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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

WHISPERING LEAVES

BY CHRISTINA ALBERS

Into my childhood's dreams the linden leaves
Whispered a lay of lands beyond the seas,
Where temples dream in shades of other trees,
And fireflies gleam through mystic summer eves,—

And years went by: I see the palm-trees sway
In groves made resonant by temple bell,
I see the glowing fireflies,—and they tell?—
Of other palms and temples far away,

Whose silver cadence rings through space unheard
Save by the spirit ear, which feels the chime
Hov'ring like dreamwings o'er the waves of time,
Those peaceful waves by mortal sound unstirred.

Thus beckon us our dreams from more to more,
Where on the mystic road opes gate on gate
To steps that lead to loftier estate,
To the vast silence of the last still shore.

WHERE HINDUISM AND ISLAM MEET

BY THE EDITOR

I

In our previous issue we pointed out to our readers the need of Hindu-Muslim unity and the dreadful consequences resulting from suicidal communal wrangle and religious fanaticism. We also dwelt at some length upon the results of cultural contact between the Hindus and Muslims in the past, as also upon the spirit of toleration and freedom extended to all in both the religions, and outlined *inter alia* the various ramifications of Islamic Faith and Practice based on the fourfold authorities,—the Quoran, Tradition, Inference by analogy and Consensus of opinion. We shall now take up these items of Faith and Practice for consideration one by one, incidentally showing, as far as possible, their resemblance to the cardinal principles of Hinduism as also to the religious rites and observances countenanced by it.

(1) *Faith in God*: The unity of Godhead is the corner-stone of Islamic religion. "There is no God but God and Mahomed is the apostle of Allah"—is its leading dogma and every Muslim is expected to subscribe to it. The doctrine of Trinity is denounced as an outrage on the unity of Godhead. Allah is described in the *Quoran* as immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, all-merciful, and eternal,—without beginning and without end. The orthodox school holds that the sevenfold qualities of God, *viz.*, life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, seeing and speech, exist from eternity in His immutable essence. A few Quoranic passages will enable us to form a clear conception of Islamic Godhead: "Verily, God is Almighty.

O men of Mecca, adore your Lord, who hath created you and those who were before you."¹ "He is the First and Last, the External and Internal. He is not a body that space should bound Him, and of nothing can it be said that it is on this or that side of Him, yet He is closer to man than the artery of his neck."² "He is eternal. He begetteth not, and He is not begotten. And there is none like unto Him."³ "This God is your Lord. There is no God but He, the Creator of all things. Therefore worship Him alone;—and He watcheth over all things."⁴ "Dost thou not see that God knoweth all that is in the Heavens and all that is in the Earth? Three persons speak not privately together, but He is their fourth; nor five, but He is their sixth; nor fewer nor more, wherever they be He is with them. Then on the day of resurrection He will tell them of their deeds: for God knoweth all things."⁵ As a matter of fact this conception of Godhead undoubtedly corresponds to the Hindu view of Iswara, Saguna Brahman, *i.e.*, God with attributes: "In the beginning there existed that sole One (Supreme Self) without stir or breath (action or change). There was nothing else but the one."⁶ "He who is the Father of us all, the Procreator, the great Providence, He who knows the whole universe, He is one, yet assumes many names of gods; about Him all

¹ *Quoran*, Sura 2, verse 19.

² *Ibid.*, Sura 50, verse 15.

³ *Ibid.*, Sura 112, verses 1-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Sura 6, verse 102.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Sura 58, verse 8.

⁶ *Rig-Veda*, Nâsadiya Sukta, X. 129. 2.

people of the world become desirous to know.”⁷ ‘Thou art the limit of this limitless earth. Thou art the ruler of the adorable celestial ones. Thou, in truth, pervadest the whole of the eternal region with thy greatness. None indeed exists like Thee.’⁸ ‘With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere in the universe,—That exists pervading all.’⁹ ‘The mighty ruler of these worlds beholds, as though from close at hand, the man who thinks he acts by stealth. All this the gods perceive and know. If a man stands or walks or moves in secret, goes to his bed or rises, or what two men whisper as they sit together, King Varuna knows: He as the third is present.’¹⁰ But the scriptures of the Hindus do not stop with this description of God with attributes only but embody as well a sublime picture of the transcendent Reality bereft of all such limiting adjuncts (cf. *Katha Up.* 1. 3. 15; *Brih. Up.* 2. 4. 14; *Mând. Up.* 12; *Gitâ* 13. 14).

