to meet the enemies in an open fight rather than hide oneself in bushes and constantly fear that enemies are lurking everywhere.

Here we must not ignore the value of thought behind actions. In order to act properly, one must think rightly beforehand. In order that one may keep up the balance when in the whirlpool of action, one must start with an equi-poised condition of mind brought on by hard thinking. Here lies the utility of meditation in religious life. While



out in the world one will find oneself liable to be led astray constantly, but only if one is forearmed with invincible thoughts and ideas to one's aim and goal, one will be safe. What is helm to a boat, rudder to a ship, meditation, or proper manœuvering of thoughts, is to a man of religion.

## V

The man who is not a devotee or is not tormented by philosophical thoughts, will naturally not think of giving up actions. But he also requires to regulate his actions, in order that the best result may be achieved. To such a type is prescribed work for work's sake—work without any attachment to the result thereof. One cannot be sure of the result of work; even the best-planned works sometimes end in miserable failures. The man who has his whole attention fixed on the result will not have much surplus energy left for actual actions, and his attempts are bound to end in failures. But the result will take care of itself for the man who takes care of the means and does not fritter away his energy in unnecessary thoughts about the end. Ordinarily, much of one's energy is lost when one constantly thinks what the result will be. But the man who takes care only of the means saves much of his energy, and he does not find it difficult to make a second effort if at all the first effort fails.

The modern world admires the work which attracts notice by its outward feverish excitement. But the calm and the silent really work much better than those who are restless in the name of speed and efficiency. The best way of attaining calmness is to forget all ideas about the result and to think only of the means. By working this way a man will gradually get rid of personal

likes and dislikes, desires and ambitions—he will find that he is separate from works. This method of work will be, to him, a training in unattachment. And the man who is completely unattached is not far from realizing the Truth.

It may be asked whether one following the principle of non-attachment as to the result of action will not lack in initiative and be unable to put forth sufficient struggle in life. This misgiving is baseless. Karma-Yoga is not a concession to the idle habits of a man, but is a method of action so that the best out of life may be got. There will be idlers and lazy men in every society, and they will always try to find out justification for their idleness. They may try to take shelter under the theory of Karma-Yoga, but their very life will betray their inner weakness. Karma-Yoga will give a man tremendous power of action. A Karma-Yogi will work for the joy of it; as such, he will be in a better position to husband the resources necessary for success.

## VI

Character is the greatest test of religious life, and work gives one an opportunity to know and evaluate one's character. A man living alone may have the consciousness and also the reputation of possessing many virtues, but his real nature will come out when he is in the vortex of action. Many good persons accustomed to live in isolation behave in a way which believes their past life, when they have to work with others. By living alone perhaps, they develop gross selfishness or egotism which escapes their notice because they have not been tried. This does not become the case with those who want to build up their character through works. While one is engaged in works, one's weaknesses come out and are seen at every moment and thus one

knows clearly where one stands. By this way a man feels the necessity of correcting himself, whereas a man living away from society develops a false pride that he is better than many in infinite respects. And there is no greater obstacle to one's progress than a false sense of pride. The ideal man is he who remains the same while in or away from society. Because he has no selfishness, he does not run the risk of being exposed as selfish when he is placed in a society. Because he has no egotism at all, he does not prove himself to be self-conscious when he comes into conflict with others in any way; as a matter of fact he can have no conflict with others. To realize that position it is better that one passes through a stage of hard work. For, when one's character is built up—selfishness is destroyed and egotism is killed—, one can more easily progress

in spiritual life. Thus work has a great utility, to judge from many standpoints.

And a person, acquiring a perfect balance of mind through work, can think of giving up work and of following some other way, if need be, for further spiritual progress. Till then he need not bother his head in idle discussions as to whether work or the renunciation of work is better. What does it matter to him if the renunciation of work marks a very high stage of spiritual development, when his present condition of mind demands that he should work? He should not give up the duties of the station of his life and prove false to himself. Indeed "Better is one's own Dharma, (though) imperfect, than the Dharma of another well-performed. Better is death in one's own Dharma: the Dharma of another is fraught with fear."

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## THE HINDU CONCEPTION OF DEVA AND ASURA

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEE, M.A.

### RELATIVITY OF OUR IDEAS ABOUT REALITY

In my previous article, *What do Gods signify*,\* I have briefly indicated how, in course of its cultural evolution, the ancient Hindu mind discovered a real world of Powers at the foundation of the world of sensible phenomena, and a still more real world of Gods as the origin of the world of Powers. In each lower plane of experience and thought, the realities of the higher planes appear to be nothing but theories or hypotheses, having only *conceptual*, and not *real*, existence. But as with the development of his rational nature man rises

to higher and higher planes of experience, learns to look upon the phenomena of experience from more and more comprehensive points of view, and acquires a deeper insight into the inner significance of the persistent intellectual, moral, aesthetic and spiritual demands which refuse to be permanently satisfied with the resources of the lower planes, he comes in closer and closer touch with the realities of those higher planes and becomes more and more convinced of their true objective existence. When the mind is thus elevated to the higher and higher planes of realization and reflection, its outlook is sometimes so radically changed that the objects of immediate knowledge and interest of the

\**Prabuddha Bharata*, April, 1934.



comparatively lower planes appear to it relatively unreal or only apparently real. In this way to the truly progressing human mind the conception about reality goes on undergoing modification after modification, till the highest plane of perfect spiritual experience is attained. Again, if after occasionally experiencing some truths of the higher planes, the human mind is somehow degraded to the lower planes and the experiences of these lower planes dominate over its outlook and judgment, the experiences of the higher planes are apt to be regarded as no more real than dreams or hallucinations or imaginations. Our ideas about objective reality are thus always relative,—relative to the particular planes of experience in which we habitually dwell at particular stages of the evolution of our rational nature.

#### LIMITATIONS OF SENSE-RIDDEN THOUGHT

As men in general habitually live and move in the physical or sensuous plane of experience and as the interests of this plane are predominant in most of them, the sensible phenomena—the phenomena which force themselves upon their senses and affect their physical existence—appear most fundamentally real to them and occupy the most central position in their speculation and action. They do not dive deep into the implications of their inherent demand for adequate explanation of those phenomena of direct experience and the apparently insatiable character of their desires and hankerings. To them the realities to which the phenomena of sensuous experience must be referred for the purpose of furnishing adequate grounds for their existence and nature appear to be less real than these phenomena,—the grounds appear to be less real and less important than the consequents which originate from them.

Their thought is so much sense-ridden that it overlooks the inconsistency of this position.

The ordinary mind cannot conceive of *Power* except as a property of some *physical body*, though for the purpose of explaining the origin, nature, and movement of a physical body, *Power* must be recognized as having *priority of existence* and the body must be regarded as the sensuous manifestation of *Power*. The mind in this sensuous plane finds insurmountable difficulty in conceiving of *Will* and *Self-consciousness* except as existing in a living human organism, though reason in course of its speculative advancement for satisfying the demand for the causal explanation of phenomena is led to the idea of self-conscious *Will* as the ultimate ground of *Power* and hence of all sensuous existences. It requires systematic courses of self-discipline and meditation to get rid of these limitations of thought, to free *reason* from the domination of *sense*, to develop the power of distinctly conceiving supersensuous realities, and to form the habit of looking upon phenomena of the lower planes from the point of view of the truths of the higher planes.

#### ASCENT TO HIGHER PLANES THROUGH SELF-DISCIPLINE

Such systematic self-discipline and meditation seem to have been the plan of life of the members of the higher grades of the early Hindu society. This enabled them to assimilate the results of their scientific investigation and philosophical speculation into real parts of their cultural and practical life. Such assimilation rendered it possible for them to bring the supersensuous realities down to the doors of the sense-ridden intellect and heart of all classes of men in the society. By systematic self-



discipline, indomitable patience and perseverance, methodical observation and introspection, fearless and unbiased criticism of and reflection upon all kinds of experience, the best members of the early Hindu society ascended to higher and higher planes of experience and thought, actually realized the supersensuous truths, upon which the truths of the lower planes depended for their existence and nature, and regulated the life of the society in tune with those higher orders of realities.

#### DISCOVERY OF GODS AS HIGHER REALITIES

In my previous article, referred to above, I have attempted to point out how to satisfy the inherent demand of reason for the adequate explanation of the phenomena of experience, the ancient Hindu mind arrived at the conception of Powers as the grounds of, and hence more real than, the sensible phenomena, and the conception of a plurality of Gods or self-conscious and self-determining Spiritual Agencies, whose relatively free wills originated and determined the characteristics of those powers and the phenomena into which they manifested themselves. These Gods and their operations were not mere matters of theory to them. They established living relationships with these supersensuous Spiritual Beings, acted and reacted upon them as ordinary men act and react upon physical forces of the phenomenal world, and determined the rights, duties and obligations of the members of the society in accordance with their relations with these spiritual Governing Powers of the universe. The human society in relation to the world of Nature thus came to be, to the advanced Hindu mind, a society of rational beings in living rela-

tion to a society of a superior order of rational Beings.

In the previous article I have referred principally to the *natural* and *dynamic* aspects of the character of the Gods,—the aspects which are implied in the causal explanation of the natural phenomena. But with the development of moral consciousness in the disciplined mind of the ancient Hindus and the growth of its influence upon their attitude towards the phenomena of experience and their underlying grounds, the conception of the Gods became more and more complex.

#### INFLUENCE OF MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS UPON CONCEPTION OF REALITY

Moral consciousness is an essential factor in the rational nature of man. Man is by nature a conscientious being. He distinguishes not merely *what is* from *what is not*, but also *what ought to be* from *what is*. He draws distinctions between *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *evil*, and thinks that *right* and *good* are what ought to be—what have the inherent right to exist—and that *wrong* and *evil*, though actually existing, have no right to exist, or exist only to be destroyed. With the development of moral consciousness in the nature of man, the conception *truth* itself becomes gradually dominated by the idea of *right* and *good*. What is right and good is looked upon as essentially *true*, and what is wrong and evil as essentially *false*. As moral consciousness rises to higher and higher planes, the conception of right and good undergoes corresponding changes, and the conception of truth also is influenced by these changes.

The idea of morality is essentially related to the idea of freedom. "Either freedom is a fact or morality is a delusion." Moral consciousness is concern-



ed with those phenomena, which are believed to be the expressions of freedom. Where there is no scope for freedom of choice, there is no meaning of "ought," no applicability of the standards of right and good. This freedom of choice is, in the ordinary planes of our experience, perceptible only in the voluntary actions of men. On this account we ordinarily pass moral judgments only upon our own voluntary activities and upon those of our fellow-men. With regard to these phenomena alone, we feel justified in thinking and speaking of what they ought to be and what they ought not to be. Being the expressions of powers which originate from *free will*, these phenomena of self-determined human activities alone are regarded as the legitimate objects of moral judgments and moral sentiments. Since the particular natural phenomena are generally looked upon as the necessary effects of certain antecedent phenomena or the products of physical, chemical, mechanical or electrical forces, they are considered to be devoid of moral qualities. It seems unreasonable to think of them in terms of *ought* and *ought not*, *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *evil*. They are what they are or what they must be by the nature of things; there is no freedom of choice behind them; they are not the expressions of any free agencies. They are to be accepted and studied *as they are*, whether they affect us beneficially or injuriously; but no moral value can be attached to them.

So long as our thought moves in these planes, all natural phenomena, including the instinctive activities of irrational animals and involuntary activities of men, appear to be completely *non-moral*. But when our thought rises to a plane in which we discover that natural phenomena also are the products of

*free will*, that the powers or forces of nature are really the self-expressions of Spiritual Agencies analogous in this respect to our own race, we are necessarily led to think that they also have moral merits and demerits, that moral judgments can be quite legitimately passed upon them, that they also can be reflected upon from the standpoint of *ought* and *ought not*. When the ancient Hindus realized the existence of Gods operating freely behind the forces and phenomena of nature, their thought began to move in this plane, and the implications of this plane of thought became progressively more and more plain to them.

#### THE WORLD CONCEIVED AS A MORAL ORDER

As a system produced by the organization of powers which are the self-expressions of the wills of free rational agents, *viz.* the Gods, the whole world appears in the plane of thought as a *moral order*, in which distinctions of *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *evil*, *ought* and *ought not* can be quite reasonably drawn. Consequently we are led to apply, to the phenomena of the world and the underlying causes of which they are the self-manifestations, those standards of morality by reference to which we estimate the merits and demerits of human conduct and character. From this point of view, the Gods or the Spiritual Agencies that are conceived or realized to be the grounds or causes of the phenomena of experience must be recognized as differing from one another not merely in respect of their *natural* attributes—their relative strength, majesty, jurisdiction and the specific external forms of their self-expression,—but likewise in respect of their *moral* attributes,—the relative goodness and badness of their charac-



ters, the relative rightness and wrongness of the different forms of their self-expression, the relative compatibility and incompatibility of their positions and functions with the highest ideal of rational and spiritual life and the ultimate purpose immanent in the world system.

The practical standards of moral judgment—the conceptions about the true ideal of spiritual life and the ultimate purpose of the world process—may, and actually do, change with the development and degradation of our cultural and moral outlook, and the true nature of the absolute ideal may not be ascertained till our own rational nature is highly developed and refined; but moral consciousness being an essential element in our nature, the distinctions of *good* and *evil*, *ought* and *ought not*, are made by our reason at every stage. Accordingly, the phenomena of our experience are morally classified into good and evil, and the Gods who are held responsible for them are also classified on similar principles into good and evil spirits.

#### CONCEPTION OF TWO ORDERS OF GODS, *viz.* DEVA AND ASURA

Thus viewed from the moral plane, the phenomena of nature appear to be produced and governed by two classes of *Moral Powers*, two orders of Spiritual Agents, *viz.* *good* and *evil*. The Hindu thinkers of the early Vedic period, having ascended to this moral plane of experience and thought, were convinced of the moral character of the world system and looked upon all classes of phenomena as determined by morally responsible Spiritual Agents. In order to explain the occurrence of phenomena which, according to their conception of morality, appeared to be evil—such as ought not to have found a place in the

world, and seemed to disturb the harmony of the universe,—these thinkers recognized the existence of a class of Spiritual Agents that were inherently immoral, that were the repositories of bad wills and powers for originating and governing those undesirable phenomena, and that were the perpetual enemies of the other superior order of Spiritual Agents, whose wills and powers always tended to transform themselves into good phenomena. The latter were adored by them as *Deva* and the former were feared by them as *Asura*. The *Devas* were the Gods proper, whose operations as the grounds of the desirable powers and phenomena of the world were inherently directed towards the creation and preservation of a well-ordered glorious system of a universe and were by nature helpful to men in the realization of their ideals. The *Asuras* were the powerful *demons*, whose operations as causes manifested themselves in the production of the evil forces and phenomena of our internal and external nature, which were found to put obstacles in the path of the progressive realization of the ideals of rational life and to create disturbances in the world system. Thus the conception of Gods or Spiritual Wills as the grounds of the phenomenal world developed into the conception of two orders of *Gods*, *viz.* *Deva* and *Asura*—Gods and Demons—under the propelling impetus of growing moral consciousness in the early Hindu mind. Causal explanation, as demanded by our theoretical reason, was thus supplemented by moral explanation as demanded by our moral reason.

