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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

“SODAR” SONG*

BY GURU NANAK

Stately is Your abode from whence
You mind Your wondrous works.
A thousand symphonies pay tribute eternal to You,
Countless melodies from angels divine.

All elements, the waters, the winds, and the fire,
And the Seraph arbiter of the fates of men,
And the unrelenting scribes of the deeds of mortals
Pay their homage to You, Almighty.

Brahma and Shiva, the lords of creation and of destruction,
And the Queens of the Heavens celestial,
And Indra, the Lord Preserver, with all his pomp of Court,
Are all but adornments unto You.

Oh, the wise, sages meditate on but You,
The self-denying, the righteous and knights ever triumphant too,
Oh, the Pandits, rich with their lore of ages,
And the Rishis, but sing of You, Almighty.

Enchanting houris that allure the heart in Heaven, the Earth and Hell,
And the purifying shrines, sixty-eight in number,
That stand ransom for all temptation and sin,
All but bring glory unto You.

* Translated by Professor Charanjit Singh Bindra of the Khalsa College, Amritsar.

The warriors brave who stand unrivalled in strength,
 And all the sources of creation, high and low,
 And the Regions, immense vastnesses of space,
 Bow in adoration but to You, Almighty.

Blessed are they who bring glory to You,
 For You have granted them the Love celestial.
 'Tis not for Nanak to count them all,
 The countless millions blessed by You.

You, You alone are eternal, Master,
 Though the creation be but transient.
 Truth needs must prevail at all times :
 Nature may cease to be, not You, Almighty.

The varied genera and the multitude of species,
 O Lord, You have created to Your glory !
 Do You revel in the joy of creation?—
 Bounteous Nature but bears testimony unto You !

Whatever be in Your Grace, O Lord,
 Let that be ordained for naught else can avail.
 You are the King, aye, the grantor of Kingships !
 Nanak supplicates but for grace of You, Almighty.

A NEW ERA IN INDIA

BY THE EDITOR

I

India stands to-day on the threshold of a new era. The teeming millions of her soil are waking up from their deep slumber of centuries to the renewed apprehension of their national ideals. An unprecedented enthusiasm for gaining back their pristine glory is witnessed in the corporate life of the people. In the words of Dr. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, "In every phase of life in India to-day, political or cultural, economic or artistic, everybody who is anybody is a fighter, a fighter against some social obscurantism, whether Hindu or Moslem, some alien chauvinism, some vassalage in art, some industrial thralldom or some subjection in scientific, sociological, economic

and philosophical theory."¹ In fact in the realms of art and literature, history and philosophy, music and painting, archæology and medicine, the genius of the Indian people stands revealed afresh in all its richness and glory. Even the Indian schools of physics and chemistry, mathematics and botany have already got over the deadening psychology of inferiority complex and are taking front-bench seats in the world's academic halls. In short, every field of thought in India is now crammed with changes of great national importance. That the history of this once great nation is being made anew before our very eyes

¹ *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, P. 334.

can hardly be gainsaid. For, when the white lights of the happy morn fall on the woods and rivers, hills and dales, and the rustling of leaves and the twittering of birds are heard in suppressed undertones of dreamlike mystery, none can doubt that the cities and villages from one end of the land to the other are all astir and the spirit of the people is awake with the break of day to the grim realities of life.

But the history of a nation is not made in a day. It is the result of the silent working of the manifold creative forces for centuries. The modern life of India proves with unerring certitude that a nation that can stand loyal to the stimulating principles of its historic growth and expansion—to its cultural genius and tradition—can, like the phoenix of old, spring back into a life of renewed activity from the ashes of the past. Indeed it is the elasticity of India's spiritual culture that has ever kept ablaze the Promethean fire of her people even in the midst of the baffling variety of trials and tribulations of ages. The secret of this magnificent efflorescence of India's cultural genius after cataclysms of centuries is to be sought not so much in extraneous circumstances as in the spiritual instincts of the people themselves. For, it is a striking phenomenon in the annals of India that every great national revival has always been preceded or accompanied by a spiritual renaissance. No doubt the neo-cultural forces that have flowed into the stream of Indian thought as a result of the contact between the East and the West have much to do with the creation of a new ferment in India; for 'the civilizational role of borrowing is fundamental and the culture contact is the veritable yeast of history,' as Goldenweiser has remarked. But still what actually led to the revitalization of this dying race,—

to the stimulation of its political and spiritual imagination,—were the inestimable services rendered by a brilliant galaxy of India's noblest sons who were born a few decades ago with all the wealth of their cultural genius to stem the tide of Westernisation that was going on in India. Christianity, one of the greatest proselytising religions in the world, served as a handmaid of British imperialism and accelerated the progress of this silent cultural conquest of India. But, thanks to the bold stand made by the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Indian Theosophical Society, this process of Westernisation was arrested to an appreciable extent, and time became ripe for the inauguration of a synthetic movement that would harmonize the two fundamental instincts of India's social organism—the instinct of conservatism and that of expansion, the bubbling of life that always strives to break down all barriers. And this need was fulfilled in the double personality of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, who appeared in the arena with their clarion-call to look back to the treasures of their indigenous culture on the one hand and with their gospel of manhood and world-conquest on the other. Thus in fact the spirit of aggressiveness that was imparted to Hindu thought and culture successfully fought the reactionary forces that were playing havoc in Indian life and society. The people became alert and self-conscious and realized the hollowness of the pragmatic philosophy of the West and began to appreciate the richness of their own spiritual idealism. As a result, every limb of India's national organism has to-day become instinct with a new life. For, "in India," rightly said Swami Vivekananda, "religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life. In India social reform has to be preached by showing how much more

spiritual a life the new system will bring, and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants,—its spirituality.” Thus “every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion.” For, “of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of the human race, none certainly is more potent than that the manifestation of which we call religion. All social organisations have as a background the working of that peculiar force, and the greatest cohesive impulse ever brought into play among human units has been derived from this power. It is the greatest motive power that moves the human mind.” Indeed it is this spiritual awakening that has opened a new chapter in the history of modern India.

II

In the wake of this spiritual palin-genesi there have appeared in recent years on the theatre of Indian life a brilliant group of individuals whose contributions to the all-round growth of our national life are none the less great. The sterling achievements of such bold fighters and builders of Modern India as Sir Syed Ahmed, the great energizer of Indian Islam, Dadabhai Naoroji, the hierophant of Swaraj movement in India, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the hero of Maharashtra and the champion of ‘the categorical imperative’ of the *Gitā*, Lajpat Rai, the lion of the Punjab, Sir Surendranath, Chittaranjan and Sir Ashutosh of Bengal, and above all, Mahatma Gandhi, the prophet of Ahimsā and non-violence, to mention only a few, demonstrate the strength and alertness of the Indian mind to respond manfully to the spirit of the times, as also the constructive genius and assimilative challenge of the Oriental soul. It

cannot also be gainsaid that the contact of India with Occidental life and thought has also served in no small measure to stimulate in us a spirit of enquiry and broaden our outlook on our socio-political philosophy. The spread of European literature, philosophy, history and science through the medium of English translations has kindled new hopes and aspirations in the Indian mind. The history of the freedom movements of the West cannot be read to-day without the imagination being thrilled and stimulated by the heroic deeds and adventures of her great patriots. We cannot expect the Indian people to go through the inspiring stories of Marathon, Thermopylæ or Sālami, without a stir of emotion in their hearts nor can we construe, as Professor Radhakrishnan has aptly said, the march of Garibaldi from Palermo to Naples as a mere walking exercise round the fort. As a matter of fact the contact between the East and the West on various fronts, while kindling a new aspiration for novelties, has served as well to rouse in the soul of the Indian people a spirit of emulation and struggle for the recovery of their pristine greatness. There is no Indian to-day whose mind does not feel the poignancy of his present position of helplessness and an inner urge for liberation, when his neighbours—the Japanese and the Chinese, the Turks and the Persians, the Afghans and the Egyptians are found to be bold citizens of independent territories. It is refreshing to find that the first shock of reaction brought on by this cultural contact has been got over by the triumphant spiritual genius of the Indian people and they have once again begun their epic march towards the goal of freedom in tune with the glorious traditions of their past history.

Besides these diverse forces that have contributed to the growth of genuine love amongst the Indians for their own

cultural heritage, the great *litterateurs* of Bengal (not to speak of those of other provinces) from the days of Dinabandhu and Girish Chandra down to the time of Dwijendra Lal and Rabindranath have also played a very significant role in moulding the thoughts and aspirations of the people. A spirit of patriotism, a deep regard for historic past, and a sense of nationality characterize to-day not only the literature of Bengal but also the literatures of other provinces as well. The spiritual ideas and the liberal forces, released and diffused through these literary activities, have worked a phenomenal change in the socio-religious outlook of the people. Blind orthodoxy and conservatism that generally batten on ignorance, traditional customs and outworn usages is almost a thing of the past. Healthy attempts are being made by the Indian National Congress and many philanthropic organisations to liquidate mass illiteracy so as to rescue the dumb millions from the eidola of superstition and fear. What is more encouraging is that the Indian womanhood have also begun to feel the actualities of the situation and are struggling for new measures to emancipate them to a reasonable extent from the galling fugitiveness of their present social life. A movement is already on foot to abolish polygamy and child marriage altogether, and stringent legislative measures have been adopted to combat these long-standing evils in the land. Suggestions are also being made in some quarters to test how far the institution of inter-caste or inter-provincial marriage would contribute to the growth of a virile race in India and break down the barriers of exclusiveness and parochialism. This is indeed a problem which is left for solution to the consideration of those experts in social biology, who are vitally interested in the matter.

III

Along with this urge for social reconstruction we witness as well a great industrial revolution that is going on throughout the length and breadth of the country. Never in human history has there been an era so crowded with mechanical inventions and geographical discoveries. This is indeed an age in which large-scale production has been rendered an imperious necessity to meet the fast growing demands of mechanized life. India can no longer stand aside as a mere silent onlooker in the titanic struggle that is going on for self-assertion and industrial development in the world around under her very nose. Industrialisation of her material resources with adequate safeguards provided against the attendant evils can hardly be tabooed at this stage of world's economic progress without undermining our national efficiency. But at the same time the importance and usefulness of cottage industry in India cannot be overlooked. If properly organized, as it is being done to-day under the auspices of the Indian National Congress, this cottage industry would also provide ample scope for the solution of the problem of unemployment to a great extent and save the suffering millions from the grip of abject poverty. But, to say the least, industrial revolution that has already made an appreciable progress in India is a dire necessity to stand the keen competition of the greedy commercial races of the outside world. The labour should be effectively organized and given more voice in the management of industries. Moreover, introduction of a radical change in the antiquated land tenure and revenue system; abolition of all feudal dues and levies as also of all kinds of forced labour; levelling up the communities who are educationally and economically backward by the provision of special

educational facilities for them; introduction of free compulsory education without taxation; increase of irrigational facilities; raising the standard of living; fighting the evil of unemployment and, above all, establishment of communal peace and harmony—are but some of the burning problems of the day which demand immediate solution and a careful handling in the interest of the future social and political evolution of India. The poverty of the country has become proverbial and has to our misfortune been looked upon as an integral factor of our cultural life! But, as Professor Radhakrishnan has rightly pointed out, ‘a spiritual civilisation is not necessarily one of poverty and disease, man-drawn rickshaw and the hand-cart. Poverty is spiritual only when it is voluntary, but the crass poverty of our people is a sign of sloth and failure.’ Adequate measures must immediately be taken to eradicate this canker of poverty that has been eating into the vitals of the people. Needless to say, a great responsibility lies in this respect with the university authorities; for inspite of many a handicap much can still be done through educational institutions towards the solution of this problem.

With the proliferation of scientific knowledge and the advance of archaeological researches, many lost treasures of Indian life have been unearthed. The recovery of the splendid monuments of Indian culture of the pre-Vedic and post-Vedic ages as well as of the Buddhistic days has unrolled before humanity a glorious chapter of Indian history and stimulated a healthy spirit of self-confidence and legitimate pride amongst the people of India in the greatness of the creative powers of their forbears. “Some of their investigations were solid achievements in positive knowledge, *viz.*, in materia medica, therapeutics, ana-

tomy, embryology, metallurgy, chemistry, physics, and descriptive zoology. . . Hindu intellect independently appreciated the dignity of objective facts, devised the methods of observation and experiment, elaborated the machinery of logical analysis and truth investigation, attacked the external universe as a system of secrets to be unravelled, and wrung out of Nature the knowledge which constitutes the foundations of science.”² In these days when new forces are at work to shape the course of our history, we must not give the go-by to our glorious past—to the richness of the cultural achievements of the ancient Indian genius; for any future growth and evolution of the country must be in tune with the spirit and the cultural tradition of the children of the soil. But this worship of the past must not be allowed to serve as a permanent drag on our career of progress. For, every great achievement is a vision in the soul before it becomes a fact of history. “Our minds,” rightly says Professor Whitehead, “build cathedrals before the workmen have moved a stone, and our minds destroy them before the elements have worn down their arches.” Our vision must therefore be kept wide. It is the vision of the future destiny, the creative urge of our national genius, which will be the formative factor in the days to come.

IV

In conclusion we cannot but accentuate the fact that what is needed at this hour is not merely a slavish imitation of Western ideology but a synthesis of the cultures of the East and the West in the light of the eternal wisdom of the seers and sages of India. Let us hope that in this age of our national renaissance, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the high and the low must

² *Creative India*, pp. 15-16.

live up to the glorious tradition of their forefathers and forge ahead with the first glimmer of the new dawn that has broken upon the horizon of India. The progressive elements in the fold of Islam have also manfully responded to the call of the hour. "For the last two generations, we have been watching a genuine renaissance or rebirth among the Mussalmans. . . The Moslem past is being reborn under new conditions, and the present is being reconstructed under the inspiration of past ideals to help forward the supply of the pressing wants of to-day. The past is thus being re-interpreted and transformed to serve as a plank for 'futurism'. The ideological foundations of a deeper solidarism between the Hindus and Mussalmans are being laid wide and deep"³ in the country. It is time that the Hindus and Muslims, the Buddhists and Jains, the Parsis and the Christians joined their hands to snatch from the hands of

destiny their long-cherished freedom of life. India of to-day is the India of the centuries. She has never moved far from the central theme of her being. Her past is not a mere source of archaeological pride. Her entire past has become the living present to-day. The spirit of India has once again woke up from its slumber and will sleep no more. And rightly did Swami Vivekananda proclaim, "The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end, and a voice is coming unto us, gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterance, and is gaining volume as days pass away. Like a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more, no outward powers can hold her back any more, for the infinite giant is rising to her feet."

³ *Creative India*, pp. 475-76.

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The Devotee from Belghar: Sir, be gracious to us.

Sri Ramakrishna: He dwells within all. But then, apply to the Gas Company; and your house will be connected with the supply. You should, however, pray with earnestness. It is said that God can be seen if the three attachments unite, namely, the child's affection for the mother, the chaste wife's love for the husband, and the worldly man's attachment to his fortune.

There are marks of a true devotee. He gets quiet as he listens to the counsels of the Guru. Venomous snakes become still when they hear the songs

of Behula; not so, however, the cobra. There is another indication; the true devotee develops comprehension. Plain glass does not take impressions of objects, while you can take pictures with filmed plates, such as photographs. Devotion is, as it were, the film.

There is yet another sign. The true devotee has controlled passions; he has conquered lust. The Gopies never felt lust.

You are in the world, but what does it matter? This is rather more advantageous for spiritual exertions, like fighting from a fort. In that kind of spiritual exercise which requires

sitting on a corpse, the latter opens its mouth from time to time in order to frighten the aspirant. So he has to keep ready a quantity of fried rice or gram and to throw them into its mouth now and then. For, he will be able to devote himself to spiritual exercises with a care-free mind, when the corpse shall be quiet. So the family should be kept in good humour. They should be provided for; only then can one take to spiritual practices with ease.

Those who have a little enjoyment left will call on Him, remaining in the world.

The case of those who have genuinely renounced the world is different; bees would never alight upon anything but flowers. All water is turbid to the Châtaka bird. It will not take any water, and it keeps waiting for the rain-water which falls when the star Swâti is in the ascendant. Men of true renunciation would not take delight in anything except God. The bee sits on flowers only. Monks of true renunciation are like bees; while the householder devotees are like these flies which settle on sweets and festering sores as well.

You have taken so much trouble to come here; and you are searching after God. Most men are content with visiting the garden, few seek for its owner. Men gaze upon the beauty of the world and do not seek the creator.

Sri Ramakrishna (pointing to the singer): He has sung about the six centres. These pertain to Yoga,—Hatha and Râja. The Hatha Yogi does a number of physical postures; the aim is to develop the eight occult powers, gain a long life and similar other objects. The object of the Râja Yoga is devotion, love, knowledge, and dispassion. Râja Yoga is better.

The seven planes of the Vedanta and the six centres of the Yoga scriptures largely agree. The first three planes of the Vedanta correspond to the

Mulâdhâra, Swâdhishthâna, and Manipura centres. Mind dwells on these three planes. When it rises to the fourth plane, that is, the Anâhata centre, the individual soul is seen like a flame, and it has visions of luminous forms. The aspirant exclaims in wonder, "What's this? What's this?"