It will not be out of place to point out here that there are certain striking resemblances in the utterances of the Scriptures of the Hindus and the Muslims as well, which unmistakably demonstrate the kinship of thought and affinity of ideology existing in the two systems of religious speculations. The following parallel passages quoted from the authoritative Scriptures of the Muslims and the Hindus will illustrate the point under consideration: The *Quoran* says, ‘O company of Jinn and men, if you can overpass the bounds of Heavens and the Earth, then overpass them. But by our leave only shall ye overpass them.’¹¹ The *Atharva-Veda*

says, ‘This earth, too, is King Varuna’s possession, and the high Heaven whose ends are far asunder..... If one should flee afar beyond the Heaven, King Varuna would still be round about him.’¹² The *Quoran*: ‘Seest thou not that God causeth the night to come in upon the day, and the day to come in upon the night? And that He hath subjected the sun and the moon to laws by which each speedeth along to an appointed goal?’¹³ The *Upanishad*: ‘From Its (Brahman’s) fear the Wind blows, from Its terror rises the Sun, and from fear of It again Indra, Fire and the fifth, Death, proceed to their respective functions.’¹⁴ The *Quoran*: ‘No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in (attaineth to) all vision. The eyes see not Him, but He seeth the eyes, and He is the subtle, the All-informed.’¹⁵ The *Upanishad*: ‘It is the seer but is not seen; It is the hearer but is not heard; It is the comprehender but is not comprehended; It is the thinker but is not thought.’¹⁶ ‘What no speech can express, but what expresses speech, what none can comprehend with the mind, but by which the mind is comprehended, what none can see with the eyes, but by which one sees the function of the eyes, what none can breathe but by which breath is directed, know that alone as Brahman.’¹⁷ The *Quoran*: ‘If all the trees that are upon the earth were to become pens, and if God should after that swell the sea into seven seas of ink, His words would not be exhausted.’¹⁸ The *Mahimnah Stotram*: ‘O Lord, if the blue mountain be ink and the limitless ocean the inkstand, if the branch of the celestial tree be the

⁷ *Rig-Veda*, X. 82. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 52. 13.

⁹ *Gitâ*, 13. 13.

¹⁰ *Atharva-Veda*, IV. 16.

¹¹ Sura 55, verse 33.

¹² IV. 16.

¹³ Sura 31, verse 28.

¹⁴ *Taittiriya Up.*, II. 8; *Katha Up.*, II. 6. 3.

¹⁵ Sura 6, verse 103.

¹⁶ *Brihadâranyaka Up.*, 3. 8. 11.

¹⁷ *Kena Up.*, I. 4-8.

¹⁸ Sura 31, verse 26.

pen and the earth the sheet of paper,— if the Goddess of learning writes for endless time with such a pen, even then the limit of thy qualities, O God, will not be reached.”¹⁹ The readers would do well to remember in this connection that Hinduism is not limited to any particular dogma or belief but comprehends a sparkling variety of thoughts, *viz.*, dualism and qualified monism and transcendentalism, and thereby answers to the manifold types of mental developments and spiritual experiences of mankind. Needless to say, the sublime conception of God with attributes in Islam, corresponding, as it does, to the Hindu view of Saguna Brahman, finds a place of honour in the glorious spectrum of Hindu philosophy.