#### THE WORLD AS A BATTLEFIELD OF DEVAS AND ASURAS

Thus we find that with the growth of moral outlook in the reflective and



disciplined mind of the Hindu thinkers, the good and evil phenomena of the world of experience came to be looked upon as the manifestations of two classes of powers—*Deva Sakti* and *Asura Sakti*,—which characterized two orders of Spiritual Agencies or Gods, viz. *Deva* and *Asura*. Like the men of good and evil character of the human society, or like the good and evil thoughts, desires and feelings in the human mind, the *Devas* and the *Asuras* are naturally at war with each other, and as results of these conflicts, sometimes good is found to prevail and sometimes evil. Moreover, as in the human society different ideals and forces of good are sometimes found to conflict with one another, and each appears to make endeavours to prevail over the rest by capturing the imagination, the intellect, the heart and the will of its members, so in the world of spirits, the *Devas* are conceived to be sometimes vying with one another for establishing their own supremacy. On similar grounds the *Asuras*, the spirits governing the forces of different kinds of evil in the world, are also imagined to quarrel and fight among themselves for getting the upper hand

in the determination of the courses of natural and human phenomena. Thus as the phenomenal world appears to be a world of conflicts and co-operations, so the spiritual world also, which is its basis, is conceived to be a world of conflicts and co-operations.

Men of good character naturally ally themselves with the *Devas*, and in cases of conflicts among the *Devas*, with those whom they, according to their conception of goodness and greatness, consider to be relatively the highest and best. They offer worship to them and regulate their own desires and activities in conformity to theirs. They sometimes offer worship to the *Asuras* also, whom they are afraid of, in order that they may not do any injury to them or put obstacles in the way of their self-fulfilment. They always wish that the *Devas* may be victorious over the *Asuras* and make efforts according to their light for that purpose. On the other hand, there are men of evil characters who think that the triumph of the *Asuras* would be to their advantage and exert themselves to achieve this end.

[To be concluded]

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## THE SCIENCE OF MEDITATION

BY SWAMI JNANESWARANANDA

### I

From the very dawn of Indian history the Indo-Aryans gave a great deal of importance to the culture and development of the inner faculties of human life. As a result of long experience and experiment, they developed a special system of exercise for increasing the strength, purity and

power of those faculties. Having established a fundamental theory that the human body is divided into different layers of being, they discovered various methods of feeding, strengthening, resting and re-energizing them.

The science of meditation was developed in India for the purpose of

supplying the mind with the necessary nourishment and food, and for giving it proper exercise, rest and relaxation, and also for furnishing it with the necessary conditions for growth. Therefore, meditation can very well be defined as the science of supplying the mind with the food, exercise, rest, relaxation, and favourable environment necessary for the manifestation of its highest perfection.

Let us try to understand this analogy. In receiving the food for our physical body, the natural law is, that in the course of metabolism we undergo a process of disbursement and waste, which must be replenished by drawing in a supply from some sources of nature. We eat because we need certain elements and ingredients which we have spent in the course of our work. But the food we eat is not the only kind which we supply to the physical body. The five senses also are drawing in food for its nourishment and development. In the selection of food we have to be very careful, as there can be harmful as well as beneficial foods. For the replenishment of our mental energy, too, we draw in naturally from various external sources. There is a special process of meditation which gives us the power of putting ourselves in constant touch with these subtle sources from which we can so abundantly draw our spiritual food, without incurring any expenditure. Therefore, all the consideration we pay in selecting our physical food, must likewise be applied to the selection of the spiritual also.

## II

The next consideration is to give the mind its necessary exercise. We all know that by lack of exercise our muscles and nerves degenerate and deteriorate; whereas, by regular exer-

cise they can be developed to an almost infinite degree and amount of strength and efficiency. It has been demonstrated by many athletes and men of unusual physical strength, that by proper exercise the power of the muscles and other physical faculties can be developed to any degree of proficiency. The story is told about a farmer who used to carry a little pet calf across a narrow stream. This he did every day until the calf gradually grew up, but the farmer continued to carry it without being conscious of its physical development. His attention being drawn towards this fact, he realized that it was a bull which he was carrying so easily. Although this might be only a story, it undoubtedly illustrates how by gradual exercise, one can develop the power of one's muscles to an unbelievable degree of proficiency.

It requires no proof to demonstrate the fact, that by means of exercise we can develop the strength of our physical body to an inconceivable extent. The same is true regarding the development of our mental faculties. But through lack of exercise our spiritual and mental powers have pitifully degenerated. Consequently we have lost control over our mind; we have lost our memory; we have lost the power of discrimination, foresight, and many other subtle manifestations of mental power. Since these faculties have been exercised and cultured by many to an amazing degree of proficiency, it proves the fact that anyone can do so by regular scientific exercise.

There are people who have cultured their power of concentration to such an extent that they can read any book, page by page, at a single glance. The psychology behind this is not very difficult to understand. We know that when a child learns to read he does



so, letter by letter. He must spell each word before he comprehends its meaning. As he grows up, he can read word by word; when he advances further he can even read a whole sentence at a glance. Developing the same faculty still more, a whole thought or a paragraph can be read at a glance. By developing the focus of the mind a whole page can be read just as easily as a sentence or paragraph.

Very often certain problems present themselves to us in our lives. Because we do not know how to bring the mind to a state of peace, poise and tranquillity, we do not arrive at any definite and constructive decision. But a concentrated mind can probe with ease into any deep problem, finding the most wonderful solution which would be impossible for a disturbed mind even to apprehend.

Many other illustrations could be given in order to show the benefits which a fully developed and concentrated mind can bring even to ordinary daily life. The culture and attainment of a very healthy condition of the mind is absolutely necessary for every person, no matter what he or she wants to achieve in life.

A mind uncultured and uneducated in meditation and concentration fails to understand clearly the benefits or disadvantages of certain surroundings; whereas a meditative mind can at once accommodate to and make the best use of any environment in which it is placed. If a need for change should arise, such a mind knows unmistakably the practical, mental and spiritual processes necessary for making it.

### III

Of great importance is the need for giving complete rest and relaxation to the mind. Mother Nature has arranged

for a wonderful process of rest for the physical body by raising that "blessed barrier between day and day." But the poor, overburdened mind seldom gets any good rest, even during sleep. It must be given its proper recuperation by a definite method of meditation. When we do not get sufficient sleep for a few days we know how miserable we feel. The poor mind is kept practically without any sleep, rest, or recuperation from the very day it came into existence until the end of life. No wonder that it has weakened and lost its vitality! But undoubtedly it has a wonderful power of resistance; otherwise it would have been smashed to pieces by the cruel and relentless treatment to which it is constantly subjected.

There is a definite method of meditation to give the mind its much-needed rest and relaxation. Very often we think wrongly that a change of occupation brings relaxation. Though we think that we are relaxing, the fact is, we are not. What we actually do is this: we put aside strenuous and tiresome occupations of the mind and change them for something new, or of a lighter type. But this cannot be considered proper relaxation. Real relaxation of the mind can be had only by completely unharnessing the mind from the task of dragging on any physical, intellectual or emotional burden. Only when the mind is completely free, when it is not controlled, manipulated or used by any other function, does it enjoy freedom and rest. This state of the mind can be attained only by a special process of meditation and concentration.

The sense of fatigue, disgust or depression of the mind comes only because of a psychological confusion under which we labour every moment. This confusion is caused by mis-



comprehension of the subject and the object—the “I” and the “Not-I.” It is the “Not-I” which is active, which is doing everything, and which is moving to and fro in this world of phenomena. The real “I” is the witness; it is the illuminator; it never takes any active part in any of the functions, either of the body or of the mind, save and except illumining them by means of its innate radiance. The moment we are able to distinguish in consciousness between the “I” and the “Not-I,” the “I” or the subject at once gets a wonderful experience of release, rest and tranquillity. This surprising fact needs particular emphasis. Is it not rather strange that although we know that *we possess* a body and a mind, for all practical purposes we think that *we are* the body and the mind? The simple logic to be applied in this case is this: If we say, “I have a body and a mind,” the relationship between my “self” and the body and the mind, is one of the possessor and the possessed. The body and the mind are the objects possessed by the possessor, which is the real “I.” Why, then, is there this meaningless confusion between the possessor and the possessed? Do we not, in our practical life, always take the possessed for the possessor? Is not our ordinary consciousness of the “I” identical with the body and the mind? Where has the possessor gone? In fact, the real “I” is not recognized at all. As soon as we discover and put the real “I” on its eternal throne of glory, we receive a wonderful experience of rest, relaxation, and complete “unharnessing of the mind,” no matter what the physical system might be doing. As soon as we realize the independent existence of that higher “I,” we enjoy the most intense degree of rest, even in the midst of the most intense activity.

## IV

The purpose of meditation is to realize the peaceful and all-perfect nature of the Higher Self. Its real nature has been very beautifully described in one of the Upanishads by a very suggestive and deep simile.

Human life has been compared to a gigantic tree which sends its roots down deep into the unfathomable bottom of the Unknown, the Infinite. It is nurtured and nourished by the sap of that Infinite, which is Brahman. Its strong trunk is the trunk of Karma, which has been attained and accumulated through successions of incarnations.

Seated at the top of this tree, but not dependent on it, is a bird, self-poised, self-illuminated and self-contained. It is always happy, always cheerful, and it never depends on anything for its existence, happiness, or knowledge. It radiates brilliance and effulgence; the tree underneath is revealed and illumined by that heavenly light. It never leaves its throne of glory because it has no desire. It has everything.

There is another bird, very similar in appearance, which occupies the body of this tree; it has no fixed place of its own, but is moving and hopping constantly from branch to branch. It is eternally hungry and restless! Oh, the voracity and greed of this bird! The more it eats the more hungry it seems to be! Every moment is spent in finding and tasting new fruits. When it tastes a sweet one, it has a temporary feeling of joy and happiness. But immediately that sense of satisfaction is gone; it is hungry again. It seizes another fruit, which perchance, is bitter. As soon as it tastes this one, it receives a shock, and looking around catches a glimpse of the beauty, glory, peace and radiance of the self-effulgent bird. It feels a great attraction for and



aspires after this higher bird. In the next moment it forgets, and darts after another fruit. While moving in search of fruit, the restless bird, being attracted unknowingly and imperceptibly by the other, is constantly moving towards it. When a sense of satiety and satisfaction comes, it does not want to go round and round in search of fruit any more. It takes a direct flight towards the higher bird, and gets there quickly. But in most cases, the process of approach towards the higher bird takes place rather slowly and gradually. Eventually, the lower bird comes very near the other reflecting its radiance, peace, poise, and perfection very distinctly on its own personality. Finally, it becomes absorbed and loses its separate existence. It realizes that the lower bird is only a shadow; it is all Maya; the only reality is the higher bird who never took any active part in the process of growth and development of the tree of life.

Our real Self is the higher bird. The lower bird, or our physical and mental system, is only the shadow of the higher one. Therefore our constant effort should be to put ourselves in the position of the top bird.

Always hold your consciousness on the illumined bird; know that you are the 'witness-self.' Affirm inwardly, "I am not the body or the mind—they are mine. My real 'I' is neither the physical body nor the mind. I am always separate, ever independent, and eternally free from this body. I am the witness; I am only seeing and watching every sensation which is appearing and disappearing on this physical plane, without in any way taking part in them. I am eternally blissful, self-contained, self-illumined and self-existent. I am perfection absolute, knowledge absolute, and bliss absolute. I am That! I am That! Verily I am that illumined Bird, the ever perfect Atman!"

Making this affirmation, holding your consciousness firmly on the plane of the top bird, let the mind go freely to anything or any thought. Do not try to check it; let the lower bird hop about as it pleases; let it eat all the fruits it wants; upon realizing that it is constantly watched by the higher-self, it will become more and more restful. The yearning will awaken within it to go quickly to its home, which is the position above.

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## TRADITION IN INDIAN ART

BY NANALAL C. MEHTA, I.C.S.

The astounding thing about Indian Art that strikes even a casual student is the remarkable stability of its traditions throughout the course of centuries. Whether it be architecture, sculpture, painting or music the age-long traditions continue to exercise their dominating influence. This however does not pre-

clude its being influenced by new streams of alien but dynamic cultures at certain epochs of its history. From the dawn of history India has been subject to manifold influences which sometimes came to her from beyond the seas—sometimes from Persia, sometimes from Babylon and sometimes from the

far off countries situated on the shores of the Mediterranean. It must have been a singular event in the history of India when Chandragupta Maurya married the daughter of Seleukus Nikator—one of the generals of Alexander the Great. It was, as it were, the fusion of the two most dynamic cultures of the ancient world. What repercussions of this marriage were on the society at that time, we can only guess.

It is however known that during the earlier centuries of the Christian era a number of Hellenic artists, who have left a veritable gallery of Buddhist sculpture, were working in what are now known as the Frontier Provinces and Afghanistan. The passionate feeling of the Greek for the representation of the human body in all its outward and athletic glory did not take root in the Indian soil. The Gandharan period despite many a charming and graceful sculpture remains a mere episode in the cultural history of Hindustan. It seems as if the Indian had a peculiar feeling of his own for Nature. The realism of some of the statuettes—especially of the bull on the Mohenjo Daro seal is of a totally different character from that of the Greek or the Hellenistic artist. Years ago Dr. Spooner suspected Persian influences in the development of Mauryan art; but nothing is more remarkable than the extraordinary constancy of the fundamentals of Indian culture throughout the ages, and its amazing powers of assimilation of alien elements in its unique matrix.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAM

It is rather extraordinary that even Islam in its first flush of power—more than half a millennium before the advent of the great Moghuls—failed to affect the artistic traditions of India to

any appreciable extent. India has always been the great laboratory of religious experiments, and in this particular sphere the influence of Islam was indeed powerful. But so far as the outward tenor of life was concerned, life remained practically unchanged. Important edifices of a novel type began to be built, but after a short time the indigenous tradition asserted its dominance.

Throughout the centuries of its existence Islam in India has always looked up to Persia for its artistic inspiration. The Indian Musalman has always felt somewhat humble before the Persian and it is somewhat remarkable that the monumental work of Maulana Shibli has no place for a single Indian in his monumental work on the Heroes of Islam. Iran and its adjacent lands—what now constitute Russian Turkestan—were the fountain-heads, as it were, of Islamic culture. Baghdad, Samarkand, Bokhara, Herat, Ghazni and Shiraz are names to conjure within the history of Islam. Historical circumstances fortified this tendency, for from the days of Timur the valour of the Islamic rulers made the court of Samarkand one of the greatest literary and artistic centres that the world has ever known. Babar though a Turk by descent was a Persian by culture. Nothing in Hindustan pleased the fancy of this valiant prince. His son Humayun brought with him two distinguished masters of painting from the court of Iran—Abdul Samad Shirazi and Mir Saiyyad Ali. The celebrated paintings of Hamza Nama—unique by themselves in the history of Indian pictorial art—were commenced during the reign of Humayun though they were completed during the time of Jalaluddin Akbar. Abdul Samad Shirazi—*Shirin Kalam*, as he was called—master of drawing as well as of calligraphy, was given the charge of train-



ing up Indian artists in accordance with the Persian canon.