When the mind ascends to the fifth plane, it longs to hear about the Lord alone. Here is the Visuddha centre. The sixth plane and the Âjnâ centre are one. One realizes God, when the mind reaches this. But like a flame inside a lantern, the mind cannot touch Him yet, as there is glass between.

It is from the fifth plane that King Janaka spoke on the knowledge of Brahman. Sometimes he used to dwell on the fifth and sometimes on the sixth plane.

After the piercing of the six centres there is the seventh plane. On reaching it the mind dissolves. The individual soul unites with the Supreme Self; and there ensues Samâdhi. The consciousness of body disappears, and one loses sense of the outer world. The knowledge of manifoldness dies, and discrimination stops.

Trailanga Swami said that discrimination gives rise to the knowledge of the many,—of difference. Death comes on the 21st day after the Samâdhi.

There are marks for one who has realized God. He behaves like a boy, a mad man, an inert object or like an unclean being. And he feels truly, "I am the machine, He is the machinist; He alone is the agent and all else are non-agent." As the Sikh visitors said, "Even a leaf moves according to God's will." It is like feeling that everything happens as Rama wills. As the weaver said, "It is due to Rama's will that the piece of cloth costs one rupee and six annas; the dacoity took place accord-

ing to Rama's will; and it was due to Rama's will that the dacoits were caught. The police arrested and took

me away in accordance with the will of Rama, and again due to Rama's will they let me off."

THE STUDY OF INDIA IN AMERICA

BY PROFESSOR W. NORMAN BROWN, Ph.D.

My connections with India are more those of an observer and a student than of one who feels and then wishes to promote some very special personal spiritual message which he receives from his contact with India. The gratifications which I receive from the work that I follow are perhaps more intellectual than spiritual and, therefore, in an Indian sense, more earthy or physical. One who is engaged in the kind of profession in which I am, that is, the study and teaching about India, needs to come in contact with those who are outside the academic world but who are also interested in India and in the message and the value it has for this country. We who are in the educational business have a tendency to restrict ourselves to facts without considering their application to human experience. The two should go hand in hand. There should be greater effort to make a liaison between those who are engaged in the study and instruction about India and those who are engaged directly and perhaps solely in trying to win from their acquaintanceship with India some guide for their own personal life and an inner peace.

Some of us who are engaged in Indic studies feel that India should occupy a position in humanistic education in this country. When we speak of the humanities and humanistic studies, we are concerned at once with the whole problem of the history of civilization, the development of thought among men, and the application of thought by men to all the various phases of their life. If we look

even most superficially at human history, we see that a number of great cultures have arisen—great civilizations which have had an inner unity of thinking and of applying their thinking to life. In the ancient world, there was the Egypto-Babylonian culture, which has been continued through the Greco-Christian in the great Occidental culture, and through the Islamic culture in Asia. There is the civilization of the Far East, which has been continuous again for some five thousand years. There is also the great culture of India.

Although we are all aware of India's cultural eminence, we might suppose from a glance at the educational program in our universities and colleges that India had not been a great country and that Indian civilization has not been important. The fact is that it is scarcely studied. Even when we deal with history or philosophy, with the clash between our own Western tradition, our own Western culture, and the culture of India, or of other Oriental countries, we scarcely bother to find out why the Indians or the Chinese or the Japanese or the Mohammedans, in whatever part of Asia it may have been, have acted as they did when they came into conflict with us Europeans. We have thought only of what our own thoughts were and what we did—what motivated us. We have drawn our picture of history in one dimension, if it is possible to do that. To make any such presentation of the situation, even with allowance for overstatement, and there is here some overstatement, is to reveal the fallacy of it.

If humanistic education in this country is really to study mankind, the thoughts of mankind, the achievements of mankind, and to think of the future of mankind, it cannot neglect the Orient—it cannot neglect the civilization of the 350 million people of India. I am sure, of course, that no person engaged in the study of the humanities in this country would say that India has been negligible in the history of the world and that we need not think about her in connection with the future of the world. Yet it is true that departments of philosophy in many institutions teach the history of philosophy with no reference to the philosophy of India. Departments of fine arts still give courses in the history of the fine arts which ignore India, though most of them have now discovered China. Anthropology departments in some of our best known institutions have no one competent to speak on the anthropology of India. Sociology in America hardly knows India. Yet there can be no doubt that all the departments of human interest which I have mentioned are worthy of the most profound study in connection with their development in India.

The first aspect of India's culture that comes to anyone's mind is philosophy, and with it religion. Nowhere else have these two been so closely joined in a team,—philosophy being always subservient to religion. Nowhere have philosophy and religion been reflected upon by so many people in so many different ways with so many different results, yet again, with a general underlying unity of results. Of course, this is not to say that every coolie in the streets of Calcutta can discuss the Upanishads. But it is to say that nowhere in the world have so many people engaged in particular secular occupations, devoted themselves to

those secular occupations with the expectation that through studying them they would somehow fulfil a religious duty or function and themselves receive a religious benefit from so doing.

We ourselves, in spite of generally ignoring Indian philosophy, nevertheless have received some small benefits from Indian religion and philosophy in this country. The discovery of the Vedas, especially the *Rig-Veda*, by European scholars at the end of the eighteenth century was responsible for a great deal of the German romantic movement of the nineteenth century. That discovery was responsible for the scientific study of the history of religion and the comparison of religions. It gave us in America some of the main currents of the transcendental school of philosophy, which was perhaps the most notable development of philosophy in our country during the nineteenth century. In our own day, such an important writer as Aldous Huxley, in his most recent work, *Ends and Means*, has been profoundly influenced by the thought and social practice of India.

In religion, India shares the honours with the Semitic world. I should not want to try to discriminate between the Semitic and the Indic religions; some may prefer the one to the other. The fact remains that it is from those two civilizations that the world's great religions have come. We cannot believe that religion will cease moulding people's opinions and directing their actions; and for that reason we must continue to study it, and to study it as developed in India.

Other departments of civilization in India are even less known to the West than Indian philosophy and religion. I might talk about Indian art—an art quite out of the tradition of our own which, speaking generally, is Greek. The art of India is distinctly an art of

symbolism and was meant to serve a religious purpose. The very subservience of naturalism to the ideal and to symbolism is so characteristic of Indian art that in itself it demands that we should give our attention to that art. This is to say nothing at all of the technical and aesthetic characteristics of that art.

I might also speak of the great developments in India in the fields of law, or again in the fields of medicine, great for their own time—not for to-day. I could talk of matters social, call the attention of all to the fact that in India, in the system of caste, social distinctions have become so great as to make the system as a whole unique, although not entirely unparalleled in scattered detail, as, for instance, in this country in the differentiation between the white and the negro. The system of caste in India, which directs the social thinking and practice of the larger part of her population, must be studied if we are concerned about the future of the world and about what Indians are going to do within the next half century.

All these various departments which I have mentioned, and others which I have not mentioned, if taken together, would constitute historic Indian civilization. A curious thing about this civilization is that it has been valid in India over a tremendous stretch of time—at least 2,500 years, perhaps even 5,000. We know that there was a high state of civilization in prehistoric India in the third millennium before Christ, about 2,500 to 3,000 B.C. At that time in the great cities of the Indus valley, and possibly in other parts of India at the same time, that civilization was similar to those farther to the west, perhaps also to that of the same period in China. Although there is a great deal about this early Indic civilization which we do not know—we cannot read its writing, for example—yet we know enough to have a hint

that some of the characteristic features of the historic Indian civilization which I mentioned already existed at that earlier time. You have heard mention of the practice of meditation according to Yoga. We cannot say for certain that Yoga was known at the time of the Indic civilization, but we can note the very striking fact that a number of figures, evidently of religious character, have been found on certain seals from that period—figures seated in postures which are known and practised in Yogic meditation. I should not want to be so incautious as to say that they are actual figures of Yoga practice; they merely look more like Yogic postures than anything else. It may be that the practice of this type of meditation, in some rudimentary form, was known long ago in India—and it may not be, too. India to-day has as its chief religious figure the God Shiva. Curiously enough, one of those seals from the Indus valley which I have just mentioned shows a figure, like that of the God Shiva, surrounded by animals as is the case of Shiva in his representation as Lord of all creatures, seated in meditation—and Shiva is to the Hindu the ideal type of Yogi. Was it Shiva? A proto-type of Shiva? I do not know, but it arouses the thought that perhaps some of the characteristics, the most important features of Indian civilization, were existing back at that period.

It also reminds us that, although Indic civilization has been met by hostile civilizations with generally hostile ideology, Indian ideas have continued to exist. The alien ideas which have come into the country have been the ones to succumb. Even the Aryans, who gave to India the Sanskrit language, in which the country's ideas are now expressed, had no such ideas when they came into India. They may have cultivated their ideas there. Or they may even have acquired them

from other Indians who were there before they themselves came. Whichever was the case, it is significant in later times that these ideas which were characteristically Indian, stood out against the attack of Hellenistic civilization, one of the great civilizations of the world, one whose close relative, the Greek civilization, has conquered us in the Occident. Yet, although Hellenism seemed for a while to carry the day in India, especially in the northwest, when it appeared to capture the stronger half of Buddhism and to sweep everything before it, it nevertheless in the end failed. There was a period of some hundreds of years when in northwest India art forms were Hellenic, coins were struck with Greek devices, even in the Greek language. These Hellenistic traits have long since all vanished. In Indian art, Indian philosophy, Indian religion, there is nothing of the Greek now and has not been for some fourteen hundred years.

At a later time, Islamic civilization came in and swept the country from end to end, and it might have seemed that Indic culture must give way before it, but again the Indic was strong enough to resist and maintain itself. To-day the European-Christian civilization is in India. It and the Islamic together are both hostile to the native Indic culture. But Hindu culture has resisted them, and I should say is now carrying the day.

Indic civilization has not only been a great one, but a strong one as well. You may have your choice as to whether you prefer European civilization or Indian civilization, but you cannot claim that the European is stronger than the Indic. Although subjected to severe attacks by these foreign cultures, Indian culture has nevertheless succeeded in maintaining itself. Any preparation, therefore, for a future world that does

not account for India's traditional culture, but tacitly ignores it, is by that very fact inadequate, indeed viciously negligent.

I should not like to try to analyze the fundamental spirit of Indian civilization. Perhaps if I were to stress one single thing, I should mention the respect and tolerance which it has for the opinions of others—a thing which is a little strange to us in the West, where we are familiar with wars of heresy, where wrong religious belief was formerly a matter of hanging or burning, as wrong political belief is now. In India, with only very minor exceptions indeed, religious persecution has not existed. There may be profound differences of opinion as to what the individual should do, but there is a profound unanimity of opinion that no two individuals are able to do exactly the same thing and that no absolute doctrine or dogma can appeal to all. Human intelligence is limited and cannot comprehend that which is unlimited, and this position of relativity is a characteristic position of all Indian religions and philosophies. *You have learned of that directly through Ramakrishna, whose message was, in part, that all men could seek in their separate ways, but that each man was seeking in the end only what his neighbour was seeking, although the roads might be different. This kind of tolerance and respect and decency towards one's fellow beings is something quite characteristic of India and a thing which we need more here.*

Another idea existing in India which the world needs to-day is the ethical doctrine of non-injury (*ahimsâ*) to others. Now we can be realistic and can say that *ahimsâ* has been dishonored many times in India. That is true. Yet probably nowhere in the world has it had so much honour too. It is something which even the followers of other

religions that do not emphasize it have come, after some generations in India, to feel as part of their religious duty. Toleration and non-violence toward one's fellows are matters which we in the West could learn of from India, to our undoubted profit.

There are two general reasons why we should study Indian civilization here in the West. One is for our own protection. It is important for our own good relations with a tremendous section of the world's population that we should come to know what that portion of the world thinks. We need to know so that we may understand how they will react when they are thrown into even closer contact with the Western world than they are at present, and they surely are going to be thrown into that closer contact. We need to know that we may deal with them. We also need to learn from India things which will help save us from ourselves.

If you concede all this, and much more that I could say, you will wonder what are the steps by which we should endeavour to promote in this country knowledge of India. I myself think of the problem from the academic side. There are in America eight institutions which have Indic Chairs: Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins, Chicago, and California. At those institutions, although there are Indic Chairs, there are, with only occasional exceptions, no people on the staff, in disciplines such as philosophy or history, who are competent in the Indic phase of their fields. What that means is that the occupants of the Indic Chairs are the only persons there in touch with students who are also in touch with India. It is, therefore, only by the merest chance that a student even in those institutions comes to know anything about India. What of other institutions—some hundreds of them in

the country where there is no Indic Chair? Yet it is important that students of to-day should know of India. Are we to wait until some cataclysm occurs before they are introduced to that country's civilization? It may then be too late. Those students who are with us now are the ones who very likely will have to deal with the problems which the West will some day have to answer about India. In a few decades, these students will be the men who will be controlling our Government, directing public opinion.

There must be at least two kinds of persons prepared and put into our institutions for introducing American students to India. We need to establish in some institutions Indic Chairs such as already exist in eight universities. We need, just as much, students of philosophy, fine arts, sociology, who have studied the philosophy of India, the fine arts of India, the social questions of India. They will acquaint their students with the achievements of India in their own departments and so with India as a whole. They are the teachers who should come into contact with the greatest number of our students.

Publicists and diplomats may perhaps have other ideas of increasing knowledge of India than those which I have expressed. Unfortunately we have not in our day great interpreters of India who can command large public audiences. When Swami Vivekananda was in our country, at the time of the Chicago Fair and for years later, he was such an interpreter. We hardly have one such in a generation. It remains, therefore, for those of us who have not any such gift as his to do what we can in a small way, hoping that all of us in operating together may succeed in achieving an effect. It is important that we should make the effort—Americans and Indians who come to America as well—making

the effort, of course, always with the one clear understanding that we do it objectively with no feeling on the part of either that it is superior to the other.

We must introduce into our public consciousness the questions that must arise from the contact which we already have, and the still greater contact that

we are going to have with India during the next half century. These differences between the West and India, already in existence, will become issues within a few decades, perhaps within only one. Let us hope that we may settle them with the knowledge that leads to understanding, tolerance, and co-operation.

RELIGION AND MODERN DOUBTS

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA

Religion has the sanction of ages behind it. It is as old as human civilization. Yet one cannot be expected to accept it simply because it is old. *Does it convey any truth worth possessing? Can it serve any useful purpose of the modern world? Does it hold out any promise of peace and happiness here on earth? Moderners want straight and satisfactory answers to these simple queries before they may be expected to do anything with religion.* And for this moderners are not to blame. This age ushered in England by George Bernard Shaw, as Mr. Ward has put it, is precisely an age of critical judgment. Things have to be weighed, analysed, tested and assessed properly before they may be accepted or rejected by the enlightened people of this age. The sanction of ages cannot make them swallow ideas and ideals about whose worth they are absolutely in the dark. Very naturally, therefore, religion, however old it may be, has to pass through this ordeal of critical judgment. There cannot be any question of avoiding this issue.

Now, there are many among us who are apt to discard religion simply because it is old. Our Theory of Evolution vaguely suggests that we, moderners, compose the vanguard of progressive

thought, and in its perspective the ancients appear like little children with an overwhelmingly bigger share of credulity than reason. We readily imagine that their curiosity regarding the mysteries of nature would perhaps be satisfied as soon as some one would come up to explain these mysteries in terms of more mysterious things. Hence we sometimes hasten to conclude that religion must have derived its existence through some such process. Who knows if God is not an assumption of some ingenious ancients to explain the mysteries of nature? Then what about the myriads of angels, the heaven and hell and the ridiculous stories of creation found in religious texts? Are these not drawn purely from imagination for tickling the fancy of puerile minds? There are many among us who honestly believe that the eighteenth century French encyclopædist, *Holbach*, was right when he said, "If we go back to the beginning, we shall find that ignorance and fear created the gods; that fancy, enthusiasm or deceit adorned or disfigured them; that weakness worships them; and that custom respects and tyranny supports them in order to make the blindness of men serve its own interests." Somehow these moderners are possessed by the idea that religion

born of fantastic dreams was ushered into society simply by the weight of authority. The Church and the State combined to declare from the housetop that the validity of religion was beyond question and this was all that forced people to swallow its teachings. With such a stuff the modern world cannot have any business. *Religion, they declare, is old, rusty and useless. It does not rest on logic, science, nor even on common sense. Obviously it must go to the scrap-heap. This in short is the demand of those moderners, who do not find any light or substance in religion.*

Moreover, some hold that religion is a dangerous commodity. It gives rise to crusades and jehâds, communal dissensions and sectarian squabbles, riots and breaking of heads. There is something in it that lets loose anti-social forces jeopardising the solidarity of a nation having many religions. Further it enervates the people by converting them into dreamers, concerned more with the next world than with the present. Free will is cramped by thoughts of predestination; enthusiasm is diverted through unproductive channels to win rewards in heaven, while the horrors of hell remain sitting on the hearts like a terrible nightmare. And all these combine to bring down the zeal for earthly ends very close to the zero-point. On the top of this, the church, allied sometimes with the autocratic state, exploits this weakness of the masses in order to aggrandize itself. These considerations lead some moderners to condemn religion as the opiate of the people, positively detrimental to the growth of a nation.