(2) *Faith in Angels*: The doctrine of angels which is one of the most ancient of Oriental creeds is also found interwoven throughout Islamic thought. These Angels are represented in the *Quoran* as ethereal beings created from fire, perfect in form and radiant in beauty, free from all the appetites and infirmities of frail humanity and existing in perpetual youth. In the Hindu Scriptures²⁰ also there is a frequent mention of these angelic beings or gods. It should be borne in mind that both Hinduism and Islam have assigned to these gods or angels only a relative immortality. It is the Supreme Lord, Iswara or Allah, who is eternal, and without beginning and without end. Everything else is subject to ultimate decay.

(3) *Faith in Scriptures*: In this respect also we find similar notions obtaining amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. According to the Muslim creed a Book is treasured up in the

seventh Heaven where Allah sits clothed in His transcendent majesty on the throne of effulgence. The Book exists from eternity and contains the decrees of God, and all events, past, present and future. Transcripts from these tablets of Divine Will were brought down to the lowest Heaven by the archangel Gabriel and revealed unto Mahomet from time to time. Mahomet says, “This *Quoran* is a manifesto to man, and a guidance, and a warning to the God-fearing.”²¹ “To each age its book.”²² “And thou shalt see every nation kneeling to its own Book . . . This our Book will speak of you with truth.”²³ Indeed in the *Quoran* we do not meet with any word of condemnation for the revealed Scriptures of other races. On the other hand Mahomet specially refers to Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus and also to other prophets, who received Books for the guidance of their own people, and is thus completely exonerated from the charge of dogmatism which is very often laid at his door. Though the *Quoran* is looked upon by the Muslims as the supreme authority in all matters of Islamic Faith and Practice, the other authorities such as Tradition, Inference by analogy and Consensus of opinion, are also given their legitimate place of importance. The Hindus likewise look upon the Vedas as self-revealed and eternal. In the *Brihadâra-nyaka Upanishad* it has been said, “As from a fire kindled with wet faggots diverse kinds of smoke issue, even so, my dear, the Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama Veda and Atharvangiras . . . are like the breath of this Infinite Reality—the Supreme Self.”²⁴ Acharya Sankara commenting upon this text says, “It is

¹⁹ Verse 32.

²⁰ *Rig-Veda*, II. 27. 10; III. 9. 9.; *Satapatha Brâhmana*, IV. 5. 7. 2; XI. 6. 3. 5; *Brahma-Sutras*, I. 3, 26.

²¹ Sura 3, verse 132.

²² Sura 13, verse 38

²³ Sura 45, verse 27.

²⁴ *Br. Up.*, 2. 4. 10; *cf. Brahma-Sutras*, 1. 1. 3.

the eternally composed and already existent Vedas that are manifested like a man's breath—without any thought or effort on his part. Hence they are an authority as regards their meaning independently of any other means of knowledge."²⁵ As regards the relative importance of the Vedas and the Smritis, it is held by the Hindus that 'in case of any difference between the teachings of the Srutis and the Smritis, the verdict of the former is of greater weight and value than that of the latter.'

(4) *Faith in Prophets*: The Muslims believe that Allah sends from time to time prophets and apostles with special missions on earth to carry the erring humanity to the realm of everlasting peace and blessedness. It is really a mistake to suppose that the *Quoran* declares Mahomet, as the only apostle of God. On the other hand there are frequent allusions in the Book to many other apostles and prophets sent before him to various nations to fulfil the Divine purpose. So does the *Quoran* say, "To every people have we sent an apostle saying, 'Worship God and turn away from Taghout (Satan).'"²⁶ "Then sent we apostles one after another . . . Away then with the people who believe not."²⁷ "And we have already sent apostles before thee: Of some we have told thee, and of others we have told thee nothing"²⁸ Islam, however, makes a distinction between an apostle (Rasul) and a prophet (Nabi) in that an apostle is sent to a particular community or nation as the true representative of that people, whereas prophets are more numerous, and any nation may have many of them. Rasul is the word used of Mahomet in the credal formula of Islam though he is also frequently called