Within a few years however it was discovered that an Indian, while good at copying was a person rather difficult and peculiarly obstinate to be vitally or easily influenced. The Indo-Persian phase was therefore only of a passing phase of brief duration. The patronage of the Moghuls and the magnificence of Persian illustrations—Babar, Humayun and Akbar had some wonderful Persian manuscripts in their library—undoubtedly gave an unprecedented stimulus to an Art which seemed to have fallen on evil days with the decay of a central power. The extraordinarily finished workmanship and the impeccable colour-schemes of Moghul paintings are undoubtedly in a great measure due to the influence of the Persian examples. But these only affect the surface, and the principal characteristics of the Indian tradition remained practically unaltered.

#### THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE

The fifteenth century in Europe was a period of considerable movement in the history of Europe. The world has rarely witnessed such a wonderful harvest of artistic master-pieces as during this period of the Renaissance when Italy, Holland, Germany and Spain vied with each other in producing pictures of a quality that the world has never seen before or since. The Moghuls were great dilettanti and were interested in everything, especially if it was something strange or singular. Yet it is curious that such a great patron and connoisseur of painting as Jehangir did not think it worth while to copy the large-scale canvases in oil which were shown to him by the English ambassador Sir Thomas Roe. Painting had made remarkable progress in Italy

since the death of Giotto in 1337. Since then the brothers Hubert and Jan Van Eyck discovered the medium of oil for painting which was to revolutionize the entire course of painting in the European world. Problems of fore-shortening, perspective, of the true colour of shadows were solved one by one during this great period of artistic revival. The Renaissance had achieved practically all its glories almost 100 years before Jehangir ascended the throne. And yet it is remarkable that throughout the creative period of Moghul art the momentous changes that had taken place in the pictorial art of Europe had practically no effect on the royal ateliers of Agra, Delhi and Lahore. Though Abul Fazl expresses the admiration for the great European masters and mentions that some of the painters notably Dashwant and Basawan had become almost as famous as these, nowhere is it recorded that the Indian artists were induced or encouraged to take a lesson from the West or to adapt their own technique to a changing world.

It is somewhat interesting to see the copies of European paintings made by the Moghul artists of this period. It seems that they were only interested in carrying out the wishes and whims of their patrons. The pictures had themselves no message to impart to these Indian artists. There is a singular and extraordinarily fine copy of a picture by Kamaluddin Bihzad copied by Nanha at the instance of Jehangir which has been recently published in the superb volume on Persian painting by Binyen, Wilkinson and Grey. It is truly remarkable that artists so accomplished as these, who could at will copy and reproduce every stroke of foreign masters, observed an attitude of such complete mental detachment bordering on indifference that they hardly allowed



even a trace of foreign influence in any material respect in their individual productions. It is possibly an instance of what Al Beruni thought to be the extraordinary conceit of the Indian people as regards the superiority, in fact finality, of their own culture. Whatever may be the cause, it is true that up to this day none of the discoveries of Europe since the days of Giotto has been extensively made use of in this country. The old fashioned fresco, the miniature painting on paper, cloth or wood, the use of water-colours, utter indifference to linear perspective, modelling or depicting shadows, a comparative dislike for pure Naturalism or verisimilitude, fondness for the decorative rather than the actual, a liking for the descriptive rather than representational or photographic, a penchant for the conventional and the symbolic, for the emotional or the lyrical rather than for the exact or the actual aspect of life—these are and have been the principal characteristics of the pictorial art of India during its centuries of evolution.

While the European art for the last 500 years has been experimenting with the problems of optical illusion, or simultaneous and consecutive vision, atmospheric illuminations, the true colour of shadows, the comparative strength of straight in relation to a curved line, Indian Art has pursued its placid course undisturbed by any questionings as to the relative importance of accurately rendering appearances as against conventional or symbolical expression of ideas or emotions. The scientific or the technical aspect of painting has always been a question of secondary importance in Indian Art. Call it the genius of the people or its obscurantism or conservatism, the fact is there. It is as if the Indian felt himself more confident and comfortable in his own native habitat despite his un-

doubted ability to adapt himself for a time to outlandish ways and methods. Occasionally he borrows, but his essential outlook on life remains unchanged.

There is perhaps another and more deep-seated reason for this singular and somewhat characteristic attitude of the Indian towards Art as a whole. Art in Asia is something comprehensive and not exclusive. This is particularly so in India. Poets, sculptors and painters are workers in the same field with their peculiar media of expression; so much so that the canons of appraisal or criticism that apply to literature are also valid for sculpture and paintings. In fact the object of the graphic and plastic arts is according to the ancient texts the expression of the same sentiments or *Rasas* which are the subject-matter of poetry. The subjects therefore of painting or poetry are not infrequently the same.

From this arises, not unnaturally, an attitude of comparative indifference for portraiture or mere technical research. The expression of idea or an emotion, the rendering of a myth, story, legend, or even a poem or a musical mode are the objects which the painter has generally in view. The frescoes of Ellora, Ajanta, Bagh, Sittanavasalam, Tanjore, Conjeeveram and countless other wall-pictures merely recite the story or the legend from the inexhaustible repertoire of the Jatakas, Puranas, epics and the folk-tales through the medium of line and colour. Emphasis is laid on a lucid rendering of the scenes, on the appropriate illustration of the incidents rather than on representing the actual appearances either of the environment or of the human figures. We might in fact regard the pictorial rendering as a mere substitute for a verbal rendering, generalized and effective in a country of



vast spaces and many scripts and languages.

In the old Gujarat manuscripts, for instance, painted pages are merely another version of the same story told swiftly and vividly through the medium of line and colour. Pure bright tints are used in conjunction with a few strokes of the brush. There is no attempt at technical finish or optical illusion. The style is in a way similar to and the object identical with the old Buddhist sculptures illustrating the Jatakas. These medieval paintings are somewhat in the nature of modern posters. The lines and colours are there to emphasize their message through their distinctive medium and with their peculiar vocabulary.

It is sometimes thought that the period of Moghul painting from the time of Akbar up to the death of Aurangzeb must be regarded as something of an exception to these general statements. This is, I believe, incorrect, and it is primarily due to the fact that while the vast wall spaces decorated with frescoes in the mausoleums at Sikandra and the palaces of Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Delhi and Lahore have vanished, sometimes by the lapse of time and often by misplaced zeal or religious bigotry or pure vandalism, a large number of pictures and albums consisting mostly of portraits and scenes of royal life have survived. A careful survey of the surviving material will disclose the fact that Moghul artists applied most of their time to the decoration of books such as *Hamza Nama*, *Shahnama*, *Razmana*, *Ramayan*, *Gita Govinda*, *Khamsa of Nizami*, *Diwan-i-Hafiz*, *Gulistan*, *Bostan*, *Rasika Priya* of Kesho Das, *Bahar-i-Danish*, *Kalila wa Damna*, *Anwarvi-Suheli* and the recently discovered exquisite manuscript of *Shalibhadra Charita*.

#### THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MOGHULS

The Moghul Emperors saved the pictorial art of the country from the vulgarities of bourgeois patronage of which it appears to have been a victim between the eleventh and the sixteenth century. The artist suddenly became a man of importance, worthy of Imperial favours and had an honoured place in the royal entourage. The Muslim has always been a greater realist than the Hindu. It is possibly the result of his religious inheritance. Abul Fazal thought the preparation of pigments for the use of the painters of the Imperial atelier a matter of sufficient importance to mention in his court chronicles. The Moghul artist was interested in the use of fine paper, jewel-like pigments, dazzling illumination of borders and lovely mounts of varied designs for his pictures. A royal portfolio of Moghul pictures gives a peep into the intimate life of the Moghul Court and its scenes of unprecedented splendour. What the quality of the wall-paintings executed by the Moghul artist must have been, it is easy to gauge from the wonderful inlay work to be found in the great architectural monuments of the Moghul times. The same individuals executed the pictures on paper, ivory and cloth, decorated the wall-surfaces, and provided designs for the beautiful decorations of the interiors of palaces, mosques and mausoleums. It was a time of unprecedented patronage for the artisan. The Moghul artist—*naquash* as he was sometimes called—was as versatile as his Italian *confrère* of the Renaissance period.

While the superb technical skill of the Moghul artist has been admired, the art of the Moghul dress-maker has remained hitherto unnoticed. What gorgeous combinations of colours the Moghul dress-maker was able to devise in the



shape of crimson or emerald coloured sashes with flowered borders wound round the waist on cream-coloured *angas* and white *pyjamas* with the loveliest of tiny and multi-coloured shoes, elaborate turbans with rows of pearls round the neck. The setting for these superbly dressed individuals was equally marvellous—lovely carpets from India and Persia, porcelain from China—all in the snow-white palaces of marble at Agra and Delhi, and for some time in the dreamland of Fatehpur Sikri.

#### THE RISE OF PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS OF TRAINING

The transition from these glorious scenes of Imperial splendour to the next stage was rapid. The Court art of the Moghuls was almost dead by the end of the seventeenth century. The Imperial artists were scattered all over the country and were again working as the *protégés* of smaller princes and rich bourgeois, *i.e.* far from being a time of decline in the history of Indian art, it heralded the advent of spring tide in the domain of pictorial expression. Vernacular literatures had been developing, taking the place of Sanskrit even among the *élite* of the land ever since the eleventh century. Hindi literature, the most important of that time, had got into a strange mood of erotic lyricism. Its preoccupation was practically the glorification of love and women. Poetry of this period is probably unique in the literary annals of the world. For full 250 years it was engaged in describing the physical charms of women. Woman was the principal character in all poetical themes, whether they dealt with the life of Krishna and Radha or with the change of seasons or the harmonies of music. The painter also fell in a line. The bulk of his pictorial out-

put dealt with practically the same themes as his brother worker in the literary arena; but let it be said to the credit of the former that the pictorial art as a rule never degenerated into the trivial banalities of unabashed eroticism. The artist retained his mastery of fine and rhythmic lines and used it to interpret the scenes from the Puranas and epics as well as from the common incidents of everyday life. It was an art truly popular, for it permeated every sphere of life. The extent and the output of it must have been enormous, judging from the material that is still extant.

While it was in continuation of the older tradition, it could not but be influenced by the traditions and the technique of the Moghul period, but unlike the Moghul artist the Hindu artist of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries working at the courts of the princes of Rajputana and the Pahari principalities was not primarily interested in matters of mere technique, or even finished workmanship. He got all what he had to say by the use of his peculiar mastery of line and pure radiant colours. He had not to seek his public. He made use of a universal language which was understood from North to South and from West to East and transcended provincial and linguistic boundaries. He was a symbol of the cultural unity of Hindustan and it is surprising what he achieved within the short space of a hundred years or more between the beginning of the eighteenth century up to about 1830.

#### PAHARI PAINTING

Let me quote the reactions of a great European connoisseur to the enchanting art of the Punjab of only a century ago. Laurence Binyon writes :

“I can never forget the extraordinary pleasure and exhilaration I felt when I



first made acquaintance with drawings from the Kangra Valley. How was it, I thought, that such enchanting things had remained unknown to us in the West? There was one small drawing in particular, with music played to them by attendants, and hailing with joy the moon-rise over a lake. It drew one into itself, into a world of magical radiance. It was simple and poignant as a song. Since then Dr. Coomaraswamy has made us more familiar with Kangra drawing, and more examples have found their way to England. It is true that the sweetness of them, in the later productions of the school, is apt to cloy; their grace declines to a weak prettiness. But judged by its best, as it should be, the art of Kangra is a pure delight. We are not to expect from it more than it sets out to give; but where else shall we find drawings more exquisitely expressive of natural feeling in a lyric vein? The drawing on Greek vases, the design of Japanese prints, may have other fascinations and be richer in resource, more vigorous and varied; but in the art of Kangra there is a frankness and abandon, a spontaneous directness, which affects one like some of our own ballad-poetry, with its stock turns of phrase and its traditional refrains, but also its heart-piercing sudden sweetness. It is something unique in the world's art."

The Punjab is now perhaps the one province where some superb examples of this unique art can still be picked up in the stray shops of dealers, who have collected, as it were, the artistic sweepings from the neglected treasure-houses of the old Pahari princes. The latter have no use for their patrimony and the great educated public of the Punjab is unaware and uninterested in it. In fact, the Punjabi is really surprised and can hardly understand how such lapses from the practical standard of his well-

regulated life were possible not so very long ago. The few lovely pictures occupying the centre wing of the Lahore museum have no message or apparent appeal to the new public, and at any rate have exercised no influence whatever on the art of the two or three painters who have been working in this province of martial valour, where military skill and physical prowess were once combined with a fine sense of beauty and discrimination even at a time, when the suzerainty of the central power at Delhi had become a mere shadow and the small ancient principalities and the newly risen power of the Khalsa were in a state of perpetual war.

The short space of time during which the Pahari schools of painting worked and produced so many enchanting works, constitutes a unique chapter in the artistic history of India. It is however hardly a memory now, even like the bare and deserted mausoleum of Nur-Jahan—the light of the world. Here in the growing city of Lahore many a big and costly building has been and is being built. Golden domes attest to the affluence of the community, but Art remains a forlorn refugee on the ruined eminences of the Lahore fort or in the glazed cases of the local museum. One can hardly believe that this is the province where art and aesthetic beauty reigned supreme over every department of life only a hundred years ago. Going further north to the enchanting valley of Kashmir the disillusionment becomes complete. A whole race of exquisite and patient workers has forgotten the very elements of design and is engaged in the artistry of copying either old patterns or the tinsel wares of Europe. The cheapness of it and the utter absence of anything really artistic animating these articles are unbelievable.

## SOUTH INDIA

In the great temple-cities of the South, famous for their majestic architecture, vast pillared corridors, monumental sculptures and marvellous images of metal, the state of affairs is equally depressing. The handicrafts of the descendants of these master-craftsmen have no room in the homes of the intellectual Madrasi. The exquisitely printed cottons of Tanjore or Masulipatam have no markets in the country. All over there is the same refrain of neglect, want of encouragement and consequently the creeping shadow of lingering death.

THE END OF THE EPOCH  
TRADITIONAL

Indian art witnessed its doom about the middle of the nineteenth century—at the very time when systematic arrangements were being made to usher in the dynamic culture of the West. A

new generation of Indians trained according to the methods of the West initiated in the knowledge and manners of a new civilization was being born, and it was felt that the indigenous culture of Hindustan had either lost its vitality or the power of regeneration without the help of an external stimulus. In any case, the new culture from the Occident was welcomed, and it was really the beginning of a new era when old values were replaced by something which was not yet properly understood or appraised. A new outlook on life was being created, and in the process it was but inevitable that a culture—a civilization, which had been unable to resist the onslaughts of a new and more dynamic civilization should succumb. India had lost herself in the maze of dialectical juggleries principally concerned with arid discussions of obsolescent dogmas, and it appeared as if the old country was really aging and had outlived the period of her creative activities.

## THE MASTER MAHASAYA

BY PAUL BRUNTON

I am now in Calcutta itself, searching for the house of the Master Mahasaya, the aged disciple of Ramakrishna.