But, has religion really no solid ideological ground to stand upon? And, does it really injure the best interests of a nation? These two questions require a very careful scrutiny. No prejudice

on either side should be allowed to vitiate our judgment.

First of all, we should note the fact that these doubts regarding *the truth and efficacy of religion* are neither new nor peculiar to our age only. These may be said to be at least as old as the age of the Greek Sophists. And we had our own Chârvâka. However, since the days of the Sophists in the Western world, successive waves of scepticism, though at irregular intervals, have left a clear impress on the pages of history. A regular tug-of-war between faith and reason has been going on throughout the entire period of which history claims to have an authentic record. And India can boast of a religion whose existence can be traced at least to the fifth millennium B.C. without doing any injustice to the honest scruples of historians. How is it then that in spite of the onslaughts of fact-finding reason in different ages and different climes religion has succeeded in surviving so long? This is a question that should not be passed over lightly. Our ideas of evolution suggest that survival presupposes fitness. Following the lead of Herbert Spencer, who applied the principles of evolution to every department of human knowledge, we may conclude that religion has the fitness to survive the onslaughts of reason. A little scrutiny will show that after each attack religion comes out stronger than before. Doubts help religion to clear the mist and confusion about it and compel it to restate its fundamentals clearly and logically in terms of the requirements of contemporary reason. It was to meet the challenge of reason that Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, and many others in India restated the old religion in terms of contemporary thoughts. It was to meet the challenge of reason that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Martin Luther, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel,

Schopenhauer and many others enunciated their theistic philosophies so that the established religions might be purged of their crudities and brought in line with the contemporary way of thinking. In the present age we have our Realists, Behaviourists and Marxists and yet perhaps to meet this very situation we have on the other side our Pragmatists, Intuitionists and, If I may be permitted to say so, the Vedantists. Who can say if this time also religion will not keep up its tradition by emerging from the tussle through a necessary and thoroughly up-to-date restatement of its fundamentals?

So caution should be our watchword before we pass our verdict on religion. We must draw a line between critical judgment and a hasty verdict based on thoughtlessness or sheer prejudice. Our business is to detect the flaws, if any, of religion with the help of pure reason and not with the aid of an up-to-date set of fallacies, dogmas, half-truths or slogans. No hasty generalization will help us in the matter. We must beware of the craze for novelty that very often forces our thoughts into a vicious circle that leads nowhere. If we seriously want light or substance from any quarter, we have to guard ourselves against the glamour of wiping out the past and creating a brand new world out of our imagination. This is not an easy job. Voltaire was perhaps right in believing that society is a growth in time, not a syllogism in Logic; and 'when the past is put out through the door it comes in at the window'. So we must be doubly sure of our position before we decide to take up the Herculean task of banishing an institution like religion that has its roots in the hoary past and that has survived many an onslaught of sceptical thoughts.

With this necessary caution, let us

now take up the ideological question, namely, whether religion conveys any truth worth possessing. Most certainly we do want facts and not fiction to solve the enigma of nature. And facts have to be ascertained thoroughly by experiment, observation and mathematical reasoning, because it is our almost instinctive conviction that first-hand experience combined with sound logic cannot but yield correct knowledge. The findings of science are obtained through such a procedure and that is why science commands our faith. How we wish that the ultimate realities could be discovered through the scientific process, for then nothing would possibly stand in the path of our belief. But as things stand now, science is not yet in a position to say the last word about nature. The deeper mysteries of nature remain unsolved. As a matter of fact even now the ultimate scientific ideas can hardly be brought within the scope of rational conception, and one may reasonably doubt whether we shall ever be able to comprehend them although we may vaguely apprehend them through the medium of mathematical abstractions. Herbert Spencer appears to be perfectly right when he says, "Ultimate scientific ideas are all representation of realities that cannot be comprehended . . . In all directions the scientist's investigations bring him face to face with an insoluble enigma. He learns at once the greatness and the littleness of the human intellect—its power in dealing with all that comes within the range of experience, its impotence in dealing with all that transcends experience." Take for instance the fact that science has so long defined force in terms of matter and that now it has begun to explain matter in terms of force. This makes a rational conception of force or of matter impossible. Just as the ultimate nature

of force and hence of matter is inscrutable so also is that of time and space; yet science has so much to do with motion which involves the 'triple obscurities of matter, time and space'. Then again regarding the fundamentals that transcend direct experience science advances only theories and hypotheses, and these also in terms of mathematical abstractions and one must not forget the fact that these theories and hypotheses do not bear the stamp of finality on them. They are liable to correction by further research and one may reasonably doubt with Herbert Spencer whether they will ever lead to a clear and definite knowledge of the ultimate and fundamental verities of life and existence. Yet it is a fact that the popular mind of our age is in a mood to swallow as gospel truth whatever may appear with the hall-mark of science, be it a hypothesis or a theory. Is it not a new type of superstition against which we have to guard ourselves before we proceed to pass our critical judgment on religion?

The conclusions of Herbert Spencer as put down by Prof. Will Durant are to the point: "Let science admit that its 'Laws' apply only to the phenomena and the relative; . . . Let science cease to deny deity, or to take materialism for granted. Mind and matter are, equally, relative phenomena, the double effect of an ultimate cause whose nature must remain unknown. The recognition of this Inscrutable power is the core of truth in every religion, and the beginning of all philosophy." Indeed since the days of Immanuel Kant rational philosophy has made it perfectly clear that it is not given to the intellect to jump out of its limitation and grasp the Absolute. Caught within its own meshes of time, space and causation, intellect can never aspire to get hold of the Transcendental

Reality. Yet this Ultimate Reality is the core of truth in every religion as Herbert Spencer has put it.

Now the question that confronts us is,—how can religion concern itself with the Ultimate Reality which transcends the limits of our intellectual comprehension? It is refreshing to find that some of the Western philosophers have contributed substantially towards the solution of this problem. Even Immanuel Kant, who discovered the limits of the intellect, pointed out in his *Critique of Practical Reason* that our reason leaves us free to believe that behind the Thing-in-itself there is a just God because our moral sense commands us to believe it. When Pascal said that the heart has reasons of its own, which the head can never understand, or when Rousseau announced that above the logic of the head is the feeling of the heart, or when Bergson attracts our attention to the possibilities of intuition as a conveyer of direct knowledge, these reputed thinkers mean to suggest that there is in man some other door leading to the realities of a higher plane where the intellect has no access. Moral sense, feeling, heart, *intuition* appear to be probable clues to this secret door of transcendental knowledge.

This hypothesis is confirmed by the findings of Swami Vivekananda. The Swami worked on the data furnished by Sri Ramakrishna's epoch-making spiritual experience as well as by his own observation and then explained the subtle facts and laws of the spiritual plane. On the strength of his own observation he said that it is through the heart that all realizations come. When the heart is thoroughly purified one develops something like a sixth sense, namely, the intuition of a pure heart, through which comes the experience of supersensuous realities that lie beyond the ken of intellect. This

experience is no less valid than that of the intellect on the lower plane. Purification of the heart and the development of the pure intuition is a tangible process for a quite normal expansion of man's range of knowledge. It is only a changing of tools, a grosser tool with a finer one, in order to work with finer things. There is nothing of abnormality or supernaturalism in *mystic experience*, because the intuition of a pure heart, through which it comes, is a normal and natural faculty of man as much as his intellect. Of course it has to be developed through the purification of the heart, but our intellect also has to be developed by proper training before we may rely on its findings. Swami Vivekananda pointed out that this fact was discovered ages ago by the Hindu seers and that the *Pâtanjali Yoga-Sutras* may very well be looked upon as a compendium of the science of mystic experience dealing with the possibilities of expanding our range of knowledge through the development of pure intuition.

The Swami pointed out that all religions were fundamentally based on the data gleaned by the intuition of pure hearts, that is, by the first-hand experience of seers. "Go to the source of any religion," he would say, "and you are sure to find it emanating from the lips of one or more seers, those who stood face to face with truth." God was no assumption of the wily ancients for fooling their ignorant comrades, as many of us so readily imagine. God had been actually realized before He was announced. In our age, Sri Ramakrishna, standing on the bed-rock of his spiritual experience, has assured us over and over again that it is open to everybody to see God provided he can purify the mind. In ages long gone by, the Upanishadic Rishi said the

same thing when he uttered, दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः Then, is it not the same truth upheld by the prophet of Nazareth when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." These utterances convey neither clever assumptions nor poetic imaginations; these are clear statements of facts of the spiritual realm. It is up to anyone to test the truth of the statement that through the intuition of the pure heart one can come into closer touch with Divinity and get a direct knowledge of the basic truths of life.

One thing has to be made clear. Even philosophers may smile at the idea of seeing God. But one has to remember the fact that the intuition of a pure heart is also a faculty of the mind and like the intellect it has also to work within the limitations of subject-object relations and time, space and causation. The Thing-in-itself, the Absolute, which is beyond both mind and matter, is certainly beyond the reach even of pure intuition. Just as the Absolute appears before our sense-perception as the panorama of gross nature, so also before the intuitive perception it appears as a no less extensive panorama of mystic experience. The difference lies in the fact that through the latter it gives a surer and clearer glimpse of the ultimate Reality. Thus, Formless God is perceived by pure intuition through various forms. Moreover it transforms the observer's character by thoroughly purging his heart of all crudities and rousing his disinterested love for God and His creation and steeping his mind in ineffable peace. Lastly, this intuition of a pure heart is the corridor that leads one on to the direct experience of the very core of Reality. A time comes when the entire mind including both the faculties of thought and feeling, intellect and intui-

tion, is hushed into silence, the body remains fixed like an inert substance and the real self of man realizes its identity with the Absolute. The Vedanta teaches us that the real self of man is neither the body, nor the mind, nor a combination of both; it is beyond both mind and matter and no other than the philosopher's puzzling Thing-in-itself, the Absolute. This finding of the Vedanta was based on the fact of self-realization by the Hindu sages of old. And it has been confirmed in our days by the realizations of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Thus the Absolute, that cannot be known by the mind, यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह does in a sense become more than known through self-consciousness when the mind is stilled in the complete silence of Nirvikalpa Samâdhi. This is how religion concerns itself with the ultimate Reality as the core of its Truth—first through intuitive glimpses and then through transcendental self-knowledge.

II

Let us now come down to the *common sense view of nature*. Can we accept the world as it stands? Is there no riddle behind it waiting for a solution? Are not our senses deluding us all the while? Do they convey to us exactly what lies outside or do they add something substantially to what they receive? Are we to believe the scientists or our senses? The physicists have discovered that there is nothing but electric forces and vast empty spaces in the universe. Is it not a fact that these formless and colourless entities are somehow transformed by our mind into this beautiful panorama of nature and endowed by it with moral and aesthetic values? Our love and hatred, joy and sorrow, philanthropy and oppression, world-federation and class-

war are certainly not related to the physicists' mysterious electric units, nor do they spring from unintelligible mathematical formulæ. They are all evidently related to the fabric woven by our mind. Again this fabric, as we all know, varies with the range and number of senses of the observer. A slight change in the number and range of the senses is bound to change the entire kaleidoscopic view of nature beyond recognition. This identical objective world of the physicists calls up different views of nature before the vision of the different classes of beings. Thus our view of nature is not an absolute and universal reality. Of course it may be safely admitted that through evolution we, of all animals, have attained the capability of getting the widest and richest view of nature. Yet can anybody say that the process of evolution has come to a stop? Who knows that we shall not evolve further and have yet wider, richer and more significant views of nature? Professor James of the Harvard University, the celebrated sponsor of Pragmatism, is worth quoting. He says, "I firmly disbelieve, myself, that our human experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe. I believe rather that we stand in much the same relation to the whole of the universe as our canine and feline pets do to the whole of human life. They inhabit our drawing-rooms and libraries. They take part in scenes of whose significance they have no inkling; they are merely tangent to curves of history, the beginnings and ends and forms of which pass wholly beyond their ken. So we are tangent to the wider life of things." Thus our view of nature is, firstly, a dream spun out by our mind from the suggestions received from the physicist's objective world of electric forces and empty space. Secondly, though this view of nature is universal with all

normal human units, it is undoubtedly a relative affair compared to the possibilities of vision of other animals; thirdly, it may quite reasonably be supposed to be an ever-widening and ever-changing affair along with the stages of evolution. Our common sense logic brings us so far.

Now, may it not be reasonably suggested that the seers are individual specimens of the higher order towards which humanity is consciously or unconsciously advancing through the process of evolution? *These seers claim to have a different view of nature*; and they do also tell us something about the evolution of their mind along a definite line that makes it possible for them to get a different view of nature. With one voice they declare that when the mind becomes pure and concentrated one can see things that lie beyond the range of the common human vision. Why call these seers dreamers? They are no more dreamers than we are. They only describe what they experience, just as we do. Their view may differ from ours, just as our view may differ from that of the members of any sub-human species. Nor can their view be lightly dismissed by equating it with hallucination simply because it is rare. Because, they show us the way to climb up to their observation-tower from where we may also visualize their perspective. Hence, it is at least as much real as our own view of nature, and we should remember the fact that our view has no absolute character or value. If we question the sanity of the seers for their different view of nature we have to admit that the beasts have as much right on precisely the same ground to question our sanity. Yet, if we ignore the visions of the beasts as well as of the seers and obstinately stick to our own view of nature as the only correct one, this attitude may show our intellectual snobbery and unwarranted

dogmatism but it can never prove our sanity.

Not only is the seer's view of nature as much real as our view, there is plenty of corroborative evidence to prove that it is in a sense more real. It is wider, richer and more useful than our view of nature. Its aesthetic and moral values far surpass those of our view. Our view makes us proud, selfish, discontented, restless, acquisitive, pugnacious, oppressive and unscrupulous,—their view makes them humble, selfless, happy, calm, all-renouncing, benign, altruistic and righteous. Our view emphasizes the diversity and concomitant discord on the surface of nature, while their view discloses the unity and harmony reigning eternally within the core of the universe. That is why, in spite of the superficial diversity and discord of nature, it is possible for the seers to stand for universal peace and well-being.

And this leads us on to the question of the *usefulness of religion*. Not only is religion a quest for the Ultimate Reality, not only does it lead an individual towards peace and perfection, but also it does contribute substantially towards the establishment of amity and harmony in social relations. The path of religion is the path of gradual self-effacement, for this alone chastens the heart and prepares it for the realization of the spiritual truth. The novice who treads this path and wants seriously to reach the goal has to curb his baser instincts, and precisely for this reason it is not for him to contribute to the disruptive and disintegrating forces of the world. He has to expand his heart, to love and serve his neighbour as his own self. And the seer, who has reached the goal and realized the fundamental unity of the universe, cannot know anything but unbounded, unconditioned and universal love as the very essence of his own being. Hence, religion, that goes to eliminate

the baser instincts of man and manifest the Divinity within him, is surely the greatest of all civilizing forces.

How does then religion bring about *jehâds* and crusades, communal riots and breaking of heads? It looks almost like a paradox, yet it is a fact that can never be ignored. But the answer is quite simple. It is not religion, but ignorance and perversion of religion that is at the root of all these evils. Voltaire clears this point when addressing Hollbach he writes, "Religion, you say, has produced countless misfortunes; say rather the superstition which reigns on our unhappy globe. This is the cruellest enemy of the pure worship due to the Supreme Being. Let us detest this monster which has always torn the bosom of its mother: those who combat it are the benefactors of the human race; it is a serpent which chokes religion in its embrace; we must crush its head without wounding the mother whom it devours." Indeed it is superstition, or rather perversion of religion due to ignorance regarding its fundamentals that is to be held responsible for all the iniquities carried on in the name of religion.

Humanity may take some time to understand and assimilate the fact that all religions are based primarily on the empirical observation of seers and as such each and every one of them is true, and leads alike to the same goal, namely, realization of God and consequent manifestation of Divinity in man. Ignorance of this fundamental unity of all religions divides humanity into warring camps. But the *science of religion* that is about to take shape is sure to dispel this ignorance and transform these mutually destructive camps into a magnificent federation of all religions. Consider for a moment how our small earth has developed so many varieties of physical food for human consumption. Each country has its own special variety. Now, if

the people of one particular country stand up and say, 'We are taking the only right kind of food necessary for the body-building of man, all other peoples on earth have to imitate us in their choice of food, else they will die;' surely we shall all laugh at this ridiculous utterance. And why? Because both history and science prove the absurdity of this utterance. History shows how different people with different food-charts have been living through centuries; and science shows how underneath the superficial diversities of food we have the same group of chemical ingredients essential for the physical growth of man. So long as the essentials are all right, the food is quite good for its purpose, however much it may be modified on the surface to suit the varieties of taste and other exigencies. This is exactly the case with religion, which may be described as our spiritual food. History proves that every religion has succeeded in producing great saints and seers within its fold. And the science of religion will show that it has been possible simply because underlying the diversities of religion we have the same group of essentials necessary for the spiritual growth of man. Much light has been thrown on this point by the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna, and signs are not wanting to show that the enlightened believers of the world are gradually becoming aware of this essential unity of all religions.