a Nabi in the *Quoran*. Mahomet himself says that the number of such prophets amounts to two hundred thousand but only six of them are super-eminent, viz., Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mahomet, as having brought new laws and dispensation upon earth. The Hindus also believe in the infinite possibility of such saviours (messengers or prophets) appearing from time to time to restore religion to its pristine purity and to destroy evil on earth. So does the Lord declare in the *Gîtâ*, "Though I am unborn and my nature is eternal, and though I am the Lord of all creatures, I employ nature which is my own, and take birth through my divine power. Whenever there is a decline of Law, O Arjuna, and an outbreak of lawlessness, I incarnate myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of the Law I am born from age to age."²⁹ The *Shânkhya-Sutras*,³⁰ the *Pâtanjala-Daršana*,³¹ the *Brahma-Sutras*³² and the *Purânas*,³³—all lend support to this theory of Divine Incarnation and hold that these liberated souls (the Incarnations) attain to lordly powers except the power of creation, etc., which belongs only to the supreme Lord, Iswara. Though Allah is not specifically mentioned in the *Quoran* as incarnating Himself in the person of an apostle or a prophet but only as sending such highly gifted souls on earth for the well-being of humanity, the God of the Hindus is described in their scriptures as embodying Himself in various forms from age to age to rescue the suffering mankind from the untold miseries of existence. But this technical difference notwithstanding, the purport of both is almost

²⁵ *Br. Up.*, Sankara Bhâshya, 2. 4. 10.

²⁶ Sura 16, verse 38 ; cf. Sura 10, verse 48.

²⁷ Sura 23, verse 46.

²⁸ Sura 40, verse 78.

²⁹ IV. 6-8.

³⁰ *S.-S.*, 3. 54-57.

³¹ *P.-D.*, I. 18-19.

³² *Br.-S.*, 4. 4. 17.

³³ Cf. *Srimad-Bhâgavat*, *Vishnu Purana*, etc.

the same, inasmuch as they point unequivocally to the advent of such God-men into the arena of human affairs with special missions to fulfil in the world.

(5) *Faith in Resurrection and Final Judgement*: The Muslims believe that their deeds, good or bad, are kept recorded in the Holy Book of Allah, and on the Day of Judgement all persons will be hauled up from their graves before the Tribunal of God and their actions will be weighed in a mighty balance poised by the angel Gabriel, and the nature of the sentence will depend on the preponderance of either scale. The trial of the balance will be followed by the ordeal of the bridge which, fine as the edge of a scimitar, spans the huge gulf of Jehennam or Hell.³⁴ The sinful and the miscreants will grope along it and fall into its abysmal depth, while the faithful and the virtuous aided by a resplendent light will cross it with the swiftness of birds and enter the Vehesta or the realm of Paradise.³⁵ In the Smritis and the Purânas of the Hindus there are frequent references to the Lord of Death (Dharmarâja) sitting in judgement over the actions of beings after their shuffling off the mortal coil, as also to the sufferings of the sinful in Hell³⁶ and the enjoyment of pleasure by the virtuous in Heaven.³⁷ But, unlike the Muslims, the Hindus consider these experiences of suffering and enjoyment in Hell and Heaven as but temporary, and not everlasting, phases in the career of the human soul.

³⁴ Cf. *Quoran* : Sura 44, verses 43-48 ; Sura 56, verses 40-43 ; Sura 67, verses 6-10.

³⁵ Cf. *Quoran* : Sura 44, verses 51-56 ; Sura 78, verses 31-34 ; Sura 56, verses 22-36.

³⁶ Cf. *Bhâshâ-parichchheda*, 163 ; *Brahma-vaiivarta-Purâna*, *Prakritikhanda*, ch. 27 ; *Srimad Bâgavat*, *Skanda*, 5. 26 ; *Gîtâ*, XVI. 16, 21.

³⁷ *Gîtâ*, IX. 20-21 ; *Manu-Samhitâ*, XII. 20-21 ; *Nrisimha-Purâna*, ch. 3.