Passing through an open courtyard which adjoins the street I reach a steep flight of steps leading into a large, rambling old house. I climb up a dark stairway and pass through a low door on the top storey. I find myself in a small room, which opens out on to the flat, terraced roof of the house. Two of its walls are lined with low divans. Save for the lamp and a small pile of books and papers, the room is otherwise bare. A young man enters and

bids me wait for the coming of his master, who is on a lower floor.

Ten minutes pass. I hear sound of someone stirring from a room on the floor below out into the stairway. Immediately there is a tingling sensation in my head and the idea suddenly grips me that that man downstairs has fixed his thought on me. I hear the man's footsteps going up the stairs. When at last—for he moves with extreme slowness—he enters the room, I need no one to announce his name. A venerable patriarch has stepped from the pages of the Bible, and a figure



from Mosaic times has turned into flesh. This man with bald head, long white beard, and white moustache, grave countenance, and large, reflective eyes; this man whose shoulders are slightly bent with the burden of nearly eighty years of mundane existence, can be none other than the Master Mahasaya.

He takes his seat on a divan and then turns his face towards mine. In that grave, sobre presence I realize instantly that there can be no light persiflage, no bandying of wit or humour, no utterance even of the harsh cynicism and dark scepticism which overshadow my soul from time to time. His character, with its commingling of perfect faith in God and nobility of conduct, is written in his appearance for all to see.

He addresses me in perfectly accented English.

“You are welcome here.”

He bids me come closer and take my seat on the same divan. He holds my hand for a few moments. I deem it expedient to introduce myself and explain the object of my visit. When I have concluded speaking, he presses my hand again in a kindly manner and says :

“It is a higher power which has stirred you to come to India, and which is bringing you in contact with the holy men of our land. There is a real purpose behind that, and the future will surely reveal it. Await it patiently.”

“Will you tell me something about your master Ramakrishna?”

“Ah, now you raise a subject about which I love best to talk. It is nearly half a century since he left us, but his blessed memory can never leave me, always it remains fresh and fragrant in my heart. I was twenty-seven when I met him and was constantly in his society for the last five years of his life. The result was that I became a changed man; my whole attitude towards life

was reversed. Such was the strange influence of this God-man, Ramakrishna. He threw a spiritual spell upon all who visited him. He literally charmed them, fascinated them. Even materialistic persons who came to scoff became dumb in his presence.”

“But how can such persons feel reverence for spirituality—a quality in which they do not believe?” I interpose, slightly puzzled.

The corners of the Master Mahasaya’s mouth pull up in a half smile. He answers :

“Two persons taste red pepper. One does not know its name; perhaps he has never seen it before. The other is well acquainted with it and recognize it immediately. Will it not taste the same to both? Will not both of them have a burning sensation on the tongue? In the same way, ignorance of Ramakrishna’s spiritual greatness did not debar materialistic persons from ‘tasting’ the radiant influence of spirituality which emanated from him.”

“Then he really was a spiritual superman?”

“Yes, and in my belief even more than that. Ramakrishna was a simple man, illiterate and uneducated—he was so illiterate that he could not even sign his name, let alone write a letter. He was humble in appearance and humbler still in mode of living, yet he commanded the allegiance of some of the best educated and most cultured men of the time in India. They had to bow before his tremendous spirituality which was so real that it could be felt. He taught us that pride, riches, wealth, worldly honours, worldly position are trivialities in comparison with that spirituality, are fleeting illusions which deceive men. Ah, those were wonderful days! Often he would pass into trances of so palpably divine a nature that we who were gathered round him



then would feel that he was a god, rather than a man. Strangely, too, he possessed the power of inducing a similar state in his disciples by means of a single touch; in this state they could understand the deep mysteries of God by means of direct perception. But let me tell you how he affected me.

“I had been educated along Western lines. My head was filled with intellectual pride. I had served in Calcutta colleges as Professor of English Literature, History and Political Economy, at different times. Ramakrishna was living in the temple of Dakshineswar, which is only a few miles up the river from Calcutta. There I found him one unforgettable spring day and listened to his simple expression of spiritual ideas born of his own experience. I made a feeble attempt to argue with him but soon became tongue-tied in that sacred presence, whose effect on me was too deep for words. Again and again I visited him, unable to stay away from this poor, humble but divine person, until Ramakrishna one day humorously remarked :

“ ‘A peacock was given a dose of opium at four o’clock. The next day it appeared again exactly at that hour. It was under the spell of opium and came for another dose.’

“That was true, symbolically speaking. I had never enjoyed such blissful experiences as when I was in the presence of Ramakrishna, so can you wonder why I came again and again? And so I became one of his group of intimate disciples, as distinguished from merely occasional visitors. One day the Master said to me :

“ ‘I can see from the signs of your eyes, brow and face that you are a Yogi. Do all your work then, but keep your mind on God. Wife, children, father and mother, live with all and serve them as if they are your own.

The tortoise swims about in the waters of the lake, but her mind is fixed to where her eggs are laid on the banks. So, do all the work of the world but keep the mind in God.’

“And so, after the passing away of our master, when most of the other disciples voluntarily renounced the world, adopted the yellow robe, and trained themselves to spread Ramakrishna’s message through India, I did not give up my profession but carried on with my work in education. Nevertheless, such was my determination not to be of the world although I was in it, that on some nights I would retire at dead of night to the open veranda before the Senate House and sleep among the homeless beggars of the city, who usually collected there to spend the night. This used to make me feel, temporarily at least, that I was a man with no possessions.

“Ramakrishna has gone, but as you travel through India you will see something of the social, philanthropic, medical and educational work being done throughout the country under the inspiration of those disciples of his, most of whom, alas! have now passed away too. What you will not see so easily is the number of changed hearts and changed lives primarily due to this wonderful man. For his message has been handed down from disciple to disciple, who have spread it as widely as they could. And I have been privileged to take down many of his sayings in Bengali; the published record has entered almost every household in Bengal, while translations have also gone into other parts of India. So you see how Ramakrishna’s influence has spread far beyond the immediate circle of his little group of disciples.”

The Master Mahasaya finishes his long recital and relapses into silence. As I look at his face anew, I am struck by



the non-Hindu colour and cast of his face. Again I am wafted back to a little kingdom in Asia Minor, where the children of Israel find a temporary respite from their hard fortunes. I picture the Master Mahasaya among them as a venerable prophet speaking to his people. How noble and dignified the man looks! His goodness, honesty, virtue, piety and sincerity are transparent. He possesses that self-respect of a man who has lived a long life in utter obedience to the voice of conscience.

“I wonder what Ramakrishna would say to a man who cannot live by faith alone, who must satisfy reason and intellect?” I murmur questioningly.

“He would tell the man to pray. Prayer is a tremendous force. Ramakrishna himself prayed to God to send him spiritually inclined people, and soon after that those who later became his disciples or devotees began to appear.”

“But if one has never prayed—what then?”

“Prayer is the last resort. It is the ultimate resource left to man. Prayer will help a man where the intellect may fail.”

“But if someone came to you and said that prayer did not appeal to his particular temperament. What counsel would you give him?” I persist gently.

“Then let him associate frequently with truly holy men who have had real spiritual experience. Constant contact with them will assist him to bring out his latent spirituality. Higher men turn our minds and wills towards divine objects. Above all, they stimulate an intense longing for the spiritual life. Therefore the society of such men is very important as the first step, and often it is also the last, as Ramakrishna himself used to say.”

Thus we discourse of things high and holy, and how man can find no peace save in the Eternal Good. Throughout

the evening different visitors make their arrival until the modest room is packed with Indians—disciples of the Master Mahasaya. They come nightly and climb the stairs of this four-storeyed house to listen intently to every word uttered by their teacher.

And for a while I, too, join them. Night after night I come, less to hear the pious utterances of the Master Mahasaya than to bask in the spiritual sunshine of his presence. The atmosphere around him is tender and beautiful, gentle and loving; he has found some inner bliss and the radiation of it seems palpable. Often I forget his words, but I cannot forget his benign personality. That which drew him again and again to Ramakrishna seems to draw me to the Master Mahasaya also, and I begin to understand how potent must have been the influence of the teacher when the pupil exercises such a fascination upon me.

When our last evening comes, I forget the passage of time, as I sit happily at his side upon the divan. Hour after hour has flown by; our talk has had no interlude of silence, but at length it comes. And then the good master takes my hand and leads me out to the terraced roof of his house where, in the vivid moonlight, I see a circling array of tall plants growing in pots and tubs. Down below a thousand lights gleam from the houses of Calcutta.

The moon is at its full. The Master Mahasaya points up towards its round face and then passes into silent prayer for a brief while. I wait patiently at his side until he finishes. He turns, raises his hand in benediction and lightly touches my head.

I bow humbly before this angelic man, unreligious though I am. After a few more moments of continued silence, he says softly :

“My task has almost come to an end.

This body has nearly finished what God sent it here to do. Accept my blessing before I go.”\*

He has strangely stirred me. I banish the thought of sleep and wander through many streets. When at length, I reach a great mosque and hear the

\*Before long I was apprised of his death.

solemn chant, “*God is most great!*” break forth upon the midnight stillness, I reflect that if anyone could free me from the intellectual scepticism to which I cling and attach me to a life of simple faith, it is undoubtedly the Master Mahasaya.

## KING YASHOVARMAN’S REGULATIONS FOR ASHRAMAS IN CAMBODIA

BY PROF. BIJAN RAJ CHATTERJEE, M.A., D.LITT. (Punjab), PH.D. (London)

Yashovarman (889-910 A.D.) was one of the greatest monarchs of Kambuja (the Sanskrit name of Cambodia). It was he who founded the town of Angkor (Sanskrit—Nagara) which became one of the most magnificent cities in the whole world during the Middle Ages.

Three Sanskrit inscriptions of his reign (recently edited by M. Coedis) give us the regulations laid down by the monarch for a Vaishnava, a Shaiva and a Buddhist Ashrama respectively, which was constructed by royal command in the immediate neighbourhood of his capital (Angkor).

The three inscriptions have much in common. I shall briefly refer to the references while discussing the common features.

This Decree (शासन) of Sri Yashovarman is to be obeyed in the Ashrama by the Kuladhyaksha (कुलाध्यक्ष) as well as by his servants.

The Kuladhyaksha shall see to it that the Ashrama flourishes and that the Ashrama Jana (people) are well protected.

If the king comes here with his queens the Kuladhyaksha should show him the honour due to a divinity...For...according to Vyasa “He who is devoid of re-

spect towards the king, who is the Guru of the whole world, will see none of his gifts, sacrifices and offering bear fruit.”

After the king the Dwija (द्विज) should be honoured above all others; if there are several of them, their conduct should first be taken into consideration, then their good qualities, and finally their learning.

Particularly (among the other visitors to the Ashrama) the brave should be honoured, who have proved their valour in the field of battle...for the defence of right depends on them.

(At this stage the regulations vary for the different Ashramas.)

*For the Vaishnava Ashrama:* Next to him who knows the three Vedas should be honoured the Acharya learned in grammar (Vyakarana). Among Acharyas of equal learning preference should be shown to him who observes celibacy. In judging of the comparative merits of those who are well versed in the Panchratra and those who are learned in grammar—preference should be given to those who are Adhyapakas (teachers) of both these branches of learning.

*For the Shaiva Ashrama:* Next to the Vipra (Brahmana) one should honour the Shaiva and the Pashupata Acharya



and he, who is well read in grammar, should be preferred to others. Of those who have studied deeply the Shaiva and the Pashupata doctrines and grammar—the Acharya who teaches these (subjects) should be honoured most of all in this excellent Ashrama.

*For the Buddhist Ashrama:* The learned Brahmana should be honoured a little more than the Acharya who has mastered the Buddhist doctrines or the grammarian. But a scholar of both these Vidyas should be given the preference. The Acharya who teaches the Buddhist doctrines and grammar should in this excellent hermitage rank higher than those who are well versed in the Buddhist Lore or those who excel in grammar.

(N.B. The reader should observe the emphasis on the Sanskrit Grammar. Panini's Vyakarana was a favourite study in the highest circles of Cambodia. The preference shown to Brahmanas over the Buddhists should also be noted. Yashovarman was a Hindu king.)

The well-educated Grihastha (householder) is to be honoured like the Acharya—for Manu has laid that of all the acquired qualities Vidya is the best.

Wealth, good family, age, pious works, and learning—these are, in ascending order, the claims to social respect.

Common people without exception, young children, old persons, the sick, the unfortunate and those who have been deserted (by their relatives) should be looked after by giving them food, medicine and other necessaries of life.

Those who, through their devotion, have fallen in the battle-field, those who have died, in their infancy or in their old age, for want of food, unhappy, deserted,—for all these, at the end of every month an offering of funeral cakes should be made for which four Adhakas of rice should be used.

*For the Vaishnava Ashrama:* Those who observe the rites of Trisandhya, who have devoted themselves to a life of study and good conduct, who have freed themselves of the duties of a householder (गृहस्थ), who can control their passions, who have no other shelter during the rainy season—such Bhagavatas should be kept with due respect in the Vaishnava Ashrama.

*For the Shaiva Ashrama:* Those who observe the rites of Trisandhya . . .\* who have freed themselves of the duties of a householder, who have no other shelter during the rainy season—such Yatis should be kept with due respect in the Brahmana Ashrama.

*For the Buddhist Ashrama:* Those who observe the rites of Trisandhya, who have devoted themselves to a life of study and good conduct, who have freed themselves of the duties of a householder, Yatis who have mastered their passions, who have no other shelter during the rains—such (Yatis) should be kept with due respect in the Saugatashrama.

*For the Vaishnava Ashrama:* No Vaishnava of this Ashrama can have any relation with any woman even if she be his legitimate wife. The Vaishnavas, who are devoted to their studies, will receive every day the necessaries of life.

*For the Shaiva Ashrama:* (No special provision for the Shaiva Ashrama in this land.) The Brahmanas and the Yatis will receive every day the necessaries of life.

*For the Buddhist Ashrama:* Hermits lacking in manners and good conduct, ignorant of the revealed scriptures, should be driven out of the Saugatashrama. The Bhikshus and the Yatis who are devoted to their studies will receive every day the necessaries of life.

\*Illegible.

Four tooth-picks, eight betelnuts, half an Adhak of rice, sixty betel-leaves, a handful of Dipika (a digestive), a faggot of wood, should be given to the master (of the Ashrama). (Smaller quantities of these articles are to be given to the other inmates of the Ashramas.) Cooked rice was to be given according to the age of the recipient. The student of good conduct will receive clean leaves (for writing), ink and chalk; and, on special days such as the five festivals, they were to be given special food.

Once in their cells the ascetics would be free from the control of the supervisor.

If innocent persons came to seek in the Ashrama a refuge in their fright, they were not to be handed over to their persecutor, and he was not to seize them.

Neither by word, thought or act was anyone to be killed there. Inoffensive animals were not to be killed in the vicinity of the Ashrama.

Ladies of the royal household and chaste women were to be honoured in the Ashrama as the other guests. They should not, however, enter the cells. Women known to be of bad conduct, were to be refused admittance.