However, ignorance regarding this essential unity has been at the root of all communal and sectarian squabbles. Moreover, we fight, simply because we are pugnacious by nature. And surely for these, *religion cannot be held responsible*. Can Newton or Faraday be blamed for the scientific ravages of modern wars? Or should we ban science, because it has produced engines of destruction? Well, science is a search for

truth ; it does not ask man to fight. Men fight, because they are goaded to do so by their baser instincts. And so long as this condition obtains, they will make science yield what they require for their nefarious work. So also with religion. Instead of submitting themselves to the chastening process of religion, men goaded by their baser instincts sometimes turn round and proceed to make an organized display of their passions under the cover of the sacred name of religion. They deceive themselves by thinking that when they fight in the name of religion they cease to be brutish. Little do they know that they are thus played upon by their baser instincts in order to nullify by their unworthy acts the sanctity of the very religion that they want so eagerly to uphold. Really, egoism and its breed have no place in religion. When these are active under the banner of religion, we have nothing but a monstrous perversion of religion. And for this, religion is not to blame.

The fact is that we are not yet civilized. We love to be led by our baser instincts. The brute within us is rampant. The thin veneer of ethical and aesthetic sense that we have been able to develop since the first appearance of the cave-man does not go very far to curb the brute within us. The meagre demand of our ethical and æsthetic sense is often satisfied as soon as we succeed in bringing up a plausible cause for which the brute in us may have a free play. Thus we are ready to play the brute for a lofty cause and we are proud of it. We declare without any compunction that the end justifies the play of our baser instincts. And this happens alike whether we stand for religion, or for the country, or for a particular social, political or economic programme. We then let loose the brutes in us to suck our brothers' blood and to devour their flesh. And we do

not blush ! Rather we go so far as to boast of our power, our organization and our civilization ! We cannot help it, because it is yet in our nature, in spite of the much-vaunted process of civilization through millenniums of human history. And for this, religion is surely not to blame.

Rather it is from religion that we get a genuine incentive for transcending the brute-plane and manifesting the Divinity in us. Religion, honestly and sincerely pursued, opens our eyes to detect the vagaries of our mind leading to self-deception. It inspires us to rise above the crudities of the primitive man and urges us forward along the upward path of civilization. This religion should never be confused with its perversion.

Lastly, it is a folly to think that religion enervates the masses. Far from that. The path of love, truth and selflessness alone makes us strong. Look at Mahatma Gandhi and see what a mighty power descends unto the man who sincerely treads this path. Our scriptures hold out this truth. In the Upanishad we find that Janaka was declared to have reached the stage of absolute fearlessness when he attained self-knowledge—अभयं वै जनकः प्राप्नोऽसि । Our *Bhagavad-Gitâ* is not a gospel of imbecility. It infuses life even into dead bones. Indeed, who is more fearless than he who hugs truth, throws self overboard and loves everything in creation ? Death has no horror for him. He alone can stand on the cross and yet bless the persecutors. It is for him alone to offer his head for the life of a goat. Such personages may be rare, yet they represent the ideal which the men of religion are to try sincerely to approach. Religion that produces such ideal lives can never be said to have an enervating influence. Of course, here also it is misconstrued, misunderstood and perverted religion that may be said to be 'pernici-

ous trash.' Kill this monster by all means as Voltaire has enjoined, but do not touch its mother, namely, religion.

Nor can religion be condemned on the ground that it makes people indifferent to the world about them. This is a sweeping and unwarranted generalization, and is no more than a new dogma, a new superstition. There have been hundreds and thousands of men and women with whom love for the ideal of perfection has been the only urge for religious life and who have contributed substantially to the world about them through their selfless service to the suffering humanity. Then, if the life after death be a fact and if it be causally linked with our present life just like all things in nature, why should we shut our eyes to it? We have perforce to adjust our present to our needs of the future. Can anybody prove that there cannot be life after death? We have yet to find such a person, though there are many who may dogmatize on the issue. But, even Bertrand Russell in his *What I believe* admits the worth of the scientific achievements as well as the future possibilities of the proceedings of the Psychic Research Society. He confesses that in the near future when the volume of evidence will increase quantitatively, we shall have to revise our opinion and come in line with the findings of religion which are so often branded as arrant trash. Religion stands on empiric observation through pure intuition when it acquaints us with the fact of our continued existence. Yet religion does not teach us to ignore our present life. Anyone going through the *Bhagavat-Gitā*, particularly Sri Krishna's exhortation to Arjuna at the beginning, can never say that religion makes one other-worldly. Religion, rather, teaches us to love and serve the present world more sincerely and thoroughly than anything

else does. Here also it is *misunderstood and perverted religion that generates other-worldliness.*

In this connection arises the question of fear associated with religion. Surely the masses have some amount of fear involved in their religious belief. The fear of Divine Scourge or of the Law of Karma bringing unto them retributions of their misdeeds either in this life or in the next is no doubt a serious factor of the religion of the mass-mind. Yet, unless this fear is exploited by interested people with sordid motives, it cannot be said to be entirely useless. Is not the fear of the police and the military still considered a necessity for checking the anti-social propensities of the average human mind? So also fear of the hereafter does serve the useful purpose of curbing the evil propensities of the mass-mind. Of the two kinds of check, it may be noticed that the first is imposed from outside, namely from the State, while the second is completely a self-determined one. Religion teaches one to check one's baser impulses of the present moment for getting brighter moments in future. It is one's own urge for future happiness or fear of undesirable consequences that determines one's opposition to baser impulses. This self-imposed and self-determined moral discipline is more thorough and comprehensive than anything else. This explains the high pitch of mass-morality in the days of Buddhism in India and of Confucius in China.

Yet one may ask, "Why do you bring in fictitious things like heaven and hell to govern the impulses of the human mind? Cannot the earth supply us with truer and worthier motives for the purposes?" Heaven and hell may not be as fictitious as we are tempted to think. Our view of nature, as we have already seen, is neither exhaustive nor absolute. Hamlet was perhaps right

when he said, "There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Heaven and hell may have as much objective reality as our human view of nature. If there be life after death it is in the fitness of things that there should be devices of rewards and punishments in the scheme of nature for our gradual refinement even beyond this world. Of course the thoughts of these rewards and punishments are necessary only for the beginners in religion. And we have to remember the fact that many of us are no more than mere beginners in religion, because in spite of our well-refined intellect we have to start with the A.B.C. of the intuition of the pure heart. This is why in the spiritual school most of us like little children have to think of rewards and punishments and go through a little bit of kindergarten exercise as well. In this lie the truth and utility of all rituals, parables, stories and mythologies. The idea behind all these is to gradually chasten the mind

and prepare it for spiritual realization by opening up the channel of pure intuition.

This was why Swami Vivekananda wanted each man to believe things according to the stage of his spiritual growth. The religion of the masses may appear to the intellectual man to be very crude, yet we may safely let them start from where they stand and all that we have to do is to enlighten them regarding the essentials of pure religion so that instead of perverting religion they may work their way up. We have only to eliminate all that lead to a perversion of religion and the rest is all right. *There is nothing wrong with religion. It is neither unscientific, nor illogical, nor pernicious in its effect, unless, of course, we make the mistake of judging it by the fruits of its perversion.* Rather the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi go to establish the view that *it is religion alone that illumines the upward path of human civilization.*

THEORY AND ART OF MYSTICISM*

BY D. MITRA, M.A.

Religious mysticism is still regarded in a doubtful light in the West. The scholars there have weighed it in the balance and found it wanting. They emphasise what they call its 'other-worldly' aspect. The late Mr. Victor Branford, a sociologist of great repute had begun to think and write on the effects on society of mystical thought. His book on "St. Columba :

a study of social inheritance" was one of the earliest ones of its own kind. But excluding such stray writings the idea that Mysticism can be an active agency for good, a definite power that can help us in the solution of the problems of life, capable of meeting with the requirements of "human nature's daily food" is still regarded as utopian or at least visionary in the extreme. The present reviewer of Dr. Mukerjee's book on *Theory and Art of Mysticism* remembers the attitude of horror assumed by the late Professor Patrick Geddes when some one tried to make him under-

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stand our *Eastern point of view of social progress in relation to Mysticism*. In spite of the fact that the professor was a man of most liberal outlook he characterised Philosophy, Religion and Mysticism in a rather eleemosynary spirit as mere individual problems—to use his own expression, “auto-drama.” In this he illustrated only the typical Western outlook in such matters. Catholic Europe in the Middle Ages instituted a dualism of thought in the realm of matter and spirit which modern European speculation in spite of its liberalism has not yet been able to shake off altogether. The idea that that which is a matter of inner growth—ordinarily called ‘mystical’—can guide our external activities even in the common spheres of life is being only slowly understood and assimilated by the West. In the East it has a long tradition at its back and our life as we live it every day is easily and popularly regarded as the shadow of a greater life that is beyond. Apart from any theological conception of heaven, with which it is but remotely associated, there is a living belief that even our material social life with all its institutions and conception of duty, has no significance whatsoever when it is seen detached from the greater life of the Soul, towards which all our aspiration and progress should be mainly directed.

Comte and following him many others, the pioneers of sociological thought in Europe, considered religion to be so much dead lumber, or at least a mere cumbrous relic of the past that clogged the onward march of the wheels of social progress. Dr. Mukerjee has very ably refuted the mistakes of such theorists in his present volume. He has pointed out that at every stage of life, in every form of it there has been a strain of mysticism however crude and primitive some of its earlier forms may have been—and

that it is this which forms the bed-rock of human society. Even the primitive savage who worships stock or stone does not worship it as such but as something higher in essence, something to which the group-mind of his type of tribal organisation pays reverence as a mysterious power making for social integration and as a helpful medium, therefore, in the organisation of all its thought and activities. *Mysticism in its highest aspect* is no doubt a matter of individual growth from within but at the same time it is an integrating force helping social growth and social development. This cannot be denied now after all the able exposition we have here. The Mystic’s eager search for Reality and his attainment of it have a beneficent radiation that is never lost on the society at large. *As a matter of fact it is round such personalities only that society in India still revolves and social institutions are shaped and moulded by the light of their intuition.* The mendicant Sadhu in the East is not considered as a parasite but a great social asset in spite of the fact that there has been much abuse of religious life here in the past as well as in the present time.

Religious mysticism, therefore, does not necessarily imply exclusiveness or isolation in any form. It has a dynamic quality of its own implying a widening and expansion of the heart that embraces all creatures and all forms of life and incorporates that which is diffused and scattered into one. A broad humanism is, if not always the basis, the apex of such mysticism and its true test.

The story told of Hanuman (Mahavir) has been aptly quoted by our author in this context:—“A wretched scavenger in the grip of a loathsome disease, lay in foul filth crying: ‘Ah God! God!’ Hanuman, flying by, angrily kicked the sufferer on the breast. That night as he shampooed the God’s body, he was

horrified to find a dreadful wound on the same place. How had it happened? 'You kicked a poor man on the breast,' explained God, 'as he called upon my name, and what you did to the vilest of my children you did to me.' "

Analyzing this story from the point of view of a sociologist the author points out that 'Hanuman might have been a totemic deity worshipped by the aboriginal inhabitants of India, but as the apotheosis of moral purity, energy and self-surrender, as he is described to be by Valmiki and Tulsidas, he is at once a bridge between Aryanism and Dravidian culture, and a symbol of a most ethical type of theistic worship among millions of people in Northern India.' The worship of Sri Ramachandra stresses a great many social virtues which he possessed—virtues that are still regarded here as the most covetable ones in spite of much of the disintegrating influence of modern civilization. Ramachandra is not merely worshipped as divinity but as the perfect specimen of humanity.

In the first chapter of his book Dr. Mukerjee writes on the 'Forms and Functions of Mysticism.' Here he establishes the normality of Religion and provides us with a psycho-physical study of the phenomenon of Mysticism. In the chapter on 'The Roots of Religion,' he has some very deeply reflective remarks on Imagination as the co-ordinator. He distinguishes very clearly between the symbols of Religion and Art. He writes: "In art the symbols are mere symbols while in Religion these are real as well as figurative. Unlike the artist, the religious mystic does not live in the realm of his imagination, he lives in the realm of essence." Here we find a study of the orderly growth of the mind of a mystic. "The Mystic's attitude-adjustment," he says, "is the most plastic; neither a set emotion nor an intellectual

formula can damage the wholeness and integrity of his experience. His mind responds more freely, more fully, more finely to all possible situations than does the ordinary mind. Hence the supreme place and function of religion in human life; for it is from religion that the ordinary person obtains his modes and patterns of response." Of the later chapters may be mentioned 'Primitive Religion,' 'Magic and Ritual,' 'Religion and Economic life,' 'Belief in Cosmic Order,' 'Symbols of Religion,' 'Social conception of Religion,' 'Mysticism of Sex and Love.' By far the most important chapters are on the 'Social values of Mysticism,' 'Unity of Mystical Experiences' and the last chapter on 'Modern thought and Eastern Mysticism.' Here we have a list of the most appetizing intellectual pabulum the modern mind can get hold of and Dr. Mukerjee is highly stimulating and suggestive in every detail he offers. His method is strictly scientific supplemented by introspective details culled from the best mystic literature of both the East and West. His wide range of reading and deep insight into the greatest truths revealed to the seers of old make his book a veritable mine of information. There is nothing 'parochial' or 'partisan' in it, for the book is valuable primarily on its merit as a scientific appraisal of the value of Mysticism and Religion for society. It may not appeal at once to a particular type of thinkers who still somehow adhere to the idea that Religion is only a prop for the feeble-minded and that much of it is sentimental nonsense or even merely suppressed sexuality; but to those vigorous thinkers of the new school who are gradually feeling that there may, after all, be something in Religion, Dr. Jung for example, if only we could look to the root of the matter a little, this book will come as a great enlightener of the soul. If they think

that they cannot yet go the whole length with Dr. Mukerjee then it is exactly there that they will find his suggestions regarding the art and practice of Mysticism helpful. They will have to evolve what is already within them in order to understand that the nature of which they cannot yet realise.

We cannot but mention one other merit of this book. It is written in a charming literary style. This makes the book to be of absorbing interest even to a lay-reader. There is many a scattered passage in this book where the balanced clauses, the gracefulness, the lyric charm and suavity of expressions employed make one feel that these can vie in their feeling-tone with the best emotional passages in modern literature. Here is one: "For the ignorant God is fetish, image or ritual; for the wise God is mysterious and bears a thousand names. For the child God is a playmate; for the youth God is the sweet coy maiden of love and beauty. For the worldly God is the consecration of the flesh, and the art and ritual of the satisfaction of desires. For the leaders of men, God is the supreme embodiment of renunciation and self-sacrifice. For the aged God is the All and the Alone.

"God's body is made up of man's deepest and most fervent desires and aspirations. In the depth of passion, in the serenity of knowledge, in the tensest moments of activity God is with man. And when passion is frustrated, and activity is baffled by cruel fate and death and man finds himself a castaway on the sands of time, he still worships God as the All-good. When his knowledge quails before the thought that this universe, the scene of his many triumphs and sufferings, must share the inevitable extinction of the solar system, God is still the All-true. God is the eternal

dancer in all-engulfing Space and Time. Life and Death, Creation and Destruction are rhythmically pulsating patterns in His ever-supple, ever-flowing dance. Whilst He sweeps majestically over dark unfathomable space, a thousand worlds and beings spring up like lotuses and God lingers amongst them in a kiss and His kiss is the hope and beauty of creation. When He swiftly turns back in the grandeur of sheer aimlessness a thousand worlds and beings return after their little day to His all-devouring mouth and God is left alone and unpartnered. Then there is neither universe nor man, and God neither feels, nor thinks, nor dreams."

We have no doubt that Dr. Mukerjee's present volume will serve as a valuable contribution towards the bridging of the gulf that unfortunately still exists between the intellectual outlook on Mysticism in the East and the West. The book contains a highly appreciative foreword by Professor William Ernest Hocking of the Harvard University, in which he has quite accurately pointed out that "it is of high importance for the rapidly changing East that a light so adequate should be thrown upon its ancient and perennial sources of strength." Dr. Mukerjee speaks here not only as an eminent scholar in his own rights as a Sociologist but also as a Psychologist of great insight into the minute workings of the mystical mind and its relations with the world of sense-bound reality. Western scholars like James, Rudolf Otto, J. B. Pratt and Von Hügel have studied such problems from their own angles of vision. A contribution of a substantial type like this from an authoritative scholar of the East was long overdue. Our thanks therefore go to Professor Mukerjee for removing this great need.