(6) *Faith in Predestination*: The *Quoran* lays down that "God misleadeth whom He will, and whom He will, doth He guide aright."³⁸ In other places Divine predestination and human responsibility are upheld together. For the *Quoran* says, "God causeth Whom He will to err, and whom He will He guideth, and Ye shall assuredly be called upon to account for *your* doings."³⁹ An attempt has been made by the Muslim theologians to reconcile Divine pre-ordination and human responsibility in the light of the following Sura where the deeds of men are regarded as their own acquisition: "God will not burden any soul beyond its power. It shall enjoy the good which it hath acquired and shall bear the evil *for the acquirement of which it laboured*."⁴⁰ The theory of predestination as propounded by the Hindus is a logical outcome of their doctrine of Karma and reincarnation, according to which the human soul is to go round the cycle of births and deaths⁴¹ till the entire Karma is worked out. And this inexorable law has been popularly believed to be the decree of God, indelibly written on the tablet of human forehead by the Lord of destiny. In fact the effects of all actions lie accumulated in the vast storehouse of mind, and every individual, in whatsoever plane he may be born, is responsible for his own deeds and has to work them out till the dawn of supreme Illumination when "all knots of the heart are torn asunder, all doubts are dissolved and the effects of actions are destroyed once for all,"⁴² and the human soul, freed from the tentacles of work, good or bad, shines forth anew in its own transcendent glory and majesty.

³⁸ Sura 14, verse 4 ; Sura 16, verse 39.

³⁹ Sura 16, verse 95.

⁴⁰ Sura 2, verse 286.

⁴¹ *Katha Upanishad*, 2. 5. 7.

⁴² *Mundaka Upanishad*, 2. 2. 8.

II

Besides the sixfold items of Faith as delineated above side by side with the doctrinal beliefs of the Hindus, the Muslims look upon the fivefold articles of Practice also as part and parcel of their religion, viz., (i) Recital of the Kalima (*i.e.*, Confession of faith), (ii) Ablution, and Recital of prayers, (iii) Fasting in the month of Ramjan and on other special occasions, (iv) Almsgiving and (v) Pilgrimage to Mecca. Needless to point out that these religious practices and rites that are strictly enjoined on the Muslims are intended as indispensable means to attain to their mental and physical purification to get into an everlasting life in Heaven after death. In this regard too, both the Hindus and Muslims have much in common between them. For the Scriptures of the Hindus likewise lay a great stress on such religious observances, and prescribe various courses of discipline for the purification of the mental stuff, which is the *sine qua non* of all spiritual progress and realization. In fact, in matters essential, both Hinduism and Islam stand closely knit together with the silken thread of love and harmony; for the spirit that informs them both is the same all through. It is only in the sphere of some outward forms and practices into which the religions of different communities have crystallized through centuries in tune with their racial peculiarities, that the various religions appear, to the unthinking people, to be bundles of contradictions. But, in truth, to the clarified vision of a realized soul, the apparent differences melt into insignificance and the underlying unity becomes quite patent.

Idolatry or image-worship of the Hindus has been the target of relentless attack from the Muslims as well as from

the Christians. Nothing has indeed been so badly misunderstood as this form of Hindu worship. The Hindus have nowhere been enjoined in their Scriptures to pay homage to the *idols as they are*. For does not the Sruti say, "What none can comprehend with the mind, but by which, the sages say, the mind is comprehended, know that as Brahman and *not this they worship here*"⁴³ In the *Brahma-Sutras*⁴⁴ also the very same fact has been emphasized. It is, in fact, the transcendent Reality that is invoked through these symbols or images and not the idols as they are. Sri Ramakrishna rightly says, "There is a necessity for them (symbols) too. These various forms of worship have been provided to suit different men in different stages of knowledge." "The Hindus have discovered that the Absolute can only be realized or thought of or stated, through the relative, and the images, crosses, and crescents are simply so many symbols, so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on. It is not that this help is necessary for every one, but those that do not need it have no right to say that it is wrong," said Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest exponents of Hinduism in modern times. Similar note has been struck by Prof. S. Radhakrishnan in the *Cultural Heritage of India*. He observes, "Idolatry is a much abused term. Even those who oppose it are unable to escape from it. The very word brings up to our mind thoughts of graven images, strange figures of frightful countenances, horrid animals, and shapes, and so long as the worshippers confuse these outer symbols with the deeper divine reality, they are victims of idolatry. But, as a matter of fact, religion cannot escape from symbolism, from icons and crucifixes, from rites and

⁴³ *Kena Upanishad*, I. 5.