The wealth accumulated through the gifts of the rich was not to be diverted to other uses. (After this Shaiva

Ashrama regulations cease. There may have been more stanzas but they have disappeared.) The slaves, male and female, who would serve the Ashrama, should not be less than 50 in number. Then follows a description of the slaves: Two scribes, two watchmen of the royal hut, two librarians, two betel-leaf-suppliers, two water-carriers, six who would prepare leaves for writing, four torch-bearers, two female slaves for husking rice, cooks, etc.

The Professor (Adhyapaka), towering above the other professors in learning, clad as it were in unimpeachable conduct, should have ten servants.

The Kulapati should have ten slaves, two pairs of scissors, one razor, five pieces of cloth, etc. If the Kulapati does not conform to this decree of the king he will be punished by the king without mercy and handed over to the Tapasvins (ascetics).

The Ashrama regulations of king Yashovarman of Cambodia came to a close with the following noble stanza:—  
The Earth, the Waters, the Winds, the Clouds, the Sun and the Moon—have they the slightest personal interest in contributing to the happiness of created beings? The noble rule of life which the truly great follow is this: to minimize one's personal interests and to strive to promote the interests of others.

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## THE PROPHET OF IRAN

BY F. J. GINWALA, M.A., LL.B.

Zarathustra Spitman or Zoroaster, the prophet of Iran, according to Dr. Jackson and Dr. West, was born in 663 B.C. at Rae in Adarbajan or more precisely the neighbourhood of Lake Urumiah. Spitman like Gautama is a

family designation, and the name comes from the ancestor of the prophet. His father's name was Pourushashpa and his mother's name was Dughdavo or Dogdo. In the Zoroastrian scriptures passages are adduced to show that the



sage's coming had been predicted ages before. The traditional source of information on the subject of the birth and early life of the prophet was originally the Spēnd Nask of the Avesta which gave an account of the first ten years of Zoroaster's existence. Unfortunately this Nask has been lost but its substance has been preserved in the Pahlavi literature and particularly in the Dinkard, in the selections of the Zat-Sparam and in the Modern Persian Zarathustra Namah. These works stand to Zoroastrianism somewhat as the *Lalit Vistara* to Buddhism.

In every religion the birth of its founder is heralded by supernatural signs and omens, and accompanied by wonders and prodigies. In the Avesta all nature rejoices at Zoroaster's birth. Ordinarily, children cry when they are born but in the case of Zoroaster, it is stated, the divine child smiled at his birth. The tradition that Zoroaster smiled instead of crying is as old as Pliny. It is further stated in the Pahlavi writings that four attempts were made by magicians and wizards to destroy the divine child, but they all failed. The first attempt is made to burn the infant in a huge fire, as in the case of Prahlad, but its life is saved by a miracle. An endeavour is made by the sorcerers to have the baby trampled to death by a herd of oxen, but the leading ox stands over the tiny prodigy and prevents it from perishing beneath the feet of the herd. The same experiment is repeated with horses, but the babe is rescued in the same marvellous manner. Even the wolves do not harm a hair of the divine child's head.

Before his seventh year, his father Pourushaspa, knowing that even the wizards had predicted a great future for the youth placed him under the

care of a wise and learned man named Burgin-Kurus.

Even at the early age of ten, Zoroaster showed his power of clairvoyance when he threw away a bottle, containing poison given to him as medicine, during his illness, and thus frustrated the evil designs of his enemies, who wanted to kill him.

Zarathustra is next confirmed in the true religious bonds by assuming the Kusti or the sacred thread at the age of fifteen. From his fifteenth year to the age of thirty the tradition is more meagre in its details. This period is a time not so much for action as it is of religious preparation. At the age of twenty Zat-sparam recounts that "abandoning worldly desires and laying hold of righteousness he departs from the house of his father and mother and wanders forth." It is stated that for seven years Zoroaster kept silent and passed his time in a natural cave in the Mount Elburz. They were undoubtedly the years of meditation, reflection and religious preparation that correspond to similar periods of divine, communings and philosophic introspection in other religious Teachers. The long retirement and separation from men, the hours of meditation, introspection and abstraction, had brought the material frame into complete subjection and had lifted the spiritual body into a realm of ecstatic rapture and transcendent exaltation which prepared it for prophetic vision.

At the age of thirty comes the divine light of revelation and Zoroaster enters upon the true path of the faith. It is in this year that the Archangel of good thought, Vohu Manah, appears before Zarathustra in a vision and leads his soul, in holy trance, into the presence of God Ahura Mazda. During the ten years that follow this vision, Zoroaster has seven different conferences with



Ahura Mazda and the six Amesha Spentas or Archangels. The revelation is complete. Zoroaster receives from Ormazd some final admonition and he carries from heaven the supreme knowledge contained in the Avesta, and also the sacred Ahuna Vairya formula—the OM of the Hindus, the Pancha Shila of the Buddhists—the paternoster of Zoroastrianism.

At parting he is warned to guard against the temptation of the friends who will beset his path as he returns among men. It is the instant when a weaker spirit might be prone to falter and when a false step would mean ruin and damnation. It is the moment when Mara whispered to the newly enlightened Lord Buddha tempting him to enter at once into Nirvana and not to give forth to mankind the illumination which he himself by so hard a struggle had won. The powers of evil now gather their forces for a combined attack upon Zarathustra. A description of the temptation is given forth in the Pahlavi and Avesta writings. The demon Buiti is sent by Ahriman or Satan to deceive and overthrow the holy messenger, but Zoroaster is armed with a breast-plate of righteousness, and with the spiritual weapons of the Law he defeats his spiritual enemies and puts them to flight. The Evil fiend said to Zarathustra, "Renounce the good religion of the Worshippers of Mazda so as to obtain a boon, such as a ruler of a nation." But Spitama Zarathustra answered him, "No, I shall not renounce the good religion of the Worshippers of the Mazda, not though life, and limb and soul should part asunder."

After his illumination it took nearly ten years before Zoroaster won his first convert. His teaching did not seem at the outset to have met with favour. Reforms come slowly and the ground

must be prepared. Ten years elapsed,—years of wandering and struggle, of hope and dejection, of trial and temporary despair—before he won his first disciple. This zealous adherent is his own cousin Maidhyoi, Maonha or Maidhyomah, who is often mentioned in the Avesta and other writings. He is a very different character from Lord Buddha's cousin Devadatta and he stands as the St. John of Zoroastrianism.

The eleventh and twelfth years of the Religion are stirring years in the prophet's life. They are years of struggle, bitter trial, temporary disappointment, but of final triumph; they are the two years devoted to the conversion of King Vistaspa or Gustaspa and when success finally crowns the effort they form the great climax in Zoroaster's career. An inspiration seems to have come to Zoroaster that he should turn to the Court of Vistaspa. Vistaspa is a king or princely ruler but he and his court are represented as having been wrapt in the toils of evil religious influence and fettered by false belief that was rife in the land.

Iran or the Court of Vistaspa is dominated by scheming and unscrupulous priests, and especially powerful amongst them is one Zak. Zarathustra became aware from revelation about the villainess and perverted religion of Zak and the other unscrupulous priests who were at the residence of Vistaspa. There is no doubt that he at once encountered their antagonism and vigorous opposition. They propounded thirty-three questions, and they were all satisfactorily answered by Zarathustra. Vistaspa's interest is aroused and the divine seer seems to have produced a marked effect by being able through his prescience openly to disclose and tell the thoughts of the king and of others with astonishing results. A plot is therefore



concocted by the priests who intrigue for Zoroaster's death. By suborning the porter of his lodging, these wicked schemers, succeeded in hiding vile material within the holy man's apartments so that it may be used as evidence against him. The hair, nails, together with various paraphernalia of witchcraft and sorcery, are thus slipped. On this false evidence Zoroaster is accused of being a wizard and necromancer, and he is thrown into the prison and is left to starve.

A miracle however releases Zarathustra. The king has a favourite black horse. Upon the imprisonment of Zarathustra the horse's four legs are suddenly drawn up into the belly, and the creature is unable to move. The occurrence is plainly a manifestation of divine displeasure. In the dungeon-cell Zarathustra hears of what has happened. He offers, if released, to restore the horse to its former soundness provided the king agrees to accept four specific conditions, *viz.* that he should accept his faith, that his queen Hutose should also embrace his faith, that his son Isfandiar should accept his faith and spread it and the culprits who had bribed the door-keeper and plotted against him should be punished. The king readily accepts these conditions, and the horse is fully restored to health, and leaps up upon his four legs as sound as before.

The conversion of Vistaspa is nearly complete but he still seeks from Zarathustra an additional proof before he is finally convinced. The king now himself makes four counter-requests before he fully adopts the faith. The first of these four requests by Vistaspa is that he may know his final doom and see his place in paradise; the second, that his

body may become invulnerable; the third favour is that he may have universal knowledge, knowing past, present and future; and fourth, that his soul may not leave his body until resurrection. The prophet of Ormazd gives assurance that all these requests may be granted, but he shows that such phenomenal privileges, when granted, could not be combined in the person of a single individual. The king must choose one of the four. His selection is to have permission to behold the place which he shall occupy in heaven. The king quaffs a draft of the "fountain of life" from a fine saucer and he sees his place in heaven. The king's son Peshotau receives from the prophet's hand a cup of milk which he drinks and becomes undying until resurrection. The grand Vazier Jamasp is given flowers, and he becomes endowed with universal Wisdom. The valiant Isfandiar partakes of a pomegranate, and his body is made invulnerable. Thus are bestowed the four great boons which were asked by Vistaspa.

Thereupon the queen embraced the faith, and many conversions follow and the prophet's own family, relatives and friends are frequently referred to in the Avesta as having become faithful adherents and believers. Adherents continued to multiply and devoted volunteers began to crowd into the ranks. From the Avesta we know that other lands and climes came in for a share of the good teachings of the faith. Firdausi speaks of Mobeds who were sent on this holy mission all over the world, assisted by the king's son Isfandiar. A Hindu sage Bias and several Greeks are also stated to have embraced the faith.

Such were the mighty teachings of the great Prophet Zarathustra.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BY K. GIEBENS

AND

DR. SURENDRA KISOR CHAKRAVARTY, M.A., PH.D.

TO THE EDITOR,

*Prabuddha Bharata*,

Mayavati.

SIR,

In the number of July, 1934, of *Prabuddha Bharata*, pp. 338-341, appeared an article entitled: "The Cult of Mithra."

It is strange to see that in such a short article on such a vast subject, the writer has found still the occasion of affirming plenty of things about Christianity. It must be regretted that in these affirmations, not a few historical errors are being found. Such is the case where the article enumerates many "resemblances" between Christianity and Mithraism, which, even according to Grant Showerman, from whom they are copied, may be "only apparent," and which in fact are far fetched and fancied. It is also inexact to call Manichæism a "sect of Christianity." It is not.

It would be too long to refute in detail the many assertions which the article contains without proofs. Can one sincerely contend that a struggle as the one between Christianity and Mithraism was settled "almost by chance?"

The last lines of the article are really offensive. The writer declares in them that "unfortunately" the Aryans of the West did not adhere to Mithraism, but to Christianity. That statement is directly offensive for all Christians, the more so that the writer has just admitted the polytheistic and barbarous note of Mithraism; it is indirectly offensive for all Aryans of India as well who have all failed to adhere to Mithraism.

May I kindly ask you to publish this letter in your next issue?

Yours truly,  
K. GIEBENS.

*St. Mary's College,*  
*Kurseong;*  
*4th July, 1934.*

(Reply)

(a) Resemblances between Christianity and Mithraism:

The quotation is from *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th Edition, Vol. 15, p. 621.

"The points of collision were especially at Rome, in Africa, and in the Rhone Valley, and the struggle was the more obstinate because of the resemblances between the two religions, which were so numerous and so close as to be noticeable as early as the 2nd century, causing mutual recrimination."—From the same article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

(b) Manichæism—a sect of Christianity:

"Permitted to preach his (Mani's) doctrines freely he taught especially the Christians of Mesopotamia, and in a very short time founded the Manichæan sect, which spread with such rapidity that it is evident that Mithraism had prepared men's minds for its reception."—*A History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 436, by Lieut-Col. P. M. Sykes, C.M.G., C.I.E.

"As regards Mani himself, it is safest to assume that he held both Judaism and Catholic Christianity to be false religions.

" . . . . The historical relation of Mani to Christianity is then as follows: From Catholicism, of which he had no detailed knowledge, he borrowed nothing. On the other hand, he looked upon what he considered to be Christianity proper—that is Christianity as it had been developed among the sects of Basilidians, Marcionites and perhaps Bardesanites, as a comparatively valuable and sound religion. He took from it the moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and a criticism of the Old Testament and of Judaism as far as he required it." Or again.—

"Its (of Manichæism) adherents were recruited . . . from the large number of the 'cultured,' who were striving after a 'rational' and yet in some manner *Christian* religion. . . . It admitted the stumbling blocks which the Old Testament offers to



every intelligent reader, and gave itself out as a *Christianity* without the Old Testament. . . .

“The farther Manichæism advanced into the West the more Christian and philosophic did it become . . . . In North Africa it found its most numerous adherents, gaining secret support even among the clergy. Augustine was an *auditor* for nine years while Faustus was at that time the most esteemed Manichæan teacher in the West.”—These quotations are taken from the article on “Manichæism” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th Ed., Vol. 14, p. 803.

In the face of these, is the assertion of Mr. Giebens that Manichæism was not a part of Christianity due to the fact that for a time the “criticism of the Catholic Church . . . . became the strong side of Manichæism?” In that case Protestants are not Christians.

(c) Mr. Giebens need not get frightened by “not a few historical errors,” and indulge in vague sentimentalism. The ‘assertions’ in the article are based on facts from such authoritative sources as *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, etc. The writer does not claim any originality for it and the proof of his assertions will be found in the books of reference given at the end of the article in *Prabuddha Bharata*, and he refers anybody interested in the subject to the full Bibliography given in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol.

VIII, “Mithraism” by H. Stuart Jones of Trinity College, Oxford.

(d) As regards the struggle of Mithraism with Christianity—from *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, pp. 756 and 759.

“When Mithraism sank from a position of privilege to one of toleration, and before long became an object of persecution its days were numbered. It lingered on, on the one hand, in certain less civilized outposts of empire and the Alpine valleys, while, on the other hand, it became the symbol of a lost cause to the group of cultured pagans which maintained the defence of paganism in the senate house.”

(e) It is not the intention of the writer to give any offence to anybody. His intention was to point out that in case the Aryans of the West had not cut themselves off from the old Aryan culture and religion they might have evolved as noble a religion as that of the Aryans of the East—the Upanishadic religion, etc. It is not Mithraism of the degenerate type that is advocated but the purer type of Mithra worship which is a form of Sun-worship. However, this is a personal opinion and the writer does not expect anybody to accept his views.

SURENDRA KISOR CHAKRAVARTY

A. M. College,

Mymensingh ;

17th July, 1934.

[Further discussion closed—Ed.]