THE STORY OF THE INDIAN KING AND THE CORPSE

BY PROF. H. ZIMMER

(Continued from the last issue)

It is the tale of a night full of gruesome and strange happenings, and strangely is the king ensnared within them. Every day there comes to his audience a man clad in the gown of a beggar-priest who offers him a fruit. Thoughtlessly the king receives his gift and thoughtlessly he hands it to his treasurer who is standing beside him at the throne. Without a word, without a single petition or request, the man in the holy gown withdraws. Showing not a sign of impatience or disappointment he loses himself in the crowd of exacting and petitioning people and disappears. Thus it continues for ten years, till one day it happens that a tame monkey who has escaped from his keepers in the inner apartments of the palace leaps into the hall on to the throne of his master. The king hands to him, as a plaything, the fruit which as usual the holy man has just presented to him in silence. The monkey bites into it, and behold! out falls its kernel, a gem of rarest value. Already, however, the giver of that marvellous fruit has disappeared into the crowd. Much astonished, the king asks: "What has become of the others?" The treasurer then confesses that he has not even looked at the fruits but, without even as much as unlocking the door, he has thrown them through an open window into the treasure house. Now hastily he goes in search of them, and unlocking the door, he finds those fruits. Crumbled and decayed upon the floor, they lie those gifts of many years, but beside them glistens a great heap of

jewels. The king, much pleased, bestows the whole upon his treasurer. Now he longs to have a word with the mysterious giver of such gifts; so next morning, when the holy man returns, and wordlessly presenting his fruit is about to depart, the king refuses to accept the gift unless the man stop and speak with him. At this, the ascetic begs for an interview with the king alone, and upon obtaining it, brings forth his request. He requires, he says, an intrepid man to help him in an enterprise of magic, for are not the weapons of heroes renowned for their great exorcising powers? The king promises his assistance. The magician then asks him to come upon the next night of the new moon to the great burial-ground where all the dead of the city are burned. There he will await him. The king gives his word, and the ascetic who has the beautiful name of "Rich-in-Patience," withdraws.

The night of the new moon falls. Unrecognizable, enwrapped in a dark cloak, his great sword in his hand, the king sets out upon his secret quest. Fearlessly stepping over the dread place, in the dim light of the smouldering funeral pyres, his eyes half see, half guess, dim skeletons and skulls blackened and charred, while his ears throb to the wild tumult of ghosts and demons. These hover ever about such a place upon such a night. At the appointed place, the king finds the holy man busied in drawing a magic circle.

"Here I am," he calls. "What may I do for you?"

The sorcerer scarce looking up from his task, replies, "First as a proof of your good grace, go to the far end of the burial-ground and there cut down from a tree the body of a hanged man and bring it to me." The king promises to do as he was bid. Fearlessly, by the dim flickering glimmer of death pyres, in the now moonless night, he steps. Horrible ghouls and goblins beset his path; but at last he reaches the tree, and seeing the hanged man dangling from it, he climbs upon and cuts him down. As the body falls it moans as though hurt. The king, thinking there must still be life in the corpse, is just beginning to grope over it when suddenly out of the dead man's throat sounds a shrill laugh. The king realizing that in the body there must lodge a ghost, asks: "At what are you laughing?" But even as he speaks the dead man has disappeared, and again he is dangling from the branch above him. Once more, for the hearts of heroes are firm as diamonds, the king climbs the tree and fetches him down. Resolutely he lifts the corpse again, and bearing it upon his nape, he walks silently forth. And as he walks, out of the body the ghost begins to speak to him: "Oh king, I will shorten the way for you with a tale."

Thereupon the ghost recounts to the king the strange adventures of a prince who goes for hunting with his friend, the son of a minister, through a wild wood. Resting beside a lake, he perceives on the far bank a beautiful maiden bathing. As each beholds the other, both are stricken with love. Unseen by her own suite, the maiden signals from her side of the stream, but the young prince cannot understand the meaning of her signals. His wise friend does, however, and after the tantalizing vision has disappeared, and they have returned home, he interprets them to the prince, who is

consumed with longing for his unknown love. She has told him, says the wise friend, her name, the name of her family, and the kingdom in which she lives; also she has confessed to him her love.

Under the pretext of going for hunting again, the two friends arise, and escaping from their suite, they reach the town of the maiden. There, incognito, they find rooms in the house of an old woman, who is willing to serve as a messenger to the beloved. The maiden is overjoyed to hear of their arrival. She does not give herself away, however, to the go-between, but by new signals (again only divined by the wise friend) she arranges a tryst, delays it, and finally through the unsuspecting old woman reveals to the young prince a pathway leading to herself. In the house of the maiden, the lovers meet at last and are happy together. But the cunning and passionate girl learns from her lover that he had not understood even one of her signals; that everything had been achieved through the friend who seems to direct his every step. Now the love-stricken girl, in her jealous rage, tries to poison the minister's son. She wishes her prince to be dependent on her alone. The clever friend guesses her scheme, for in the arts of intrigue he is her superior. He takes the two lovers by force, carries them off to his own home, and arranges a punishment for the girl. He makes up his mind that she is to pay for the final happiness with agony and despair. To attain this end, he prepares the performance of a dangerous play. He himself takes the part of a beggar-priest. To the prince he gives a role of the priest's pupil, and on the maiden he forces the part of a witch. Before the king of the land he accuses her of having brought about the death of the king's son whose

sudden decease the father is just then lamenting. Evidence is brought against the maid and she is condemned to a terrible death. Naked, before the town, she is exposed to the mercy of wild beasts, but just in time the prince and his friend reach the place. Unmasking themselves, they flee with the girl upon swift horses to make her the prince's bride. Now grief over the terrible fate of their daughter breaks the hearts of the girl's parents, and they die.

"Who is guilty of the death of these two?" suddenly asks the ghost speaking out of the corpse the king is carrying. "If you know the answer and are silent, then your head will burst into a hundred pieces." The king knows the answer, and the fear of the curse loosens his tongue: "Neither the maiden nor the prince are guilty," he replies. "Both were inflamed by the fiery arrow of love and so were not responsible for their actions. The son of the minister acted in the service of his master and not upon his own responsibility. Guilty only was the king who let such things befall within his country; who did not see through the subtle trickery; who did not unmask the beggar-priest; who did not notice the deeds of these strangers within his land; who did not even know they were there; who punishably failed in his duty, as all-penetrating, all-seeing eye of his kingdom."

So the king, ever shouldering his strange burden, passes judgment upon that other king so culpably duped by an imposter in the gown of a begging ascetic. But even while he speaks, the corpse has disappeared from his nape and groaning hangs once more beneath the tree. Resolutely the king returns and fetches it. Again he shoulders the strange load and again the ghost speaks to him: "You have encumbered yourself with a difficult and unusual charge, dear Sir. Let me while away the time

for you with a story. Hear!" And so he tells him another, a second tale:

"Once upon a time there were three young Brahmins who dwelt in the house of their teacher. All three were in love with his beautiful daughter, but the father dared not bestow his daughter on one of them for fear the hearts of the other two would break. Suddenly the maiden, stricken with an illness, died. Despairing, the three burned the corpse. The first then wandered through the world as a beggar-priest; the second, carrying with him the limbs of his beloved, betook himself to an ancient pilgrimage to the life-giving waters of the holy Ganges. The third, erecting a hermitage over her last resting-place, slept upon the ashes of his love.

He who wandered through the world begging witnessed on a day a wondrous happening. With his own eyes he beheld a man who, by means of a magic charm from a book, called back to life a child from its own ashes. Stealing the book, he hastened back to the ashes of his beloved, arriving at the spot simultaneously with the second, who had dipped the limbs of the maiden in the life-giving waters of the sacred river. Above the ashes and the bones, the magic was accomplished. There stood the adored maid even more lovely than before. Now a conflict arose between the three. One had guarded her ashes; one had dipped her limbs in the waters of life; the third had learned and uttered the magic spell. To whom then did she belong?

"Well, to whom does she belong?" shrills the ghost. "Burst will be your head if you know and do not speak."

The king knows and speaks: "He who recalled her to life with little pains in the doing of it is her father; he who rendered the kindly services to her limbs is her son; but he who sleeping upon her ashes at the burial-ground, devoted

his life and affections to her, he it is who must be termed her spouse."

A wise judgment, but before the king has finished pronouncing it, again the corpse has vanished from his shoulder. Again he fetches it, and again he tells him a tale, to shorten the way for him, or to dupe him, as he says. Again he gives him a riddle to solve, and again at the solving of it he vanishes away. So the ghost drives the king; hither and thither he drives him. Tale upon tale falls from his mouth, of twisted destinies and tangled lives ever newly presented. All of life he tells with its joy and its horror, and ever the thread of his fantasies twist into knots of right and wrong, of demands and failures which the king must disentangle. Where in all this intricacy lies the essential core?

There is the tale of the posthumous son of a thief who wished to offer up a sacrifice to his dead father at a spring. A certain woman whose inheritance has been seized by her relatives owing to the death of her husband has been obliged to flee from her home with her daughter. During their nocturnal escape they came upon a thief impaled and on the verge of death. With his last breath the thief expresses the wish to marry the daughter, for he thinks then that a future son of hers, even though engendered by another, would belong to him, and would therefore make for him the necessary offerings after his death. In return for this service, he tells the woman where lies his stolen treasure. Later the maiden falls in love with a handsome young Brahmin and prevails upon him to be her lover. He agrees but insists upon being paid for the service, as he in turn loves a courtesan whose favour he wishes to purchase. In due course the maiden bears a son, and after a vision she has had, leads him, together with a thousand gold coins, to the threshold

of the king's palace. This king is childless. It happens that he dreams that same night of a child at his threshold. Finding his dream come true, he brings up the foundling as his son and heir. Years later, however, after the king's death, when the young prince is about to make a sacrificial offering to his father at a spring where the dead stretch forth ghostly hands to receive the sacrifice, there lift, instead of one, three hands for his gift; the hand of an impaled thief, the hand of a Brahmin and the hand of a king. Which one is his father? The young prince does not know in which hand to place his gift. Even the priests attending him do not know.

"Well," asks the ghost of the king, "in which hand ought he to lay his offering?"

"In the hand of the thief," replies the king. "The Brahmin had sold himself. The king also, because of the thousand gold coins, had received compensation. It was the thief who had made it possible for the son to be born; it was he who because of his marriage had owned the child. For him was the child conceived."

So spoke the king, and again the corpse was gone.

When will this ghostly ordeal end? What is it then, the height of mockery or the end of a long trial? In the poem lies no indication of the meaning.

In the end, after twenty-three riddles have been put to him, the king at last hears one for which his wisdom knows no answer.

A prince and his son who are out hunting one day come upon the footprints of two women evidently fugitives from some noble house. The son suggests that if they succeed in overtaking the women, he and his father each take one of them as wife. Obviously the two are mother and daughter, the smaller footprint belonging presumably to the

daughter, the larger to the mother. The son, after some argument, prevails upon his father to take the woman with the larger footprints, while he will have the other. Having taken a solemn oath in this decision, they finally come upon the two women who prove to be indeed a beautiful queen and her beautiful daughter, fleeing from their kingdom after the king's death. The prince and his son fulfil what they have sworn to do, but the smaller feet belong to the mother, the larger to the daughter. It is the father, therefore, who marries the daughter, the son the lovely mother. Both then have children. Just how are these children related to each other? What are the one to the other and what are they not?

This enigma strikes the king dumb. For the exact clue to their relationship he can find no word; so he walks silently on, the corpse upon his shoulder. These children are all things to each other at once. To each single definition another is contrary, yet both are correct. They are to one another in every respect both the one and the other. Is this not always so? Is not always the one also the other? And is not each thing everything at one and the same time? And all judgments passed so astutely over right and over wrong, are they not too all in each? Does not there lie concealed a secret unkingliness in the kingly, a hidden unholiness in the holy? Is this the meaning of the tale that silences the king at last as he wends his way forth, wiser now in his silence than in his former clever solvings?

The ghost admires him as he walks lightfootedly along, and enjoys his silence. Now it is with a new voice he speaks to him:

"You seem cheerful in spite of this weird nocturnal wandering, this passing to and fro over the gruesome burial-ground. You do not know the meaning

of hesitation. The miracle of your steadfastness has made me glad. Now take the corpse with you. I am leaving him."

If this were the last word of the ghost, all that he had done to the king would have been but a futile and meaningless jest. What binds the two together is more than just the malicious pleasure of a spirit in duping a living man. More too is there than just the common sharing of a corpse—the one fetching it, the other living within it.

What is the tie between them that compels the spirit ceaselessly to test the steadfastness of the man with endless tales? Is it a mutual destiny? Is it a common danger? Now the spectre cautions the king against the beggar-priest. Under the garment of tranquillity, he warns him, is concealed a thirst for power and blood. He has chosen the king not only as an accomplice in his great enterprise of magic but also as a victim to his power.

"Hear what I am about to tell you, oh, King! and for your welfare act accordingly. The beggar-priest is a dangerous deceiver. By means of his spells he intends to force me to enter into the corpse once more; then he will worship me and try to offer you to me as sacrifice. He will tell you to fall upon your knees before me and when you will be lying prone with your head and hands upon the earth, he will try to sever your head from your body with your own sword. Therefore say to him: 'Do you worship first that I may imitate the posture;' then when he is lying prostrate so, cut off his head. When this has been accomplished, to you will fall the power that he, by means of his magic spells, so ardently desires to possess. May it be yours indeed!"

So saying, the spectre vanishes from

the corpse and the king bears the body at last to the sorcerer-priest.

Meanwhile the latter seems scarcely to have found the time lagging. He shows no sign of disappointment or impatience for that the king has not come sooner with his burden. He only seems filled with admiration for the hero who has so fearlessly fulfilled the gruesome task set for him. Now the magic circle is completed. Ingeniously decorated with whatever horrible materials the unholy spot offered—ground up bones, blood of dead bodies, etc., the whole is horribly alight in the flickering of burning corpse fat.

Taking the body, he washes and embalms it and decorating it like an idol, places it in the centre of the magic circle.

Then by means of Yoga spells he calls the ghost to the place and, forcing him to return into the corpse, he adores him like a god.

Now the king, instead of obeying the order of the magician to fall upon his knees and worship, does as the ghost has told him. This is not difficult, for scarcely can a priest expect a king to be familiar with this slavish posture of obeisance. Now from his body the king cuts the sorcerer's head, and tearing the heart from his breast, he sacrifices both head and heart to the spectre in the corpse. Thereupon a sound of jubilation bursts from every side out of the night. It is the ghost-troop acclaiming him. And now the spectre in the corpse, elated, speaks from his lodging place:

"Power over the ghosts; that was the supreme wish of the beggar-priest. Now it will be yours, oh, King! when your life is ended; but before that time, domination over the whole earth is given to you. I have tormented you, therefore I shall atone. Speak your wish and it shall be granted."

The king then asks as compensation for this strangest of all his nights, the

twenty-four riddle-tales the ghost has told him, and, too, he asks that the story of the night itself be made known upon the earth and respected among men.

The spectre grants him the fulfilment of his wish. "Not only will all twenty-five tales be recognized by the world, but even Shiva, the great god himself, master of ghosts and demons, the great Yogi, the ascetic among the gods, even he will honour them. Neither ghosts nor demons shall have power where they are told, and he who in sincere devotion recites even one of them shall be free of sin."

So speaking, the spectre departs.

Now, surrounded by the gods, Shiva himself appears. Acclaiming the king, he thanks him with high praises for having saved the spirit world from the impure hands of the demons.

Soon now the ghosts will serve him, their new master who has delivered them from a gross imposter and a wicked abuse of ghostly domination. But before this befalls, all the earth will be his. The great sword, Invincible, given to him by Shiva's hand, grants him power over all the world. For this great office the king is chosen, for he is in truth a higher personage than he himself knows. The god lifts the veil from the gaping abyss that parts the realms of man and god, revealing to the king that he is himself a portion of the divine omnipotence.

He, the all-god, is in him the king. A part of his being he has sent down upon the earth, and, masquerading as a human being, he will combat the evil forces in human shape and prepare the way for the reign of the gods upon the earth.

After the king has enjoyed domination over all the spirit-world, he will return into the all-god from where he sprang.

So elected, the king returns to his city. The day is breaking. Keenly aware of

the marvellous fulfilment of all the prophecies just revealed to him, he performs his earthly day. Building a bridge into the spirit-world, homeward he steps to the high source whence he came. As in dream, as through a succession of dreams that endlessly unfurl yet take place in the space of but a few moments, the king walks to and fro over the burial-ground.

Just as a dreamer tosses hither and thither upon his couch, he goes; and as

one awakening, looks back upon what was confusion to him the day before, seeing it to be still deeper confusion than he had guessed and so, changed by his revealing dream, is able now to take up a reality within and outside himself, a reality which hitherto had been denied him, so this king returns an altered and a wiser man out of his night into his world of day.

(To be continued)

SOME VEDANTIC VIEWS ON UNIVERSAL CAUSATION

BY PROF. ASHOKANATH SHASTRI, VEDANTATIRTHA, M.A., P.R.S.

In a previous article,* we have tried to show how the author of the *Padârthatattvanirnaya* has established his theory of twofold universal causation. In the present article, we shall attempt to analyse the views of other Advaita writers on the subject; and this necessitates a brief recapitulation of the view of the *Padârthatattvanirnaya*, which is given below.

It is held by the Advaitins that the substratum consciousness (*adhishthâna-chaitanya*) by itself cannot remove the individual nescience, for it manifests ignorance also. But when reflected through the modification of the internal organ (*vritti*), the veil of ignorance is easily lifted. The Advaitins have pointed out that there can exist no relation [such as contact (*i.e. samyoga*) or inherence (*i.e. samavâya*)] between the object (phenomenal creations) and the subject (consciousness); for the subject and the object have one identical reality. The subject, however, possesses independent reality; and consequently

the object is to be regarded as falsely superimposed on the subject.¹ In other words, the subject appears as the object, or the Ultimate Reality (*i.e. Consciousness*) is the *apparent cause* of the universe.

Mâyâ, on the other hand, is the really changing cause, since the insentient objects of the world are but the direct modifications of the non-intelligent formative cause—Mâyâ.