⁴⁴ *Br.-S.*, 4. 1. 4. ; 3. 2. 14.

dogmas. These forms are employed by religion to focus its faith, but when they become more important than the faith itself, we have idolatry. A symbol does not subject the Infinite to the finite, but renders the finite transparent. It aids us to see the Infinite through it."⁴⁵ We need hardly add that, in view of what has been stated above, it would be a sheer critical perversity and a stultification of truth to call the Hindus idolators. Does not a Muslim also use mosque and turn his face towards the Kaaba during the time of prayer? Does he not make four prostrations opposite the Black Stone, kiss it with love and devotion during his pilgrimage to the holy land of Mecca and offer sacrifices before the sacred mosque? These would remain a standing psychological puzzle unless the whole thing is viewed from a higher altitude. For if the Hindus are stigmatized as rank idolators, the Muslims or the Christians will lie equally open to this charge. In truth, both Hinduism and Islam stand far above this opprobrious epithet, when the real spirit and the objective of worship are taken into consideration, for it is the spirit, and not the form, that counts in the offering of our soul unto the Highest Being.

The growth of Sufism in the fold of Islam is a veritable landmark in the history of its progressive career. It not only shows the points of close contact between Vedantism and Islam but demonstrates as well the similarity of mystical experiences with the consummation of spiritual life. In the main the secret of Sufism is the identity of the world with God, and the problem which it sets itself to solve is the discovery of a process whereby the human being may realize his own oneness with the Divine Being. The Sufis hold that

God is not only the sole object of love and adoration but is the only Reality, and that the consciousness of individual selfhood is an illusion. The celebrated Sufi, Hallaj, is credited with the utterance: "I am the Truth; I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I." So did Jami say, "All was one; there was no duality, no pretence of 'mine' or 'thine'." Needless to say these spiritual experiences of the Sufi mystics bear a strong resemblance to those of the Hindu saints who have risen to the highest peak of realization through Vedantic practices. The identity of the human soul and the Brahman forms the very corner-stone of the mighty edifice of the Advaita Vedanta. Thus both the Vedantist and the Sufi virtually meet at a point where all differences are harmonized in a uniformity of spiritual experiences. Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest Hindu mystic of the modern age, came to realize that the transcendental region of the Absolute, the One without a second, was the last halting place to which both the paths of Hinduism and Islam equally led. "Hence Advaita realization may reasonably be held to be the common ground between the two faiths, the common link that may be expected to bind together the two major communities of India and make them fraternize."⁴⁶

III

Thus a close and dispassionate study of the Scriptures of the Hindus and Muslims reveals a splendid meeting-ground where they can stand shoulder to shoulder, without any detriment to their respective faiths, as a mighty fraternity to stem the tide of denationalization that is sweeping over their

⁴⁵ *C. H. O. I.*, Vol. I., Introduction, page XXV.

⁴⁶ *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 493.

Motherland. As already pointed out, the differences in the realm of religion are more fancied than actual. In fact, every religion is quite sound at heart, though in external paraphernalia of rites and ceremonials each may differ considerably from the other. But, says Thomas Carlyle, 'nature requires of a thing only that it be genuine of heart; she will protect it if so; will not, if not so. There is a soul of truth in all the things she ever gave harbour to. Alas, is not this the history of all highest truth that comes or ever came into the world? The body of them all is imperfection... The body of all Truth dies, and yet in all, there is a soul which never dies, which in new and ever-nobler embodiment lives immortal as man himself.' That is why the externals of religions undergo manifold changes and differ, but the soul remains the same, defying the tyrannic claim of time, and commands the unstinted homage of humanity through all ages. As a matter of fact both Hinduism and Islam stand on the common foundation of universal truths and meet on various fronts of vital importance. It is time that the enlightened sections of both the communities made an earnest effort to accentuate these striking points of similarity—their common culture and history—and restore amongst them peace and goodwill which depends not so much on signed documents, paper conventions, economic adjustments or party-combinations as on the drawing together of the minds and consciences of cultured men and the exchange of knowledge and ideals. It is only when we shall turn to these hidden treasures of the soul, which are not diminished by sharing, that we shall begin to feel the kindred throb of each heart and become inclined to that understanding and sympathy which is the desideratum of the present day.