## VAKYA-SUDHA

### INTRODUCTION

Vakya-Sudha is one of the numerous primers of monistic Vedanta written by Sankara. It has been truly said by one of the later famous Vedantins that Sankara has made the knowledge of Brahman so abundantly clear even in his primers that he has surpassed in it even Vyasa, the outstanding personality of spiritual India. Sankara has adopted in this book the same method of procedure

which he has done in his famous introduction to the *Bashya* of the *Brahma Sutras*, viz. the discrimination of the subject and the object. This is the method, be it noted, of Sankhya and Yoga philosophies too. This is a method which all rationalistic minds, which find it difficult to accept the God of religion, can readily accept and profit by. Starting with this discrimination when a man comes to pure consciousness, he understands what is really meant by the God of religion and finds

nothing to object to the word or the notion or whatever it be. The first period of our progress begins with the outside world with which we are more familiar and ends with the realization of the innermost; then begins the second period when the progress is a reconstruction of those falsely familiar things in this new light. When this 'inning-and outing' is complete, a perfect syn-

thetic vision results, which is the acme of spiritual realization. This is what Sankara has proposed to do in this little book. He also shows, how Brahman or absolute consciousness with the help of Maya creates the world of matter and individual souls, and how with the disappearance of Maya they vanish leaving behind nothing but that consciousness which was and ever is.

रूपं दृश्यं लोचनं दृक्तदृश्यं दृक्तु मानसम् ।

दृश्या धीवृत्तयः साक्षी दृगेव न तु दृश्यते ॥ १ ॥

1. This phenomenal world or the world of forms is the object and the eye<sup>1</sup> the subject. But the eye is the object and the mental modes<sup>2</sup> the subject. The mental modes (again) are the object and the Witness<sup>3</sup> or the Self is the subject, which is (however) never the object.

<sup>1</sup> & <sup>2</sup> *The eye and the mental modes*—These are not really subjects but are mere instruments of knowledge which the ordinary people mistake for the Seer or the subject. Sankara merely states the common belief and proceeds to impart true knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> *The Witness*—The witness is not a part of the mind, which, according to Vedanta, is material whereas the Self is the pure spirit. It is the eternal Seer untouched by what goes on in the world of objects. It is the 'Vijnata' or the eternal Knower; hence, how and by what means can it be known? In Vedanta subject and objects do not change positions.

नीलपीतस्थूलसूक्ष्मह्रस्वदीर्घादिभेदतः ।

नानाविधानि रूपाणि पश्येल्लोचनमेकधा ॥ २ ॥

2. This world of forms is multiform, its variety being due to (differences of colour, size, shape, etc., such as) blue, yellow, gross, subtle, long, short, etc. But in one and the same way<sup>1</sup> does the mind see them all.

<sup>1</sup> *In one and the same way*—However different the objects are, the eye functions in the same way. The subject is one and so is its functioning, though its objects are many.

आंध्यमाद्यपटुत्वेषु नेत्रधर्मेषु चैकधा ।

संकल्पयेन्मनः श्रोत्रत्वगादौ योज्यतामिदम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. The mind views the properties of the eye such as blindness, dullness, sharpness, etc. in the same way. This (truth) should be extended to the case of the ear, touch, and other organs.

कामः संकल्पसंदेहौ श्रद्धाऽश्रद्ध धृतीतरे ।

हीर्षोर्भोर्चित्येवमादीन् भासयत्येकधा चित्तिः ॥ ४ ॥

4. The Self<sup>1</sup> (which is pure consciousness) reveals in one



and the same way the modes of mind, such as desire, determination and indecision, belief and disbelief, fortitude and its opposite, shame, understanding, fright, etc.

<sup>1</sup> *The Self* etc.—The Self is Chiti or Chit, *i.e.* pure consciousness, which is the true subject and the revealer of all that exists. The apparent subjecthood of others, *viz.* of the mind, eye, etc. is derived from it. The mind and the organs act as the subject, they sometimes do and sometimes do not ; with them it is an act requiring effort. Not so with the Self ; its nature is revealing. It simply is, and by its very 'isness' things are revealed.

नोदेति नास्तमेत्येषा न वृद्धिं याति न क्षयम् ।

स्वयं विभात्यथान्यानि भासयेत्साधनं विना ॥ ५ ॥

5. This consciousness does not rise or set, neither increases nor decreases ;<sup>1</sup> it reveals itself as well as others without the help of any instrument or organ.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Does not rise . . . decreases*—The mind sometimes thinks, sometimes does not (as in deep sleep) and sometimes thinks otherwise ; such is the case with the organs also. They act. But without change there is no action, so they change, *i.e.* they have a beginning, a middle and an end, they are subject to increase and decrease. But we cannot attribute any action to pure consciousness ; hence it does not change but remains eternally the same.

<sup>2</sup> *With the help . . . organ*—If consciousness requires something else, such as organs, to be revealed or conscious of itself, then we are involved in a vicious circle—the organs depending on consciousness for their revealing and consciousness depending on the organs. As regards consciousness revealing other things unaided, it is equally true, as the very existence and functioning of the mind and organs depend on it and not *vice versa*. The scripture says, "What does not think with (the help of) the mind but by what the mind thinks," etc. The next verse explains it further.

चिच्छायाऽऽवेशतो बुद्धौ भानं धीस्तु द्विधा स्थिता ।

एकाहं कृतिरन्या स्यादंतःकरणरूपिणी ॥ ६ ॥

6. Intellect<sup>1</sup> is revealed because of the reflection of this consciousness<sup>2</sup> on it. It is revealed as two : one Egoism, and the other the Internal Organ.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are philosophical or rather psychological differences among Manas, Buddhi, etc. But in primers like this book, these niceties are purposely ignored. Here they are all taken in the general English sense of mind.

<sup>2</sup> *The reflection of this consciousness*—It is a peculiar expression of monistic Vedanta. In fact, immaterial consciousness cannot reflect. But although we do not ordinarily consider intellect to be material, we use such expression as: the boy reflects the powerful intellect of his father. By this we mean that the boy possesses an intellect which is very similar to or as good as that of his father. All systems of philosophy that claim to be logical find some difficulty in explaining the principle of individuation. Logic cannot bind absolute and relative, infinite and finite together—one must be false. Monistic Vedanta holds finitizing to be false, and it must give a tentative explanation to the beginner. Hence the necessity of a term which would not lower down the pure consciousness and yet would indicate it. The expression 'reflection of consciousness' means not the real consciousness but something very akin to it which comes in contact with Buddhi or intellect and gives rise to individuation.

<sup>3</sup> *The Internal Organ*—When the consciousness is reflected on Buddhi or the internal organ (which though existent was so long unrecognized), then begins the dichotomy of knowledge, the division into subject and object. Before that there was but one homogeneous consciousness, and no subject and object. The Witness or pure consciousness

before reflection has been called the subject only by sufferance and from the common-sense point of view, to which awareness means awareness of the object by the subject. But with the reflection, the homogeneity of consciousness breaks, so to say, into two: one being the 'I'-consciousness or Egoism or the real Subject, and the other the Internal Organ, itself an object and through which all other objects are known.

छायाहंकारयोरैक्यं तत्तायःपिंडवन्मतम् ।

तदहंकारतादात्म्यात् देहश्चेतनतामगात् ॥ ७ ॥

7. The identity of the 'reflection' and egoism is like that of a piece of red hot iron.<sup>1</sup> The body has attained to consciousness because of its identification with this egoism.

<sup>1</sup> Like that of a piece of red-hot iron—The heat does not belong to the piece of iron but to fire ; but the piece of iron seems to be hot and is so used for all practical purposes, because it and the fire have been identified. Similarly the reflection is of consciousness and not of egoism ; but because of the identification of the two, the material egoism seems to possess consciousness. A piece of red-hot iron possesses heat which, not being its own, leaves it in time ; but the heat of fire, or the heat which is fire, can never leave it—it is its nature, it is self.

The body in its turn becomes conscious because of its identity with the borrowed consciousness of egoism.

अहंकारस्य तादात्म्यं चिच्छायादेहसाक्षिभिः ।

सहजं कर्मजं भ्रान्तिजन्यं च त्रिविधं क्रमात् ॥ ८ ॥

8. The identity of egoism is with the reflection of consciousness, body and the Witness. This identity is of three kinds (according to the thing with which it is identified), viz. inborn, due to Karma, and illusory, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Inborn . . . respectively—The Witness or pure consciousness never comes in contact with anything, hence the identity with it is hallucination pure and simple. With the body, the identity is due to Karma or fruits of action which determine the kind of body required for the proper enjoyment of those fruits. And the 'reflection' is coexistent with individuation and is therefore called 'inborn.'

संबन्धिनोः सतोर्नास्ति निवृत्तिः सहजस्य तु ।

कर्मक्षयात् प्रबोधाच्च निवर्तेते क्रमादुभे ॥ ९ ॥

9. There is no cessation of these two related existences.<sup>1</sup> But there is cessation of the identities, viz. of the 'inborn' identity, on the wearing out of Karma and the dawn of true knowledge ; and of the other two identities, on the wearing out of Karma and the dawn of knowledge respectively.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Related Existences—The reality of the 'reflection' is of a peculiar type. A shadow is not real in the sense the original is real, still it exists along with it and is coexistent with it, vanishing only when the original vanishes. In the present case the original being eternal, the reflection too is eternal. Hence the two realities, though in fact there is but one reality.

<sup>2</sup> Of the inborn . . . respectively—With the dissolution of cause the effect is also dissolved. The 'inborn' identity is due to Karma and ignorance which latter vanishes with the dawn of knowledge. Hence when both are gone the identity is also gone. Similarly on the destruction of Karma the second kind of identity, which is rooted in Karma, vanishes. Again the third kind of identity being due to ignorance vanishes when the true knowledge dawns.



अहंकारलये सुप्तौ भवेद्देहोऽप्यचेतनः ।

अहंकारविकासार्थः स्वप्नः सर्वस्तु जागरः ॥ १० ॥

10. When in deep sleep egoism ceases,<sup>1</sup> the body too becomes unconscious. In dreams egoism is half manifested and in wakeful state fully manifested.

<sup>1</sup> *Egoism ceases*—This temporary, full or partial, cessation is nothing but the temporary, full or partial, withdrawal of the reflection of consciousness, borrowed or otherwise, from those which appear unconscious. In dreamless sleep, the withdrawal is from body, and sense-organs ; in dreams it is from the gross body alone ; in wakeful state there is complete restoration.

अंतःकरणवृत्तिश्च चित्तिच्छायैक्यमागता ।

वासना कल्पयेत् स्वप्ने बोधेऽक्षैर्विषयान्बहिः ॥ ११ ॥

11. In the dream state the mental modes or the functionings of the internal organ, being identified with the 'reflection of consciousness' create desires<sup>1</sup> (within) and in the wakeful state project objects outside with the help of the (external) organs.

<sup>1</sup> *Desires*—These have not been called objects in order to distinguish them from the real objects of the wakeful state ; though, to all intents and purposes, they are objects.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

The present section of *The Master Speaks* will be concluded in the next issue. . . . Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjee is an old contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. Last April he wrote on 'WHAT DO GODS SIGNIFY.' . . . Swami Jnaneswarananda is organizer of the Vedanta Society in Chicago. *The Science of Meditation* is from a discourse he delivered to a select group of Vedanta students in America. . . . Nanalal C. Mehta has made a special study of Indian Art. His 'STUDIES IN INDIAN ART,' 'GUJARATI PAINTING IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY,' are valuable books on the subject. *Tradition in Indian Art* is from the Presidential

address delivered in the Art section of the last Oriental Conference. The remaining portion will be published next month. . . . THE MASTER MAHASAYA is from 'A SEARCH IN SECRET INDIA,' just published by Messrs. Rider & Co., London. The picture has been so vivid and faithful that we could not resist the temptation of reproducing it. The book is reviewed in this number. . . . Prof. Bijan Raj Chatterjee is a distinguished scholar, and belongs to the staff of the Government College, Meerut. He has made valuable researches about Indian culture in Java and Sumatra and brought out also a book on that. . . . *The Prophet of Iran* is from the pen of a prominent member of the Parsi

community in Bombay. . . . Vakya-Sudha is translated by a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

### INDIA IN JAPAN

One will not be very wrong if one says that India is the cradle of the culture and civilization in the East. In a series of articles such as, "Hindu Culture and Greater India," "Hinduism in Ceylon," "Hindu Religion in Java," "Hinduism in the Philippines," published recently in the *Prabuddha Bharata*, it was pointedly indicated how Hinduism had travelled abroad and permeated the Eastern culture. The Hindu and Buddhist influences can be seen in almost all important Eastern lands.

In an article, published lately in the *Hindustan Review*, Prof. E. E. Speight of the Osmania University shows how Japan is linked with India. Prof. Speight had lived in Japan for fifteen years teaching English in different colleges. In 1923 he came to India, which he calls "the original home of so much in the religion and culture of Japan." In the article referred to above he describes how one feels the Indian atmosphere in Japan. He says, "Japan owes so much of her goodness to what she learnt in early days from India. Those great apotheoses of the noblest human qualities and aspirations which we sometimes call the gods of India are present everywhere in Japan. Close your eyes in festival time there and you will imagine you are in India. Open them wherever you travel and you will see the traces of Indian missionaries of over a thousand years ago. Siva is there, Sri Krishna is there, and on every little island round the coasts of Japan is a shrine to Saraswati." He continues, "That cultural invasion of Japan by Indian ideals came to an end

because India was herself invaded in very different ways, and had to draw back upon herself; but not before she had been able to give to Japan enough to transform and beautify life there into something unique in the history of man. . . ."

Many persons moved by the present degrading condition of India think that she must completely change her outlook on life and model everything after the manner of Western nations; and they point to Japan in support of their opinion. Japan, it is true, has arrested the attention of the world because of her material power, but even in Japan there are signs of reaction against Western imitation. Japan can and does nowadays stand shoulder to shoulder with any great Power of the world. Her industry has been a terror to the competing nations in the field of trade and commerce, her navy and merchant marine are the third largest in the world, she commands a military strength before which the imperialism of the West subdues itself and seeks her friendship. But is Japan very happy? Is she feeling quite at home with her present conditions of life?

"Having thus almost blindly followed in the footsteps of the West, and having achieved a measure of physical progress undreamt of by their forefathers," writes Mr. Toshio Shiratori, a Japanese publicist, in the *Atlantic Monthly* of America, "the Japanese people began to pause and ponder.

"What is all this mad driving and striving for? Where has it landed them? Where are the nations of the West whom they are running after? Would that be a consummation devoutly to be wished?"

"These are the questions they are asking themselves."

According to him under exterior



material success there is, at bottom, a revolt, in Japan, of mind against matter, and a cry of "Back to Asia."

About the present position of Japan, Mr. Shiratori says, "The whole situation in Japan to-day is rather too involved to be reduced to simple terms, nor are the various elements of the nation as yet thinking with one mind or working towards the same objective. On one point, however, there seems to be a consensus of opinion, and that is that blind imitation of the West has to cease and that there must be a cool and mature re-examination of the West in the light of the idealism of the East, so that there may be evolved a distinct civilization hitherto not known." Lately Japan has incurred the displeasure and suspicion of many, by her aggressive imperialism, but if she be sincere in her profession of the above ideal and if she realize it in practice, she will be an object-lesson to all Eastern countries, including India.