Thus according to the author of the *Padârthatattvanirnaya*, a twofold material cause of the world (Brahman—the apparent cause—*vivartopâdâna* and Mâyâ—the formative cause—*parinâmopâdâna*) is finally established.²

VIVARANA VIEW : ISHVARA (AND NOT BRAHMAN)—THE UPADANA

The author of the *Vivarana*, however, opines that Personal God (Ishvara) and

¹ *Chitsukhî*, Nirnayasagar Edition, pp. 44-47.

² "Atrâhuh padârthatattvanirnayakârâh—brahma mâyâ chetyubhayam upâdânam . . . tatra brahma vivartamânatayâ upâdânam, avidyâ parinâmamânatayâ."—*Siddhântaleshasamgraha*, Benares Edition, p. 72.

* *Vide Prabuddha Bharata*, June, 1938.

not the Absolute (Brahman) is the substantive cause.³ This position of the *Vivarana* is not fundamentally different from that of the *Padârthatattvanirnaya* (given above), inasmuch as Ishvara is not represented to undergo any constitutional change in the process. If we analyse the entity—Ishvara (which is regarded as *Bimbachaitanya*—original Consciousness, and not the *pratibimba*—reflection, as the author of the *Samkshepasârîraka* thinks), we find Him to be Pure Consciousness associated with *Mâyâ*. Only the limiting adjunct *Mâyâ* changes into the form of the world, while Pure Consciousness undergoes no transformation whatsoever, but only appears to have changed into the world. While *Padârthatattvanirnayakâra* follows the analytical process, *Vivarana-kâra* adopts the synthetical one.

Dr. Das Gupta, however, is of opinion that “Prakâsâtman, Akhandânanda and Mâdhava hold that Brahman in association with *Mâyâ*, *i.e.*, the *Mâyâ*-reflected form of Brahman as Ishvara should be regarded as the cause of the world-appearance. The world-appearance is an evolution or *parinâma* of the *Mâyâ* as located in Ishvara, whereas Ishvara (God) is the *vivarta* causal matter.”⁴

We are afraid that this position is not in consonance with the original position of the *Vivarana*. In the *Vivarana* the original Consciousness (*Bimbachaitanya*), as opposed to the reflected one (*pratibimbachaitanya*), is said to be the cause. And this ultimate Consciousness, as the original counterpart of reflection (*i.e.*, *Bimbachaitanya*), is Ishvara, *i.e.*, Consciousness as associated with *Mâyâ* as an adjunct. According to the *Samkshepasârîraka*, the original Conscious-

ness is the Pure Absolute (*i.e.* *Shuddhachaitanya*), and its reflection (*pratibimba*) in the *Mâyâ* is held to be the Personal God or Ishvara. It is the Pure Absolute that is held to be the substantive cause and not Ishvara, who is rather a product of *Mâyâ*.⁵

The position, therefore, comes to this: According to the *Vivarana*—

(a) Ishvara, *i.e.*, Brahman in association with *Mâyâ* (*mâyâsabalam*) and not its reflection, is the *causa materialis*;⁶

(b) *Mâyâ* is always located in pure self-luminous Consciousness, and never in Ishvara, Who is rather a concrete whole having Pure Consciousness and *Mâyâ* as His constituent factors;⁷

(c) the entire entity Ishvara is not the apparent cause; the associated *Mâyâ* is the formative cause, while Consciousness alone appears as the world.

According to the *Samkshepasârîraka*—Pure Absolute, which is the final objective and goal of philosophical enquiry, is the original and is regarded as the cause of the world-appearance. Of course, at first sight, this position seems to contradict the position of the *Vivarana*. But a compromise may be somehow effected, inasmuch as the causality attributed to Ishvara is capable of being extended to the Pure Consciousness forming His background, the

⁵ Ajñânopahitam bimbachaitanyam Ishvarah; antahkaranatatsamskârâvachchinnâjñânapratibimbitam chaitanyam jîva iti Vivaranakârâh.”—*Siddhântabindu*, 109.

“Ajñânapratibimbitam chaitanyam Ishvarah; buddhipratibimbitam chaitanyam jîvah; ajñânopahitam bimbachaitanyam suddham iti Samkshepasârîrakakârâh.”—*Ibid.* 110.

⁶ “Mâyâsabalam Ishvararûpam eva brahma upâdânam”—*S. L. S.* “Mâyâpâdhinirûpitambatvavisishtam sarvajñatvâdigunayuktam cha yad Ishvararûpam brahmachaitanyam”—*S. L. S.-Tîkâ*, p. 59.

⁷ “Nâpi svâsrayachitprakâsena virudhyate jñânânam”—*Vivarana*, *viz.*, *S. S.*, p. 43. “Svayamprakâsasyâvidyâsrayatvam upapanam ityuktam”—*Ibid.* P. 46.

³ “Vivaranânusârinâs tu . . . mâyâsabalam Ishvararûpam eva brahma upâdânam.”—*S. L. S.*, p. 59.

⁴ Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 468-9.

associated Mâyâ serving only as an indicator (*upalakshana*).⁸

SAMKSHEPASARIRAKA VIEW : PURE
BRAHMAN—THE UPADANA

The view of the *Samkshepasârîraka* thus deserves our attention next. In it, Brahman itself has been described as the substantive cause, and Mâyâ is regarded as a cause by courtesy only, because it serves as the medium.⁹ The service of Mâyâ is postulated as Pure Consciousness in and by itself is not susceptible of any change, which is made possible by Mâyâ serving as an auxiliary.

⁸ "Ishvaragatam api kâranatvam tadanugatam akhandachaitanyam sâkhâchandra-masam iva tatasthatayopalakshayitum saknoti iti tasya jñeyabrahmalakshanatvoktir iti"—*S. L. S.*, p. 63.

⁹ "Samkshepasârîrakakritas tu brahmaiva upâdânam, kutasthasya kâranatvânupapattêh; mâyâ dvârakâranam"—*S. L. S.*, pp. 75-6. "Atra Samkshepasârîrakânusârinah kechid âhuh—suddham evopâdânam"—*Ibid.*, p. 58.

Here the question naturally arises, if Brahman alone is the material cause, wherefrom then does the insentience (*jadatâ*) of the world come in? The effect derives its characteristics from the material cause alone and not from any other conditions. But the difficulty is only apparent, as it is not at all an unusual occurrence that the effect may derive some of its characteristics from even what is only a helping condition. This is seen to be the fact in the case of a pot produced from clay. The clay is made smooth and glossy by a particular process of kneading and these adventitious attributes are seen to be produced in the pot made of such seasoned clay, though the original attributes of the clay cannot be believed to be the cause. So the world may derive its character of insentience from Mâyâ, though it is merely a helping condition.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Akâranam api dvâram kârye'nugachchhati"—*S. L. S.*, p. 76. The commentator explains—"akâranam api" as "aupâdânam api"—*S. L. S.-Tîkâ*, p. 76.

THE ASCENT

(DIARY LEAVES)

BY PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH

On ancient finger rings can be seen two spirals, one of ascent and one of descent. It is said that even a very lofty spirit can descend just as rapidly as it can ascend. This forewarning is very severe and just.

People have long understood that both ascent and descent can be extremely rapid. Nothing keeps even lofty beings from descent if they allow themselves to admit the baser desires. This path or rather leap into the abyss has more than once been dealt with both

in Eastern and Western literatures from the most ancient times. In the form of poetic productions, in epics and tales and novels—everywhere in varied aspects has been noted this truth. Evidently the popular wisdom has had a premonition as to how often it is needful to remind people both about the necessity of ascent and about the danger of downfall.

Sometimes people ask: "But what then, at downfall, becomes of all the attained refinements and perceptions?"

It would certainly seem that the once realized and assimilated could not become non-existent. In what manner are already accomplished attainments displaced into an abased state?"

Such a question is entirely logical and touches upon complex considerations. One has to assimilate very clearly the principle of transformation, both upwards and downwards. During upward transformation all possibilities and attainments are, as it were, unrolled, as in a triumphal procession the banners are unrolled and their inner signs made manifest. Likewise at transgression and downfall the banners are rolled up and the signs which were recently so gleaming are plunged into profound darkness.

Often people are amazed at the cleverness and the skill of the servants of darkness. But of course no one has said that they have always been servants of darkness. Perhaps they have taken the downward plunge, about which the above symbol has been given. In the downfall their attainments have been rolled up and transformed downwards. True, their cleverness has remained but it has been changed into evil. During ascent everything encountered, everything recognized is transformed into good. And just precisely is it in the opposite process, —everything already attained is changed into evil, is changed into injury. It will darken, confuse, and turn into chaos.

In the end it is not so difficult even for the human reason to scrutinize what is proceeding towards manifestation and creation, and what towards dissolution and chaos. Precisely as it has been said: "Examine the sum total and then each particularity will stand out conspicuously."

But judgement in perspective does not come so easily. What wise rulers they were, who left behind them the

saying: "To govern means to anticipate." Yet in order to anticipate, one has to be able to see into the distance. Even so some may be confused and mistake a distinction of horizon for self-exaltation, for an excuse to boast of his present cognitions.

If foresight and illumination can be rapidly acquired, just as speedily may come obfuscation and confusion. Man can discover a treasure all of a sudden, but so many times it has happened that people lose their treasure also suddenly and irrevocably.

A great artist and worker told me about how he lost a ring, which he valued very much, in a perfectly definite place on a smooth sea-shore, where there were no passers-by. In his own words, he sifted every grain of sand in this place. He made note of the place and went over it repeatedly but he never found his memorable ring. And another case is well-known, when a valued ring unexpectedly disappeared in a house and after three weeks was found glittering on the velvet seat of a divan.

Both discoveries and losses are very remarkable if we consider them together with their surroundings.

The possibility of ascent,—can it make a man conceited? It does not. It makes him observant, courageous, and untiring. The danger of descent,—can it turn a man into a suspicious coward, a tremulous fugitive? It does not. It only sharpens his memory, multiplies his circumspectness, and reminds him how joyful it is to hasten ahead. It is possible to adduce from different literatures beautiful words devoted to the great concept, "forward".

Precisely action continuously carried on protects one against many dangers. An arrow does not so easily reach one who is striving impetuously. He passes

between the terrors without noticing them and he increases and preserves his forces by his immutable aspiration. In his striving there will be no needless luxury. In his striving he refers good-naturedly to the jostling in the unavoidable crowd. In his impetuosity he more easily forgives much, which for a loiterer is the object of endless carpings.

Likewise it was long ago said that in action it is easier to pardon. Of course in general this accustoms one to one of the most beneficent qualities, that of forgiveness. The blossoms of forgiveness are beautiful, but a garden of affronts is an extremely repulsive spectacle. The commensurateness of great responsibility, of great preparedness for labours, and in general, of large measures, will also yield great effects. Any limitation, whether it emanates from inconsiderateness, light-mindedness, indolence, immobility—no matter which, it will still continue to grow steadily.

The progressions of growths are remarkable. In all the laws of motion can be seen the same basis. So too the progression of thinking or of not thinking, of seeing or of not seeing—all this moves and grows exactly the same. Courage, a quality which can be grown, is also multiplied in action. Just as quickly can fear be multiplied—a shameful timorousness which is terribly dominant in inaction.

Whoever placed upon the rings the spirals of ascent and descent wished to

remind continually about the possibilities, both upward and downward. It would seem that if descent is so often mentioned, people would have to take every precaution in order to avoid it. But it does not work out that way in life.

Of the loftiest and most beautiful symbols people manage to make objects which tell no one anything about life. And therefore in the movements of life itself so terrible is the necrosis, the vulgarization, which is embedded in the whole meaning of existence, dominates the entire tenor of thought, and leaves upon everything its infamous seal. Those who observe this would be pessimists if they should think only about this side. But surely the first spiral, that of ascent, must remain the first, the most attractive and the most inspiring.

Descending from a mountain always produces a sort of sadness, but the ascent is attended with great joy.

When we speak of ascent, we always have before us two powerful lofty examples: Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The very fact of the existence of such giants of thought is already a true benefaction for mankind. How many sufferers have found often by unexpected ways relief in the sayings and writings of these great sages and thus a new ascent had its beginning. People should be full of gratitude to those who by their example led them to the summits.

WOMAN'S PLACE IN BUDDHISM AND JAINISM

BY DR. A. S. ALTEKAR, M.A., LL.B., D.LITT.

We dwelt at length upon the position occupied by women in Hindu religion in the June issue. We shall now discuss what place was assigned to women in Buddhism and Jainism. Both these were ascetic religions and they have not devoted attention to the duties and ideals of lay women. The founders and leaders of both these religions shared the indifference to or contempt for women, which is almost universal among the advocates of the ascetic ideal. The Buddha was reluctant to admit women to his Church and the Digambara Jains held that women can never get salvation except by first being reborn as men. It may be added here that Buddhism did not subscribe to this dogma.

Owing to the pressing request of his foster mother, the Buddha eventually decided with great reluctance to admit nuns into his Church. Mahavira is not known to have raised any objection in the matter. But both Buddhism and Jainism placed nuns under a more rigorous discipline than monks. Some of the restrictions placed upon the nuns were no doubt reasonable ones. Thus it was laid down that they should not stay alone without the protection of monks; that they should avoid the company of men of questionable character; that only monks of unquestioned purity and integrity should be allowed to preach before nuns; that nuns should always live together in groups of twos and threes, etc. Some other rules, however, betray a lack of confidence in the character and judgment of women. Thus the admission of a new nun was to be sanctioned by a joint meeting of

the monks and nuns; new monks however could be admitted without consulting the nuns at all. Nuns were to go out to beg only when led by an experienced matron. The climax is however reached by the rule which lays down that a nun, though 100 years old, must stand in reverence before a monk though he may have been just initiated in the Church. The reader will not now be surprised to learn that a nun could never preach before a congregation of monks, though the selected ones among the latter could preach before a congregation of nuns.¹ It may be here added that early Christian Fathers shared similar views; they held that it was contrary to nature that women should be allowed to preach. The Council of Laodicea closed the doors of the preaching order to women in 365 A.D., and not all feminist agitation has succeeded even to-day in getting them reopened. Islam permits women to read the *Koran*, but not to preach from it.²

The above rules betray the inherent air of superiority which man usually finds it difficult to renounce with reference to the woman. Not all of them were always followed in practice; thus the theory that nuns could under no circumstances preach to monks did not stand in the way of Râjimatî, the wife of Neminâtha, in delivering a sermon to her brother-in-law, Rathanemi, when the latter had lost self-control (*Uttaradhyayanasûtra*, 22).

In spite of some discriminative rules

¹ *Vinaya*, Chullavagga, X. i. 4; *Mulachara* of Vattakera, pp. 177-79.

² Langdon Davis, p. 238.

referred to above the permission that was given to women to join the Church by these two religions raised a new and attractive prospect before them. In Brahmanic religion also there were some nuns like Sulabhâ, Gargî and Vâchaknavî; their number seems to have been much larger in Buddhist and Jain circles. Buddhism declared that womanhood was no bar to salvation³ and Svetambara sect concurred with the view. Marriage was not necessary for women; nay, it was a fetter which women were advised to avoid. Among the nuns of the *Therîgâthâ* the majority consists of ladies, who had renounced the world during their maidenhood. The career of preaching and evangelising that was thus opened before women by Jainism and Buddhism attracted a large number of talented ladies, who distinguished themselves as teachers and preachers. We find rich heiresses, refusing tempting marriage offers and joining the preaching army of the new religions. Such for instance was the case of Guttâ, Anopama and Sumedha,

³ *Therîgâthâ*, 61.

who eventually became very famous preachers (*Therîgâthâ*, 54, 56, 73). Jayantî, a daughter of king Sahasrânika of Kausambi, doffed her royal robe and became a shaven nun the moment her questions about the nature of *jîva*, the ideals in life, etc., were satisfactorily answered by Mahâvîra. Some ladies like Abhirûpâ Nandâ and Sumangalâ no doubt joined the Church as a welcome escape from household tyranny, but their number does not seem to have been large.

When discipline became slack and unworthy persons began to be admitted into monasteries and nunneries, the tone of moral life deteriorated. It hastened the process of the downfall of Buddhism. Later Hinduism took a lesson from what it saw in Buddhist monasteries and nunneries and prohibited women from renouncing life and becoming nuns. It declared that due discharge of family responsibilities was the most sacred duty of women.⁴ Nuns, therefore, have almost disappeared from Hinduism during the last 1500 years.

⁴ Yama in SCV, p. 596.

PATH TO PEACE

BY ANILBARAN ROY

“Make your surrender true and complete, then only will all else be done for you.”—Sri Aurobindo.

Our surrender to the Divine Mother must come from our inmost soul and be made complete and integral. We know all the parts in us have not yet wholly submitted to the Mother; we know they will not all surrender without a struggle; but they will ultimately have to submit if lasting peace is desired. We must always keep ourselves open to the Mother, so that Her light may enter

into us and show us the recalcitrant parts; we must again and again sacrifice them to Her and earnestly support all Her work in us until our whole realm is made free and brought absolutely under Her rule.

The arch rebel in us is our ego which seems to have an everlasting life. With its army of desires, it hides under the cover of our ignorance and inevitably comes back to life as many times as it is apparently killed by Her force in us. As long as a vestige, even a little seed of

it will be left, so long it will revive again and again. Annihilate it completely, leaving no trace, no seed of it in us. Once this conquest is achieved, our soul's aspiration will be fulfilled; we shall find our highest life by completely merging ourselves in the Mother.