#### A PARADOX AND A TRAGEDY

Speaking with reference to the condition of America, Dr. Lindley, the Chancellor of the University of Kansas for the last fourteen years, said that no aspect of the paradox of want in the midst of plenty was more ominous, as one looked into the future, than the need and desire for more education amid increasing numbers of unemployed teachers.

If this is the state of affairs in America, what to say of the condition in India? In our country the percentage of literates is frightfully low, and still, there is a large number of educated youths who are pining away in dire poverty! Cannot they be organized to further the cause of education in the country?

Here also the example of America is worth following. According to *The*

*Literary Digest* the Federal Emergency Relief Administration of U. S. A. has, in the course of nine months, given employment to 44,000 teachers who are teaching more than 1,250,000 pupils. A similar scheme has been started to enable the poor students to prosecute their college studies. The College Students' Educational Project tries to provide work to the poor students so that they may earn something while reading in colleges. By giving money not "in the form of scholarships, or of the dole, but in wages for useful work on a wage-scale" the above organization has helped 75,000 students to continue their college career. One very good feature of this scheme is that it creates in the minds of boys a keen sense of self-respect and gives them a great satisfaction that they are indebted to nobody.

Difficulties and crises come to every country. But the difference between India and other countries is that whereas other countries strive their best to cope with the situation, and leave no stone unturned to grapple with difficulties, India, when faced with any calamity, looks helpless and easily submits to her lot as inevitable.

#### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS

There is much talk about religious education in schools and colleges. But nowhere any experiment in that direction has met with great success. The mere drilling of scriptures into the minds of boys will not create in them a religious hankering; on the contrary, the talking of religion to boys in advance of any hankering on the part of them will create in boys a great disgust for religion. One gets religious spirit imperceptibly from the persons who live a genuine religious life. Reli-



gion is taught best through silence—through living a religious life.

Dr. Cyril Norwood, speaking at a conference on religious education, arranged by the Association for Adult Religious Education, at Haywards Heath, deplored that there was no adequate provision for religious education in English schools. Some think that religion is entirely a matter of the home education. But Dr. Norwood regretted that there was generally no religion in the home in England. Therefore the result was that boys and girls grew up with alarming ignorance of anything relating to religion. As a remedy he suggested that “it would be a great help if each boarding school should have a chaplain—a person to whom the boys could resort in times of trouble with confidence that their secrets would not be passed on.”

Applying the suggestion to the condition in India, we would say if there are teachers to whom boys can approach with the problems of their inner life, a very good result will follow. But for that teachers should live such an exemplary life that they will easily win the confidence and trust, admiration and respect of boys. Teachers need not feel too much anxiety to give religion to their boys. Let them only remember that the slightest blemish on their character will greatly re-act upon the minds of their boys, and so they should be careful to be above that. For the sake of the boys—if not for their own sake—they should live a life of great inner struggle. In that case even if the boys have no direct influence during the period they live under their care, the boys will find great strength from the remembrance of the examples of their teachers, when they enter the world and have to pass through fiery ordeals.

What applies to teachers, applies to parents as well. In the matter of religious education the home and the school should combine. If the influence of the school is undermined by the effect of an unhealthy home, or *vice versa*, no result can be expected. But it is usual to lay all the blame of a bad education on the shoulder of the poor teachers, while parents think that they have no responsibility in the matter.

#### MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU'S ADVICE

India is passing through a great transitional period. She is pulsating with new hopes and aspirations, and many movements are afoot to build up a better India. In this respect women are not lagging behind; they are also coming out to share responsibility along with men. But the problem of women is very complex, because they have to keep a balance between family duties and public activities, between old traditions and new demands. If they fail to do that, many homes are likely to be broken, and in that they themselves also will have to suffer.

In regard to this Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who has seen much of the East and the West, gives some very weighty advice. Addressing a ladies' meeting at Bangalore, last month, she is reported to have said “that the women of India at the present day needed less education and more of culture. She would condemn the feeling among modern girls that the teaching of the past was useless. In India, women took themselves too seriously, and they had at present no time to devote to the art of living and of culture. Real culture was that which made life simple and rich. Real culture widened their ideas and made them wise, sympathetic and tolerant. If women thought that they could learn all from books and not from



life, they would remain ignorant and uncultured. The traditional position of responsibility and duties given to women in India had been abrogated by them. They could regain their ancient position, not by holding conferences and passing resolutions, but only by united efforts for the common good."

But she would not ask the Indian women to move only in the past. So she said "that it was the duty of women to keep themselves in touch with what was happening in the world, India could make her best contribution not by being conservative but by showing to the world her example of piety and devotion, her power of sacrifice, her wide sympathy and compassion. These were the gifts that India could give to the world and in this women had to have their share and part."

#### SELF-CREATED SUFFERINGS

Calderon, a great Spanish dramatist of the 17th century, had the following story for one of his dramas: "that a kind of Cipriano or Faust is through life thwarted in all his plans for the acquisition of wealth, or honour, or happiness, by a masked stranger who stands in his way like some Alastor or evil spirit. He is at length in love—the day is fixed for his marriage—when the unknown contrives to sow dissension between him and his betrothed, and to break off the match. Infuriate with his wrongs, he breathes nothing but revenge, but all his attempts to discover his mysterious foe prove abortive: at length his persecutor appears of his own accord. When about to fight, the *Embozado* unmask, and discovers the phantasm of himself, saying, 'Are you satisfied?' The hero of the play dies with horror."

How nicely this strange story illustrates the tragedy of every life. The

root cause of the sufferings of every man will be found to lie within himself. The man who hates the world finds himself hated by all. Conversely, if the man who complains of having received antipathy from the world looks within himself, he is sure to find that he never cared to give sympathy to anyone. On the contrary, the man who is of loving nature, finds himself loved by one and all. Man gets back like a 'boomerang' only what he throws to the world. Man and the world meet half way; the world can commit no harm to the man who has wronged none in the world. Half the misery of man is imaginary and the remaining half is brought on by his own folly or wickedness. So the man who wants to be happy in life, should try to root out the source of all evil from within himself.

#### LESSONS FROM THE AMERICAN SOCIETY

Those who want to reform our society on Western models, very often do not care to know what is the real situation in the Western social life. They are dazzled by the outer glare and glitter, and do not know what lies underneath many apparently good things. Swami Vivekananda from his intimate personal contact with the Western society of all grades said that outwardly the Western society was a loud peal of laughter, but inwardly it was a long wail. In a recent issue of the *Forum*, an English periodical published from New York, we find an American writer bemoaning the pitiful condition of the American society. He says, "If there is one widespread phenomenon in American social life, the evil fruits of which young people have experienced and observed on every side, it is the havoc wrought by divorce, broken homes, and artificially orphaned children. Young men reared in this twentieth century do not need to con-



sult statistics or police records to know that five-sixths of our youthful criminals and adolescent delinquents are the products of disrupted homes."

Still, there is incessant cry for greater and greater personal freedom from all social laws, which to some extent check a society from running into chaos. In many places family has broken up, persons find no peace anywhere; still their outlook on life is such as will create more and more confusion in society. The above writer says that it is foolish for scholarly sociologists to theorize that the breakdown of family life can be remedied by abolishing it altogether. But people in Western countries are vying with one another to make the family more and more unstable.

Many think that a scientific view of

sex and a wider knowledge of that will improve the situation. But the writer gravely doubts that. "The fact of the matter is," he says, "that never before was there such worldly sophistication prevalent among young adolescents; and never before was there such utter moral chaos prevailing among them." Therefore he cannot support the scheme of more sophistication in order to cure the evils of sophistication. Nor can he justify the appeals of the Russells and the Lindsays for greater "sex freedom." For, encouraging evil will never bring forth good.

This confession of an American writer deserves notice by those Indians who think that many of our social canons are useless, dead conventions, fit only for the people of the Medieval Age.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**INDIA IN THE MAKING.** By Swami Avyaktananda. *The Universal Publishing Corporation, Bankipore, Patna. 143 pp. Price Re. 1.*

This thought-provoking little book supplies us with some of the best thoughts and sentiments of to-day; and lays down a scheme of national reconstruction for India, which satisfies the three main currents of modern socio-political thoughts, viz. internationalism, nationalism and individualism. Speaking on religion, art, society, politics and economy, the book deals with a very comprehensive, but by no means a complex, scheme. The plan adumbrated herein is simple and practical and is at the same time, leavened with a high idealism. A deep student of the writings of Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita, and equipped with a critical understanding of the various movements of the West, the author has viewed the problems with a highly catholic eye and has arrived at conclusions which can be accepted by Hindus, Muslims and Christians as well as by Socialists and nationalists without sacrificing any of their fundamental principles.

Speaking of religion the author says: "Essentially speaking, every religion is universal and implies at its best the harmony of all religions." "Popular Hinduism, popular Christianity, popular Islam do not and cannot teach us unity in diversity. Genuine Hinduism, genuine Christianity, genuine Islam can." "The national religion of India is to be a federation of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam." "So all religions are our own. . . . It is not passive toleration but sincere acceptance that should be our ideal. We in ordinary life possess so many things. It is not that we use them all at a time; but every moment we are conscious of our own possession."

The author is against the wiping out of the Varnashramachara (the Caste-and-Order System) in the new social order and advocates its modernization "in the light of Guild-Socialism and Anarchist Communism" by removing untouchability, popularizing "the common principles of Indian culture and other elevating thoughts of the modern West" and preaching "the gospel of work as taught in the Gita." About the place of women in society the author says: "India



has crushed the human aspect of women to make them divine. The West has neglected the divine aspect of women to make them human. Modern India must combine both in her women and evolve a perfect feminine type." "The legitimate corollary of the Vedantic equality will be an equality in social privileges . . . between men and women . . ."

The author's scheme of national reconstruction includes two bodies: (1) An All-India Religious Organization whose duty would be to practise, preserve and diffuse (a) "the universal ideals of the Vedanta and thus harmonize the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran," (b) "the ideals of the divinity of man and the solidarity of humanity," and (c) "the spirit of Karma Yoga." (2) A body somewhat like the Indian National Congress with duties "to organize village Panchayats and other higher organizations" "formed out of the integration of village Panchayats . . ." which are "to be in charge of education, sanitation, law and order, economic and industrial pursuits."

The readers will find in the book not fanciful theories and sweeping generalizations that are too cheap nowadays but workable hints and somewhat detailed schemes based on a true reading of the history of the land in the light of the modern world movements. The readers will, we hope, be greatly benefited by its reading.

**A SEARCH IN SECRET INDIA.** By Paul Brunton. *Rider & Co., Paternoster House, London, E.C.* 312 pp. Price 15s.

*A Search In Secret India* is a commendable record of Mr. Paul Brunton's study of Hinduism as it prevails to-day among the Holy Men of India. The author does not, happily, belong to that group of Western writers who are singularly devoid of charity and humanism when it comes to a question of depicting the unhappy India. Pride of birth, political supremacy and such like bars that cleave man from man find no place in Mr. Brunton's heart. Neither is he carried away by the zeal and enthusiasm of a new convert. We find in him a happy combination of the earnestness of a seeker and the unbiassed critical attitude of an investigator.

In his exploration Mr. Brunton spares no pains. He travels throughout the length and breadth of the land—into the interiors—in search of enlightened saints and seers. He considers no price too high provided it can

bring him face to face with a real Yogi. In the religious drama that he sees enacted on the Indian continent as the stage, the plots and characters are more or less exhaustively incorporated. There are pretenders, charlatans, sincere seekers, and a rare few that have attained perfection. From among these, we may safely say, Mr. Brunton has successfully eschewed the chaff and selected the corns.

The author complains that India is totally lacking in scientific and critical investigation which, according to him, is purely Western. He deplores the Indians mixing up hearsay with facts. He shuns the "devotees" and dreads the disciples who have the "legend-swallowing ability." While we may to some extent agree with Mr. Paul Brunton, we may also do well to point out to him that he has not yet come across that section of the 'Secret India' in which reason and investigation alone play the foremost part, and which logically maintains that God is the only Reality—the world in its variety being a superstitious superimposition. After all, credulous people are in all societies—some credulous over spirit while others over matter. Let the learned try to know for themselves which of the two is the better credulity.

Mr. Brunton comes to the East, being distressed at heart. That it is a spiritual unrest which has overtaken him, he is not himself fully aware. The thirst for a higher life, if there is any, supersedes the journalist, scientist, atheist and every other "ist" in him. Anxiously he seeks all over the sacred land, and fervently he knocks at her spiritual door. His holy pilgrimage is in the end amply rewarded. If India has a message to the world, it is this which Mr. Paul Brunton has sought and found. We warmly recommend this book to all the seekers after Divine Heritage.

S. C.

**THE SUJNA GOKULJI ZALA VEDANT PRIZE ESSAY** for 1915. By M. T. Telivala, B.A., LL.B., Vakil, High Court, Bombay. *Published by Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay.* 96 pp.

The author tells us in the Preface: "This is one of the two essays selected by the Bombay University for the Sujna Gokulji Zala Vedant Prize, 1915. The essay was submitted in June, 1915; and the result was declared in December, 1917." The subject of the essay was: Discuss how far Sankara-



charya truly represents the view of the author of the Brahmasutras. The author has given his verdict against Sankara. The essay is really a learned one. Though we do not share the author's view, we cannot but admire his skilful handling of the subject. This is a very old subject for discussion on which no final conclusion can be arrived at; for, the wording of the Sutras, their arrangements into Purvapaksha and Siddhanta Sutras and into Adhikaranas, as well as their reference to the Sruti are such as can reasonably be interpreted in more ways than one. Such controversial subjects however should attract our attention, and as such the book is worth reading.

#### FRENCH

#### THE BIBLE AND INDIA

It is a sign of the times that as a result of the profounder intercourse between races due to travels, commercial expansion and social contacts as well as the researches of scholars in the East and West into the achievements of foreign cultures, past and present, people to-day are getting more and more impressed by the vast amount of similarities, nay, identities in the mental and moral make-up of the diverse branches of humanity.

And so "convergent lights" are demonstrated to be thrown by the Christian and Indian thoughts in the work entitled *La Bible et l'Inde: Clartés Convergentes* 1 Paris Librairie Orientale et Americaine, 1933, (pp. 300). The author is a French lady who wants to remain anonymous and has got her work published over the signature of Alex Emmanuel. It is not possible, however, to detect the feminine authorship except in an adjective in one of her letters addressed to Prof. Ernest Zyromski who writes a fine and fairly large-sized essay, *Le Message Oriental*, by way of preface to the book. The work is the product of considerable labour and much devotion.

The author's spirit is admirable. She wants her work to serve as a contribution to the establishment, in some distant future of course, of universal religion, towards which she believes mankind has been moving. In any case, the religious *rapprochement* of East and West is the direct objective of this publication. Her motive is essentially religious. She proceeds as a Christian and from the Christian point of view she discovers the

analogies between the most diverse races, the fundamental unities of mankind.

The categories of her philosophy are Christian. The following topics are discussed: Revelation, The Absolute, Personal God, The Eternal, The Only Son, The Holy Communion, The Historic Christ, Redemption, The School of Humanity, Salvation by Law, Salvation by Work, and Salvation by Grace. The basic contents of these Christian categories are found by the author to be essentially allied to or even identical with the Indian (Hindu and Buddhist) principles of spiritual life.

In one of the chapters on salvation the author compares the sacrifice of Christ as explained by Paul with the divine sacrifice as described in the *Rig-Veda*. Passages relating to salvation by good work are quoted from *Anguttara Nikaya*, *Manu*, *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Mundakopanishad*, *Dhammapada* and *Bhagavat-Purana*, and placed in the perspective of sayings from different parts of the Bible.

The Hindu conception of the Absolute is illustrated by citations from *Rig-Veda* x, 121, 1, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* II, 9, 1, *Bhagavad-Gita* xiii, 12-16, *Yayurveda-Ishopanishad* 1, 5, *Mundakopanishad* 1, 9, 888, 1, 7-8, *Shvetashvataropanishad* IV, 18-20, *Kathopanishad* IV, 12-13, The Chinese philosopher Laotze is also quoted. The passages are intended to throw light on the *Genesis*, 1, 2, *Psalms*, XCI, 9, *Isiah*, XL, 12-14, *Exodus*, XXXIII, 11, *Jeremiah*, LI, 15, II, *Corinthians*, XII, 4, I. *Corinthians*, XIII, 12, *Psalms*, CXXXVIII, 4. The discussion may be regarded as a study in parallel passages from Christian and non-Christian texts.

The methodology is clear. It is questionable, however, if "orthodox" Christians would go so far as the author in the rather much too liberal interpretation of the Biblical passages. It is well known that official Christianity can hardly sacrifice its "Dogma" in the interest of anthropology, history, psychology, etc. The author is not unaware of opposition likely to be encountered.

The question of Christian Dogma does not, however, affect every passage from the Bible cited by the author. In regard to those Christian passages which have no bearings on Dogma and which are valuable as aids to *spiritual* and *moral* life as distinguished from religion, the author may be said very often to have successfully discovered happy parallels from the teachings of Indian



masters, from the sages of the *Rig-Veda* to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The work can be well appreciated by the present reviewer, author as he is of *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes* (Shanghai 1916) and *The Futurism of Young Asia* (Berlin 1922), works in which the doctrine of equality, similarity and identity between East and West was established on all fronts,—legal, constitutional, æsthetic, economic, social, religious and philosophical.

The fundamental defect in *La Bible et l'Inde* is therefore to be found in the following statement which occurs at p. 22: "The Orientals are inferior to us in everything that touches on practical life." In other words, like most of the modern Euro-American scholars, Orientalists, philosophers, and sociologists the author ignores or is blind to the achievements of the Oriental people in the domains of administration, social organization, public-spirited activities, arts and crafts as well as material civilization in its varied phases. Hence her interpretations of Oriental spirituality, metaphysical speculation and mysticism are based on insufficient data and remain one-sided as well as misleading.

The author's fallacy is the same as that of Henri Massis (in his *Defense de l'Occident*) who is quoted by M. Zyromski in the preface to the present work as maintaining

the thesis that "the India of Yoga and Vedanta has nothing to teach us," that the "idea of law as something sovereign does not exist in Asia," and that "Asian speculation is a vast dreaming in which all is mixed up to founder into the depths of the indeterminate and return to the peace of abyss" (p. XXXIII). This, indeed, is the traditional view of the West regarding the East. And the present author in spite of her noble mission of establishing a universal religion and world-wide brotherhood has failed to get beyond the Occidental tradition, which is used to denying to the Oriental genius, the capacity for practical attainments.

M. Zyromski, who sponsors the book, takes a correct view in the preface when he wants the readers to remember that the "Occident also has its philosophers of cosmic sentiment, the Christian mystics who are incomparable, the poets who have exhibited to the world as remarkable sensibility as the effusions of primitive poets" (p. xxxii). This message should be valuable to the scholars, philosophers and sociologists of Asia who are inclined too often to deny spirituality and mysticism to the Occidental spirit.

The work may be read with profit by every student of religion, philosophy and sociology.

BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SWAMI JNANESWARANANDA AND SWAMI AKHILANANDA BACK TO INDIA

Swami Jnaneswarananda, president of the Vedanta Society in Chicago, and Swami Akhilananda, head of the Vedanta Centre in Providence, came back to India last month. Swami Jnaneswarananda went to America in 1927, and, after working for some time in New York, opened the Centre in Chicago. Swami Akhilananda went to America in 1926. He started the Centre in Providence in 1928. It was also due to his endeavour that another Vedanta Society—the Society in Washington—was established.

Both the Swamis after a short stay in India will go back to their respective fields of work.

### RAMKRISHNA MISSION INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, BELUR

At the opening ceremony of a new building for the Ramkrishna Mission Industrial School at Belur on July 23, which was the occasion for addresses by Swami Suddhananda, Prof. Jay Gopal Banerjee, Rai Bahadur Nagendra Nath Banerjee—Public Appraiser Rishikesh Mookerjee, Surendra Nath Chakrabarti—Medical College Superintendent, and others, the following was said by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar:—

"The story of the Belur Math since the laying of the foundation stone by Swami Vivekananda in 1899 to the opening of the new building for the Ramkrishna Mission Industrial School by Swami Suddhananda



to-day is a story of month to month, nay, week to week expansion of the activities of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement along diverse fronts—religious, sanitary, philanthropic, educational and cultural, both at home and abroad. And this expansion of the Belur Movement is really an epitome of the all-round expansion of the Bengali people during the last generation.

“About 1901 not more than 10 engineers used to come out of the Shibpur Engineering College every year. To-day the number is fourfold. In those days not more than 500 scholars were enrolled in all the lower technical and industrial schools of Bengal. To-day the number of such scholars is about 7,000.

“This expansion has been attended with and is really a result of the combined patriotic endeavour of all classes of the Bengali people. Industrial schools, vocational training, technical and scientific research, all require a financial outlay. We are in a position to say that like the Ramkrishna Mission every other association for the scientific and industrial education of Bengalis has been mainly financed by Bengali Zamindars (landholders), the class which for all practical purposes has been the chief representative of concentrated capital in Bengal.

“The Zamindars have pioneered to a considerable extent the movement for industrial and technical education in Bengal. The Ashanulla Technical School at Dacca is an instance. Raja Jagatkishore Acharya Chowdhury of Muktagacha has established a Technical School at Mymensingh. Seal's Free Industrial School at Calcutta is well-known. Maharaja Cossimbazar's Polytechnic Institute is likewise located in Calcutta. The enthusiasm for technical education found one of its first expressions in the Swadeshi Movement of 1905-06 and was embodied in the National Council of Education which is to-day represented by the College of Engineering and Technology at Jadabpur, near Calcutta. We are all aware that every pice of the several million Rupees with which this institution was originally endowed came from the Zamindar community. The late Raja Subodh Chandra Mallik of Calcutta and Maharaja Surya Kanta Acharya Chowdhury of Mymensingh and Sj. Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury of Gouripur (Mymensingh) have therefore become immortal in Bengal. Nor must we forget that the donations and

subscriptions collected by Sj. Jogendra Chandra Ghosh since 1904 with the object of maintaining hundreds of scholars in industry, science and commerce with stipends in Japan, America and Europe have been the gifts of landholders throughout the length and breadth of Bengal. Finally, there is the Department of applied sciences at the Calcutta University. A great part of the finances of this department is likewise the donation of landholders.

“Agricultural renaissance has always to be striven after with the aid of intensified co-operative movement in credit and marketing as well as with land-mortgage banks and technical improvements. But the ‘tonic of machinery’ as applied to arts and crafts,—the industrialization of the country,—is the chief desideratum at the present moment. It is a glory of Vivekananda's philosophy that his neo-Vedantism found a proper place for materialistic progress along technocratic lines in its scheme of full-blooded life. We are happy that this ideology is now inspiring virtually every class of our countrymen from the landholder, the lawyer, the schoolmaster and the medical man to the clerk, the merchant and the peasant. The Ramkrishna Mission can therefore depend for funds and other support on all classes as indeed the representative character of the present gathering demonstrates.”

## THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION, CEYLON BRANCH

### FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1932—JUNE 1933

The Ceylon Branch of the Ramkrishna Mission has two kinds of activities, viz. those that are *mainly religious* and those that are *mainly educational*.

The Colombo Ashrama is the Headquarters of the Mission in the Island.

*Activities, mainly religious:*—(a) At the Ashrama the Swamis conducted weekly discourses on the Upanishads and the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna on Sundays, and a series of discourses on the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda on Thursdays. (b) A religious class was conducted in Slave Island during the months of October, November and December. Another class on Tamil Literature on Tuesday nights was also ably conducted. (c) During the year under review, the Swamis of the Mission delivered



several lectures in Colombo under the auspices of many associations. (d) The Swamis of the Mission went on tours to various important places on invitation and gave public lectures on topics cultural and religious. (e) Monthly Radio-talks on popular and cultural subjects were also given. (f) Swami Paramananda, head of the Vedanta Centres at Boston and La Crescenta gave a few very brilliant and stirring addresses which were highly appreciated by the public. (g) The birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as well as of the great Saivite Saints were held with due pomp.

*Activities mainly educational:—*(a) The Ashrama maintains a library and a reading room moderately stocked with books and magazines and dailies. (b) The English School in Trincomalie made good progress during the year. The Tamil School will shortly be made a model school for the District, the Inspecting Officers of the Education Department having made recommendations for it. (c) The English School at Kalladi-Uppodai was given a graduate Head Teacher and has recorded steady progress. *The Ramkrishna Mission Students' Home* maintained nineteen orphans. The eight Tamil Schools in the Batticaloa District showed steady progress. (d) The two schools in Jaffna are managed by a local committee.

In all the 13 schools managed by the Mission there are approximately 2,200 pupils and 75 teachers.

Moral and religious instructions were continued to be given to the inmates of the Mantivu Leper Asylum and the prisoners in the Batticaloa Gaol. The usual treat was also given to them on New Year's Day.

The Ashrama is in urgent need of a plot of land, a temple and a building for the accommodation of the monks and a permanent fund for its maintenance, for which the Ashrama requires at least Rs. 25,000. Persons wishing to perpetuate the memory of those who are near and dear to them can do so either by creating a permanent fund or by erecting one or more rooms or the entire building or by making a gift of a plot of land or by purchasing a site for the Ashrama. Any sum earmarked for any particular purpose will be spent wholly for that purpose.

Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by: The Treasurer, The Ramkrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch), Wellawatte, Colombo.

## THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION BRANCH CENTRE, DACCA

### ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1933

The activities of this branch centre are broadly classified under three heads: Missionary, Educational and Charitable.

The mission has organized some centres in different parts of the city, where scriptures and teachings of Prophets are read and explained. Free discussion of personal doubts, comparative study of different religions and universal toleration are the distinctive features of these sittings. More than 200 such sittings were held in the year under review. A large number of lectures were delivered at various places in the town including the university and even outside the town, some of the prominent lecturers being Swami Sharvananda, Swami Paramananda and Swami Adyananda. The birthday anniversaries of Prophets and Teachers, including Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, were also duly celebrated, with devotional songs, exposition of scriptures, lectures and feeding of the poor.

This branch conducts two schools, one for boys teaching up to Class V and the other for girls teaching up to Class IV. The numbers on the rolls are respectively 133 and 25. Two libraries containing 2,373 and 328 books and one Reading Room are also conducted. Pecuniary help to poor students is another item of this section.

Monthly doles of rice and pecuniary help to deserving persons and families, house-to-house nursing and the running of an out-door dispensary are its charitable works. The system of treatment at the dispensary is generally Homœopathy, but Ayurvedic and Allopathic medicines are used occasionally. The number of new cases treated is 3,130 and that of the repeated cases, 2,893.

The immediate needs of the centre are:

- (i) a building for the accommodation of the ever-swelling number of boys of the school, estimated at Rs. 6,000;
- (ii) Rs. 500 for a wall behind the school buildings; and
- (iii) a permanent fund to ensure safe and smooth working of the school.

Its total receipts in 1933 amounted to Rs. 3,590-9-2, and disbursements, Rs. 1,416-5. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by:—The Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission, Dacca.



THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION  
SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON

THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT (1933)

During the year under review the number of admission in the in-door section has considerably increased. The opening of a new department for the treatment of ear, nose and throat under a specialist will certainly attract more in-door patients. In view of the increasing demand for accommodation and treatment both in the in-door and out-door departments of the hospital, additional accommodation is urgently required.

The total attendance of patients at the Sevashrama was 1,87,540. These patients did not belong exclusively to the city of Raugoon; a considerable number of them came from the suburbs and from some remote districts of Burma.

The number of patients admitted in the in-door department during the year under review was 2,347 men and 839 women including children. The aggregate of the daily totals of attendance came up to 27,985 men, 7,660 women and 1,227 children; the average period of stay in the hospital in each case was 11 days for women and 12 days for men.

At the out-patients department the total number of attendance came up to 1,50,668 including men, women and children. The average daily attendance was 283 men, 77 women, 53 children, *i.e.* a total of 413.

The total income in the year under review was Rs. 49,988-9-2, and the total amount spent was Rs. 33,972-10-1. Any contribution, in cash or kind, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by:—The Secretary, R. K. Mission Hospital, Rangoon-East, Burma.

RAMKRISHNA MISSION'S RELIEF WORK  
IN ASSAM

We have already informed the public that we have opened three relief centres, *viz.*, Jhingabari, Bilajuri and Bangsikunda in the flood-affected areas in Sylhet, and two others, *viz.*, Dharamtul and Fulaguri in the district of Nowgong. Pressing appeals for help have compelled us, since then, to increase considerably the number of villages within the jurisdiction of all our centres,

despite our limited funds. Altogether 974 mds. 29 srs. 8 chs. of rice were distributed among 6,248 recipients of 114 villages up till August 7, besides 407 pieces of new cloths and 16 pieces of old ones. A small quantity of *Chira* and molasses was also distributed among the recipients in case of necessity.

Along with the distribution of food-stuffs, distribution of cloths, paddy-seeds and supply of capital money to the able-bodied youths and widows to help them to restart their hereditary occupations, have however now become an immediate necessity. Our small distributions in these directions are too inadequate to meet the urgent demands. All these require a big sum of money. We are repeatedly informing the public that our funds are well-nigh exhausted. The help that we have so far received from our kind-hearted friends are too insufficient to relieve the acute distress of the affected area. We are still having appeals to open fresh centres in the areas where no relief has yet reached.

Our relief work in Behar is still going on from our centres at Monghyr and Motihari. As the latter district has been recently subject to floods, we have to give fresh necessary relief there. We are also having petitions from other parts to start relief works. But the paucity of our funds does not allow us to give fresh consideration to them. Our total collections for this relief work is Rs. 1,12,950-13-9 and total disbursement amounts to Rs. 1,11,067-10-0 leaving only a small balance with us.

We therefore earnestly appeal to our generous friends to feel the acuteness of the distress and stretch their accustomed helping hands once again to relieve the suffering of the people of Assam.

Contributions, however, small, will be most thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses:

1. President, Ramkrishna Mission,  
Belur Math, (Howrah).
2. The Manager, Udbodhan Office,  
1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar,  
Calcutta.
3. The Manager, Advaita Ashrama,  
4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.

VIRAJANANDA

Secretary