The requirement of surrender to the Mother is an indispensable condition of our own real peace and happiness. Desires of the lower nature are pulling us in all directions and that is the root of all trouble. Our ordinary life is really a life of surrender to these blind hankerings of Nature. Let these utterly cease in us, let us surrender ourselves wholly to the Mother Divine. We should not bother about work; we should give up all idea of duty and responsibility but should allow Her will to work in us unhampered. We must not hanker after knowledge but should calmly receive whatever light comes from Her. We should not run blindly after the limited joys of the world but should gratefully accept whatever joy and pleasure comes directly from Her. Entrusting our whole life into the hands of the Mother, let us be free from all care and anxiety, from all effort and pain. If one can cease to rely on the poor efforts of the ego and depend wholly on the Mother, he can get infinitely more than the ego can ever bring. Yet the physical mind will not believe in the divine possibilities and will obstinately stand in the way of perfect surrender! Let our silent devotion personally to the Mother increase more and more, so that this obstinacy of the physical mind may melt away and we may surrender ourselves completely to Her.

It is not mere external surrender that is required; it is not sufficient that we cut off all our relations with the external world and depend wholly on the Mother for all our worldly needs. That is a preparation, an external symbol, of the

inner surrender that is required so that the integral transformation may take place. In our egoistic ignorance and blind habit we think that unless we form plans with our mind we cannot do any work, that unless we reason and argue with our mind we cannot know anything; so a ceaseless activity goes on in the mind. So the body continues its old artificial movements thinking them to be indispensable for the realisation of *ânanda*.

But those who can wholly depend on the Mother, giving up all personal effort and initiative, She takes their entire charge and does whatever is needful for them in Her own perfect divine manner. Yet the ignorant human soul hesitates to surrender itself and tenaciously clings to the poor egoistic effort to which it is habituated. Merely surrendering the external life will not do; the inner determination of every thought and feeling and action must be absolutely given up to the Mother Divine. Only then the surrender will be complete and She will take up the whole life into Her own being, Her own consciousness. This surrender is not easy and requires a determined *sâdhanâ* with great patience and perseverance. The pure consciousness of the Purusha is within us, it is sustaining all our life, it underlies all our thoughts and feelings and actions, yet we do not see it, do not recognise it, just as a blind man does not feel the existence of the light which covers and pervades him. The thoughts and habits of our lower consciousness constitute our blindness. When we are able to withdraw from the lower consciousness and turn towards the calm, immutable, silent, pure consciousness of the Purusha in us, only then it becomes possible to complete our surrender to the Mother, who is the supreme Divine consciousness containing and pervading everything that is in the universe.

SRI-BHASHYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

CHAPTER I

SECTION I

THE GREAT SIDDHANTA

Advaitin's position refuted

Moreover, Brahman which is self-luminous Consciousness cannot experience Nescience, for 'self-luminous' means It is conscious of Itself always. If it be said that Brahman which has consciousness of Itself, yet Its nature being covered by Nescience, experiences this Nescience and that this covering takes place by something else than Itself, it would mean nothing but destruction of Brahman, for if Its nature which is self-effulgence is ever covered by something then It ceases to exist. Moreover, this view is defective, for according to this view Brahman cannot experience Nescience till It is covered by it and Nescience cannot cover Brahman till It experiences this Nescience. Again, does this Nescience first become known and then cover Brahman or does it first cover Brahman and then is experienced? In the former case, since, Brahman without Its nature being covered is able to cognize Nescience, It can also cognize this manifold world, the product of this Nescience, and therefore there is no need to regard It as covered by Nescience nor even to imagine an ignorance of this kind. Again does Brahman experience Nescience by Itself or through some other agency? If by Itself, then such consciousness results from Its nature and therefore can never be destroyed and there would be no release. If still it should be maintained that it is destroy-

ed, then it would mean that Brahman Itself is destroyed. Even as the misconception of silver in mother-of-pearls along with the false silver is destroyed by the knowledge of mother-of-pearls so also knowledge which destroys Nescience will destroy Brahman also which sees this Nescience by nature. If it experiences Nescience through some other agency then, what is It? It cannot be another Nescience, for that would lead to a *regressus ad infinitum*. If it be said that Brahman is first covered by Nescience and then is experienced by It, then in that case Nescience by its essential being covers Brahman and so it is real like the cataract in the eye and cannot be destroyed by knowledge. Just as cataract in the eye prevents vision and is not destroyed by knowledge, so also Nescience which exists in Brahman will not be destroyed by knowledge.

If it be said that this Nescience is beginningless and that it simultaneously covers Brahman and is experienced by It which would avoid a *regressus ad infinitum*—such a thing is not possible, for Brahman which is essentially conscious of Itself cannot possibly be a witness and experience Nescience without Its nature being covered first. Unless this nature ceases to shine It cannot see anything else. If it be said that it is covered by something else and

not by Nescience and then experiences Nescience, then Nescience would cease to be beginningless for it is experienced only after that something has covered Brahman and not before and, moreover, this will also lead to a *regressus ad infinitum*. If, however, it be said that Brahman experiences Nescience without Its nature being covered, then it will not be true that Brahman is conscious of Itself.

Again, when Brahman is covered by ignorance, does It not shine at all or does It shine somewhat? In the former case since Brahman is mere light (Prakâsha) It will cease to exist. The latter case is not possible in a Brahman which has no parts or attributes but is homogeneous. It is only an object which has parts and attributes that can shine to some extent, as some of the parts or attributes are covered while the rest shine. But such a thing is not possible in a homogeneous Brahman which cannot have two forms. Therefore shining and not shining cannot co-exist in It. Even if it be said that Brahman's nature is covered by Nescience and therefore It shines dimly, it is not quite conceivable. When all attributes or parts shine in a thing it is said to shine vividly and when some parts or attributes alone shine it is said to shine dimly and in this case in those parts or attributes which do not shine, the light is altogether absent and those which shine, shine vividly and there can be no dimness when there is light. In an object which is cognizable, dimness may take place with respect to certain parts or attributes which are not experienced. So in a Brahman which is pure light and without attributes and not an object of sense perception such a dimness is not possible and so cannot be an effect of Nescience.

Moreover, does this dimness disappear or not when knowledge dawns? If it does not, release is not possible. If it

does, then what is Brahman's nature? Does Its essentially vivid nature exist before the destruction of the dimness by knowledge or not? If it does, then It cannot be dimmed by Nescience nor would it be necessary to remove it by knowledge. If it does not exist, then the vivid shining is something newly brought about and therefore something originating and consequently it would be perishable and not eternal, which would mean that Liberation (Moksha) is non-permanent. Nescience cannot be proved as its substrate cannot be determined. Moreover, if wrong perception results from a defect (Nescience) which is unreal it will be difficult to show that it cannot take place without a real substrate. Even as it is possible to have wrong perception due to an unreal defect, it is possible to have it even when there is no real base which would make Brahman as a reality doubtful thus leading to the theory of a universal void of the Buddhists.

Again, in the inference that was made it was proved, rather it was attempted to prove, that the Nescience which is a positive entity rests in Brahman and covers It and is later destroyed by true knowledge. But this Nescience cannot have Brahman for its substratum, for ignorance has as its substrate a knower and not that which is Pure Knowledge, as it is antagonistic to knowledge. Where silver is seen in a shell the ignorance with respect to the shell exists in the person who experiences the silver and not in knowledge. Since Brahman is Pure Knowledge according to the Advaitins and not a 'knower,' Nescience cannot have its seat in Brahman. Secondly, Nescience cannot cover Brahman, for ignorance covers the object which is cognizable and with respect to which there is ignorance and does not cover knowledge. When shell is taken for silver, ignorance covers the object,

shell, which is cognizable and not knowledge. Inasmuch as Brahman is never an object of knowledge, Nescience cannot cover It. To admit that It is so covered is to accept that It is an object of knowledge. Again, the positive Nescience cannot be destroyed by knowledge, for ignorance which covers an object of knowledge alone is destroyed by knowledge. Ignorance which is so destroyed by knowledge is only with respect to objects of perception. But Brahman is not an object of knowledge and therefore the ignorance with respect to It cannot be destroyed by knowledge. Fourthly, all knowledge which proceeds from valid proof is not preceded by a non-knowledge which is a positive entity, *i.e.*, something different from the mere negation of knowledge, for in that case it would not be valid proof. Proof which gives a knowledge as to the positive nature of your non-knowledge would be preceded by such positive non-knowledge, and proof which precedes non-knowledge cannot be a valid proof. Therefore, Nescience as a positive entity cannot be established by such proof. Non-knowledge which is mere negation of knowledge (*prâgabhâva*) alone exists before knowledge and is destroyed when knowledge dawns. Fifthly, knowledge cannot destroy anything because it is mere knowledge and destruction can be accomplished only by some other agency. No positive entity is destroyed by knowledge, as for example, the knowledge of a pot does not destroy it. So knowledge cannot destroy Nescience if it is a positive entity. It may, however, be said here that positive things like fear generated by seeing a snake in a rope is destroyed by the knowledge of the rope. This explanation however is not correct, for fear meets destruction by its own nature because it is momentary and not by the knowledge of the rope. When know-

ledge dawns the snake disappears and the cause of the fear being removed no more fear is generated, and the fear that was generated before, being momentary, meets destruction by itself and the person is free from fear, and not because knowledge has destroyed fear. That fear like perception is momentary is known from the fact that it exists so long as its cause exists and not after. Moreover, if it were not momentary then the stream of perceptions which causes it would produce a fear for each perception and as a result we would be experiencing different kinds of fear. The fact, however, is that we do not experience a number of fears and consequently it is momentary. So *Avidyâ* is not proved even by inference.

Again, merely from the fact that a thing is perceived which is later sublated by new knowledge which shows that the first perception was erroneous we cannot conclude that an *anirvachaniya* thing exists. What is perceived is alone the object of perception, error and sublation, and the object is not perceived as *anirvachaniya* and so we cannot imagine such an object which is not perceived by these states of consciousness or any other. Whatever becomes an object of perception, error or sublation is capable of being described as such and such, and if the Nescience is capable of being described like this it cannot be *anirvachaniya* and if it is not capable of being defined like this it cannot be an object of perception.

The Advaitins may say that in the case of the rope and the snake, the rope is experienced as a snake and there is fear, but later knowledge shows that the snake did not exist at the time and place and it is not possible for the rope to become a snake and so we are forced to the conclusion that for the time being there came into existence a snake which is neither real nor unreal. That is why the

person perceiving it became afraid and later got rid of this wrong perception by the knowledge of the rope. All this could not take place without a snake and therefore we have to accept an *anirvachaniya* snake as the object of wrong perception. This, however, is untenable. In a wrong or erroneous perception one thing appears as another and this element in wrong perceptions has to be admitted by the Advaitins also. This element by itself is sufficient to explain wrong perception and consequent fear and its final sublation, and therefore there is no need to accept any inexplicability which is neither experienced nor can be proved by any means of knowledge. The perception is not that the snake is inexplicable but as real. In the former case there would be no wrong perception or fear or sublation by later knowledge. So we have to conclude that the rope appeared as the snake, for otherwise the perception, the fear generated and subsequent sublation, cannot be explained. Whatever be the explanation given by the various schools of philosophy with respect to wrong perception, this element, *viz.*, the one thing appearing as another is common to all of them. They have to accept finally this *anyathâkhyâti* and therefore there is no use putting forward any other explanation (*khyâti*).

Moreover, before we accept the creation of an inexplicable snake we must show the cause from which it originated.

Perception cannot be the cause of this unique snake, for it cannot come into existence before the snake is perceived and therefore the snake must exist already before perception takes place. Nor can the organs create it, for they generate only knowledge and not its objects. Nor can the snake be created by defects in the sense organs, the eyes, etc., of the perceiver, for such defects affect only the knowledge of the perceiver and do not create any object and the Advaitins hold that an *anirvachaniya* object is created where a wrong perception takes place. That beginningless ignorance cannot be its cause has already been shown.

Assuming that a unique silver is created, why is it experienced and spoken of as *real* silver and not as any other object? It cannot be due to the similarity or likeness between it and the real silver, for in that case the perception would have been, 'It is like real silver.' If it is perceived as real silver then it would be a case of one thing appearing as another (*anyathâkhyâti*) and not inexplicable (*anirvachaniyâ khyâti*). Neither can it be said that it is the genus (*jôti*) which is in both the unique and the real silver, for in that case, is this genus (*jâti*) real or unreal? If it is real, then it cannot exist in the unreal silver. If it is unreal, then it cannot exist in the actual real silver existing elsewhere.

So this theory of *anirvachaniyâ khyâti* is untenable from all standpoints.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

In the *Editorial* we have given a picture of the renaissance of Indian thought and culture and indicated the pressing needs yet to be fulfilled for an all-round development of our national life. Dr. W. Norman Brown, Ph.D., Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., in his illuminating article on *The Study of India in America*, while dealing with the essential features of Indian life, accentuates the need of an extensive study of Indian civilisation in the American universities so as to establish an abiding cultural contact between the East and the West for the well-being of humanity. The article on *Religion and Modern Doubts* by Swami Nirvedananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, which is a spirited vindication of the sacred ideal of religion, will serve as an eye-opener to those modern critics who hold religion responsible for all evils in human life and society and do not find any truth-value in it. In the *Theory and Art of Mysticism* which is a learned review of Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee's book of the same name, Mr. D. Mitra, M.A., Lecturer in the University of Lucknow, has pointed out the prejudice even now entertained by a certain section of modern thinkers against mysticism and has ably shown that mysticism in its highest aspect is an integrating force and that society in India has evolved through the salutary spiritual influence of the great mystics of the land. Prof. Heinrich Zimmer, a great Indologist and Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Heidelberg, Germany, continues his learned article on *The Story of the Indian King and the Corpse* and gives

here a résumé of the fascinating anecdotes embodied in Somadeva's *Kathâsaritsâgara*. In the article on *Some Vedantic views on Universal Causation* by Prof. Ashokanath Shastri, Vedantatirtha, M.A., P.R.S., of the Calcutta University, will be found a lucid exposition of the view-points of the authors of the *Vivarana* and *Samkshepasâriraka* about the cause of the world. Prof. Nicholas Roerich of the Art Museum, Naggar, Kulu, Punjab, explains in *The Ascent* the inner significance of the two spirals of ascent and descent placed upon ancient finger rings. In his article on *Woman's place in Buddhism and Jainism*, Dr. A. S. Altekar, M.A., LL.B., D.Litt., Head of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Benares Hindu University, gives a short but interesting account of the position occupied by women in the socio-religious life of the Buddhists and the Jains in India. The *Path to Peace* by Sj. Anilbaran Roy of Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry, points out how complete self-surrender to the Divine Mother is to be practised to attain to the realm of infinite felicity and blessedness.

INDIA AND HER ETERNAL RELIGION

In the course of a reply to the address of welcome presented to Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York by the citizens of Calcutta on Thursday the 8th September last at the Calcutta University Institute, the Swami dwelt at length upon the spiritual heritage of India as also upon the significant role which religion has ever been playing in

the moulding of human life and society. Regarding the central theme of Indian culture he pertinently observed, "The advent of Sri Ramakrishna has shown where the vitality of the Indian nation lies. India producing a Ramakrishna during the nineteenth century, when the onslaught from the materialistic West was perhaps the severest, shows where the strength of the nation lies and through which channel its life-current flows. When the light burns at the tip, it shows that the whole lamp is ablaze Spirituality has been the mission of India and always it will be so. *There is no need for us to go to Moscow or Berlin for inspiration. We shall get it from the banks of the Ganges, caves of the Himalayas and the Vedas and the Upanishads.* Above all the eternal Lord, the indwelling spirit in us, will lead us from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light and from death, disease and suffering to Immortality." That religion is the most potent influence stimulating into activity the creative imagination of mankind can hardly be gainsaid. Everywhere in the world, remarked the Swami, the high watermark of culture has been achieved by religion. Europe is no exception to this rule. The tall sky-scrapers of New York, the concrete roads in the Alps, the battle ships, the air-planes or the underground fortresses are not the indicators of European civilization. Take away from Europe the great monuments of religion and it will appear bleak and desolate. The masterpieces of Raphael, Da Vinci and Michael Angelo have been inspired by religion. The *leit motif* behind the creations of Beethoven and Wagner has been religion. Take away the sculptural exhibits inspired by religion from the pillared museums of France and Italy and there will be nothing left to attract the world's attention. The Cathedrals of Rheims and

Milan, the flowering of the Gothic architecture, testify to the religious fervour of the middle ages. And in point of literary excellence, the Holy Bible still stands superior to Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth or Browning.

Thus in fact it is religion that has brought into being the splendid monuments of human culture. In India it is the very bed-rock upon which the whole fabric of her culture has been based. The Indian atmosphere has been filled with the ideals of religion for shining scores of centuries and that is why even after so many political cataclysms, the spiritual civilization of India stands as a living force to be reckoned with in the conflict of cultures. "India will be great again," said the Swami, "because the Sanatana Dharma is great. India will again lead the world because the Sanatana Dharma must guide the various activities of the world. The Ideal of making India only politically or economically great is not a very lofty ideal. There are in the world to-day many politically and economically great nations. But they have failed to give a lead and direction to the evolution of a higher world-culture. It is on the basis of the Sanatana Dharma alone that the world will find a lasting solution of its ethical, political and economic problems. This Sanatana Dharma is not to be identified with any narrow creed, dogma, ritual or belief. It is the Eternal Religion which explains and fulfils all creeds, dogmas and faiths. It is the bed-rock of all religions. It includes in its sweep the cravings of the scientist, the aspirations of the saint, the seeking of the philosopher and the hopes of mankind. It has a place for everyone, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the intellectual as well as the devotional. Above all, this Sanatana Dharma, by proclaiming the unity of existence and the divinity of the soul, will reconcile

all discords, hasten the dawn of peace and establish goodwill among men.”

Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, who presided over the function, also paid glowing tributes to the sacred ideal of religion in the course of his illuminating Presidential address. He pointed out that while physically and economically the world was being brought together, political rivalries and religious dogmas were dividing the world from one another. The solution, he said, did not lie in the surrender of the soul. The world needed religion. India never preached and practised a philosophy which put successful existence above everything else. There were people who were inclined to ascribe to religion the present stunted growth, pathetic political and economic condition of India.

But, pointed out Prof. Radhakrishnan, *the present condition of India was not due to religion but to the fact that they were not sufficiently religious to-day.* If they took a long view of history and studied the rise and fall of nations who strove for heroic living, they would find that while Greece, Rome and Byzantine empire had passed away and even the modern civilized nations were showing signs of decay, India and China had lived for fifty centuries. What was it due to? It was because *India had been the worshipper of religious ideal and encouraged religious ideal in life.* No one would be regarded as great or no man powerful if his life was not regulated by an ideal which required self-restraint and discipline. This was the fundamental basis of their civilization.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SIDDHANTA BINDU. TRANSLATED BY PROF. P. M. MODI, M.A. *Published by Prof. Prataprai M. Modi, Samaldas College, Bhavnagar. Pp. 183. Price not mentioned.*

The *Dasasloki* of Sankaracharya has been a great favourite with the followers of his school. So far four commentaries upon it have been discovered, of which the one called *Siddhanta Bindu* or *Siddhantatattva Bindu* by Madhusudana Saraswati is by far the most celebrated. This commentary which was written by the Acharya for one of his pupils has a twofold aim. It not only refutes the views of the rival schools and establishes the standpoint of the Vedanta, but also collects the views of a number of great teachers of the Sankara Vedanta upon the various philosophical problems discussed by the school. The three commentaries which have been written upon *Siddhanta Bindu* are a tribute to the great value which has been attached to it by posterity.

The terse and compact style of Madhusudana's work, however, makes it difficult to grasp the sense and the implications everywhere. For this reason the need of a lucid translation with annotations has long been

felt. Prof. Modi deserves great credit for the excellent manner in which he has accomplished his task. The value of the translation has been greatly enhanced by an elaborate introduction and four appendices which include discussions of Madhusudana's life and works, his conception of the Bhakti Marga, the works used by him, and a few choice quotations from his various writings.

ANCIENT TALES OF HINDUSTAN. BY A. CHRISTINA ALBERS. *Published by S. K. Lahiri & Co. Ltd., Calcutta. Pp. 123+v. Price As. 12.*

DRAMATIC POEMS. BY A. CHRISTINA ALBERS. *Published by A. K. Lahiri for Messrs. S. K. Lahiri & Co. Ltd., 54, College Street, Calcutta. Pp. 259. Price not mentioned.*

Ancient Tales of Hindustan contains in seven elegant poems the following famous tales from the ancient epics and the story books of India, namely, Ekalavya, Krishna, Dhruva, Prahlada, Ganga and her son, The Throne of Vikramaditya, and Chandrahâsa. In *Dramatic Poems*, as the name suggests, the authoress has dramatized in verse

a few of the celebrated historical and mythological anecdotes familiar in India. She has also drawn upon her fancy to supply the material of one of them. Written in easy and graceful style, the books will be a valuable addition to the juvenile literature.

UPADESA SARAM OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI. WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND NOTES BY B. V. NARASIMHA SWAMI. *Published by Niranjanananda Swami, Sarvadhikari, Sri Ramanashrama, Tiruvannamalai. Pp. 59. Price 4 annas.*

This is a collection of 30 stanzas composed by Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Saint of Arunachala, describing the journey of the earnest aspirant towards the path of realization. Maharshi does not prescribe any particular disciplinary regulations or practices but recognizes the validity of all the four age-old methods of Sâdhanâ,—Jnâna, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga. "They all," says he, "try to solve the same formula." But he lays special stress on "Jnâna Vichâra" or the metaphysical analysis of one's own self, whereby the questions—"Who am I?" and "Whence am I?"—can be properly answered. This process will ultimately lead to the manifestation of the true Self and thereby enable the aspirant to attain Sachchidânanda.

This small book will be a helpful guide to an earnest seeker after Truth because the advice comes from a man who has realised its efficacy in his own life.

THE HUMAN SOUL. BY WILTON HACK. *Bharati Bros., Matunga, Bombay 19. Pp. 52.*

The writer of this short brochure has sought to present a conception of the human soul which he considers to be reasonable and consistent with our aspirations. He appears to have Buddhistic leanings, and his prepossessions seem to have blinkered his eyes from taking a broad and sane view of what the vast Indian religious and philosophical literature has to say on the subject. He quotes a few sentences from Vivekananda's writings, which represent the Advaitic conception of the real nature of man, and then wonders how this "Indian concept" of the human soul can square with our notions of the soul's growth, evolution, and attainment of liberation. It is evident he confuses two different standpoints from which the human soul is regarded by the great Indian philosophical systems.

In the Buddhistic conception of the *chitta*, which is a bundle of Samskâras, he

finds a definition of the human soul which is after his heart, and which, according to him, avoids the contradictions inherent in the 'Indian concept'. The beginnings of this *chitta* go far back to the animal from which man sprang. At some unknown date the Divine put into man the human soul which goes on evolving until man is cleansed of his selfish and evil tendencies and becomes united with the Divine in the experience of Nirvâna.

It is useless to enter into discussions about statements which fail to represent faithfully what they controvert. It never strikes the author for a moment that in his eagerness to escape from the logical difficulties in the Advaitin's conception he succeeds in making the mystery of creation and evolution still more baffling.

THE HIDDEN YEARS OF JESUS. BY S. A. DAS. *Published by the author from 5, Hide Road, Kidderpore, Calcutta. Pp. 29. Price annas 8.*

This brochure is the reading of the unknown life of Christ. That Christ passed through discipleship and stages of spiritual evolution is now widely believed. The unknown life of Christ states that he passed his days among the hermits of the Himalayas and came under the influence of the occult traditions then prevalent in India. It is difficult to prove the historical accuracy from the chronology of events; but the teachings of Christ, especially as recorded in St. John, contain much in them of the esoteric tradition of Hinduism. Mr. Das through an inner insight has felt the budding and the blossoming of spirituality in the Saviour of humanity and shown beautifully how the untutored soul can have the highest spiritual realization by the opening of the inner being unto Divine Light.

Renunciation and surrender put him in direct touch with and under the influence of Jehovah, acquainting him with the blessings of personalism in spirituality; but the final sacrifice is necessary to get beyond it and to realize the identity of the spirit in the beloved and the seeker. Christ made this sacrifice to attain His Divinity.

The author finds in this hidden life of Jesus the hidden life of humanity which can rise to this great revelation by paying the ransom which Christ paid.

DR. MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR.

AIMS AND IDEALS OF ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE. BY BROJASUNDAR RAY, M.A., B.L. *Published by A. Roy, 2-A, Radhaprasad Lane, Calcutta. Pp. 178. Price Rs. 2.*

The book presents in a number of short essays the spiritual basis of the civilization which was developed in a very remote past in India. With their gaze fixed upon the supramundane the ancient Hindus organized their society and politics and education in a manner which helped to lead the humblest in the community to the realization of *moksha* or the *summum bonum* of human life. In process of time the old ideal came to be obscured to some extent by unhealthy growths, and to-day it is openly challenged by forces arriving from the West.

The book is no mere recital of the ancient aims. It is a kind of defence of the old culture and a plea for its revival in modern times. In spite of a certain measure of success which has attended the author's effort, the arrangement of the book leaves something to be desired. Some of the topics dealt under the head of a chapter do not always present an organic unity, and the transitions of thoughts often appear as jerky and abrupt. Further, a large number of typographical errors have marred most of the Sanskrit quotations. Nor do we find the author's use of terms to be always very careful. For example, his characterization

of the Indian psychology as idealistic is ambiguous and his differentiation of the psychic from the mental is easily a source of confusion.

BENGALI

ANANDAGITA. BY PROF. ABHAYAPADA CHATTOPADHYAYA, M.A., BURDWAN RAJ COLLEGE. *Published by Krishnamohan Mukhopadhyaya, B.A., Burdwan. To be had of the author, Burdwan P.O., Borehat. Pp. 99. Price Re. 1.*

The book is written as an introduction to the *Gitâ*. But it may as well be called a compendium of the Vedanta philosophy inasmuch as almost all the cardinal doctrines of Vedanta have been systematically presented here in the form of an interesting dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna in a very simple and clear language. The author, by his lucid and masterly exposition of the fundamental truths of the Vedanta philosophy, has done a positive service to the Bengali-knowing public who are interested in this profound subject. We recommend this excellent and reliable digest of Vedanta to all who desire to know in a nutshell its essential principles as well as some of the conclusions of other orthodox systems of Indian philosophy. We wish its widest circulation. The get-up of the book also leaves nothing to be desired.

NEWS AND REPORTS

CALCUTTA CITIZENS' TRIBUTES TO SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Swami Nikhilananda, founder and head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York City, U. S. A., has returned to India after seven years of strenuous work in the cause of Vedanta in the United States of America. As a mark of appreciation of his manifold services to Indian thought and culture in the foreign lands, the citizens of Calcutta presented an address of welcome to the Swami in a public meeting held on Thursday the 8th September last at the University Institute. The function was attended by a huge gathering, and the spacious hall and the balconies were packed to their utmost capacity. Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan presided on the occasion.

Among those present were Sjtka. Sarala Devi Choudhurani, Lady Abala Bose, Sjts. Bejoy Krishna Bose, Gokul Chandra Law, Santosh Kumar Basu, V. F. Vicajee, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Prof. and Mrs. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, Mr. and Mrs. Kanti Ghosh, Mr. D. C. Ghosh, Mr. N. N. Sen Gupta and a large number of monks of the Ramakrishna Order. Sjt. Santosh Kumar Basu proposed Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan to the chair and as Chairman of the Reception Committee read out the address of welcome to the Swami, which was presented in a silver casket. A short summary of the illuminating speeches delivered by Swami Nikhilananda and Sir S. Radhakrishnan has been given under Notes and Comments. The function terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chair, proposed by Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar.

HINDU TEMPLE IN HOLLYWOOD, U. S. A.

The Vedanta Society of Los Angeles, California, U. S. A., a branch of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission of India, completed the dedication of a new temple on July 10, 1938. It is located within that part of the city of Los Angeles known as Hollywood.

As early as 1930, under the devoted leadership of Swami Prabhavananda, the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles had its origin. Recently, in co-operation with a sister society in San Francisco, it added to its usual activities the publication of a new magazine—the *Voice of India*. The erection of its temple represents a further and very important step in its development.

The structure, of white stucco, is architecturally a pleasing adaptation of Moorish-Indian, its domes and finials causing it to stand out sharply from its residential environment as Oriental. The largest and central of its three domes is an imitation of the dome of the Hindu temple at Benares. A spacious and well-designed approach extending from the street, a distance of some sixty feet to its doors, adds much to its attractiveness.

The auditorium seats normally and easily one hundred and fifty persons. On its side walls are moderate-sized representations of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Brahmananda. These pictures, tastefully framed, the white walls and ceiling, the leaded clear-glass windows, and three crystal chandeliers combine to produce an impression at once simple and elegant. Behind the speaker's platform, in the centre, is the shrine-room, within which are representations of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, and Holy Mother. To the left of the shrine-room as one looks from the auditorium, is the organ and library room; to the right, a study.

Swami Prabhavananda was assisted in the dedication ceremonies by five brother Swamis from various parts of the United States: Swami Akhilananda and Swami Satprakashananda from Providence, Rhode Island; Swami Vividishananda from Denver, Colorado; Swami Devatmananda from Portland, Oregon; and Swami Ashokananda from San Francisco. The dedication began on an auspicious day, *Rathajatra*, July 7, with private ceremonies in which all the Swamis participated. The public services were held

on July 10, at eleven o'clock, and were attended by more than three hundred persons. On this day the Aratrika, or ceremony of waving the light was performed, a hymn to Sri Ramakrishna was chanted, the Swamis, each in turn, spoke on the subject of Vedanta; a dedication ode composed for the occasion by Dr. Frederick A. Manchester, formerly of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin, was read by Miss Iris Gabrielle, a young woman of the community, and a brief speech was delivered by Professor Percy H. Houston, of the Occidental College, Los Angeles, Vice-president of the Society. After the ceremonies were concluded, a luncheon was served in the Mission House adjoining the temple.

With the midday services the dedication proper ended. In the afternoon a lecture was delivered in the temple, and in the evening, in affectionate and reverent memory of Swami Gnaneshwarananda, who passed away within the last year, moving pictures taken by the Swami, chiefly in India, were publicly shown. These included many scenes having to do with the religious life of India, especially scenes connected with the Sri Ramakrishna Movement. Most of the visiting Swamis remained for a time in Los Angeles, and some of them lectured during their stay, thus in effect prolonging the occasion of the dedication—a happy and memorable one in the history of the Los Angeles Society.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, RANGOON

REPORT FOR 1937

The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Rangoon, is not only one of the premier institutions of its kind in the Mission, but in point of efficiency and equipment it is counted among the major hospitals in the whole of Burma. Its rapid expansion since its inception betokens its hold on the public, and its economy, and high standard of efficiency have wrung warm praises from distinguished and competent visitors.

During 1937 the total number of attendance at the out-patients' department came up to a total of 2,39,369 including men, women and children. The average daily attendance was 427 men, 133 women, and 96 children, i.e., a total of 656. The number of patients admitted to the indoor department was 4,375. The number of surgical operations performed came up to 6,831.

The total receipts and disbursements during the year were Rs. 67,008-11-0 and Rs. 58,598-10-9 respectively, leaving a balance of Rs. 8,410-0-3.

The Sevashrama at present needs a sum of Rs. 18,000 for an X-ray building, a kitchen, a steam laundry and workers' quarters.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, CALCUTTA

REPORT FOR 1937

The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home is one of the most successful institutions run by the Mission. It is a college students' hostel, specially meant for poor and meritorious students, who are helped through their college course with free board, lodging, as well as fees, books and other necessities as far as possible. Its aim is to supplement the purely academic education imparted by the University by a thorough and systematic home-training calculated to develop the character and efficiency of its inmates. It is also open to a few paying students, who intend to receive this home-training.

The features of the home-training may be summed up as follows:

Spiritual: Religious classes are regularly held while the *utsavs* celebrated on a religious basis not only afford the students a

healthy recreation but also go to intensify their spiritual aspiration.

Intellectual: The students run a monthly manuscript magazine and join in a Saturday class where socio-religious topics are discussed and papers on various subjects are read.

Practical: All household duties (except cooking), namely, sweeping, scouring utensils, marketing, cleansing, etc., are done by the students. Besides these, the students have to spend some time in rearing a kitchen garden and a number of flower beds.

At the end of the year under review there were 40 students in the Home, of whom 25 were free, 10 concession-holders and 5 paying. Nine free students appeared for the different University examinations. Of these one stood first class first in the M.Sc. examination in Chemistry, one passed the P.Sc., M.B., and the remaining seven passed Intermediate Examination in the first division.

The immediate and urgent needs of the Home are funds for putting up a few structures, namely, a library building, a dining hall, a medical ward, and a few cottages for workers. Funds are also necessary for making arrangements for different kinds of vocational training, a comprehensive scheme for which is under preparation.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF

In the week ending on the 9th of September, 98 mds. 34 srs. of rice were distributed among 2,709 recipients belonging to 44 villages in 4 unions from the Ramakrishna Mission centres at Nijra and Silna in the Gopalgunj Sub-division of the Faridpur District, besides 5 mds. 14 srs. as temporary relief to 108 recipients.

The distress is as acute as before. The water which was rising till recently has invaded nearly 95% of the houses. The relief will have to be continued for a couple of months more.

We have made arrangements to open relief in the Murshidabad District also, with the limited funds at our disposal.

For the relief work in both Faridpur and Murshidabad Districts, we shall require at least Rs. 850/- per week.

We heartily thank the charitable public for the encouraging response, but we urgently need more funds for the work. The success of the relief work depends entirely upon the generosity of the benevolent public. We appeal to our countrymen to come to the succour of tens of thousands of starving souls in their hour of dire peril. All contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged by—

- (1) The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O., Howrah Dt.
- (2) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4 Wellington Lane, Calcutta.
- (3) The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

(Sd.) SWAMI MADHAVANANDA
Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

18th September, 1938