Islam like other great religions of the

world has got a glorious history behind it in and outside India, however much we may stigmatize it as a stagnant religion in our ignorance of its real spirit and cultural achievements. The once great Cordova of the Moors—the beautiful bride of Andalusia; the princely city of Cairo of the Fatimides—the splendid seat of Islamic culture; the Elysian Baghdad of the Abbasides—the earthly paradise of dreamy splendour; the mighty achievements of Islamic genius in the domains of science and art, literature and medicine, though now almost buried in oblivion, even today after so many silent centuries, excite the unstinted admiration of the civilized world. Even Modern Egypt and Persia, Turkey and Afganistan are pulsating with the accession of a new life, and the Muslims there are forging fresh rules of religious interpretation by appeals to the traditions of the Prophet to curb down fanaticism and blind orthodoxy. Strenuous efforts are being made outside India by eminent scholars and divines to liberate Islam from the 'fetters of authority, from the dead hand of the past age.' In fact, everywhere there is a positive bid for the expansion of the social and religious, political and economic outlook of life among the followers of the Prophet. But it is really a matter of profound regret that the impact of the dynamic forces that are working phenomenal changes in the outside world, has failed to break down the thick wall of ultra-conservatism of the Muslims in India. Cut off from the liberalizing influences of the outside world the majority of the Indian Muslims have in recent years stagnated beyond measure within the narrow groove of rank communalism and have thereby begun to stultify their career as a progressive element on the Indian soil. It cannot also be gainsaid that there are people amongst the Hindus

as well, who, by their narrow-minded outlook, have done incalculable harm to the cause of Indian nationalism. We earnestly hope that at this psychological moment both the Hindus and the Muslims will rise above all petty and sordid communal interests and make a common cause to liberate India—their common motherland—from the octopus of foreign imperialism. Rightly did Dr. Syed Hossain remark in his inspiring address to the Muslim students at the University of Dacca: “The religion you profess has emanated from the Arabs, and the Arabs, the torch-bearers of Islam, are your spiritual ancestors. But geographically, racially and by heritage you are Indians, and the great Aryans are your real and physical ancestors. India is our common motherland. Be you Hindus or Mahomedans, try to feel within yourselves that you are dispossessed of any separate entity and that you do not belong to any separate unit, that economically, your interests are the same, and that you are only the slaves of economic subordination and victims of slave mentality.” It is time that the hierophants of Indian nationalism—those who have really the interests of the land

at their heart—should sink all their differences, sacrifice their petty personal prejudices and make a common cause to see India once more united and seated on the golden throne of her pristine glory and majesty. If the combined genius of the Hindus and Mussalmans had built the most beautiful edifice in the world, the Taj Mahal of Agra, there is no doubt that the consolidated and concerted efforts of the Hindus and the Muslims to-day can create a new India which will be the brightest jewel in the world like the great Taj of old. Let the lessons of the past be not lost upon them but serve as a beacon-light to guide all through the gloom of the present and inspire them with noble impulses for the realization of the lofty ideal for which the country stands.

“Assemble, speak together, let your minds be of one accord: Let all utter the Mantras in a common way. Common be their assembly, common be their mind, so be their thoughts united... United be the thoughts of all, that all may live happily, that ye may all happily reside.”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *Rig-Veda*, X. 191. 2—4.

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

After the evening service was over, the minister was holding a long conversation with Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna: Both are true,—God with forms and without forms. Well, what is your opinion?

The Minister: Yes, sir, God without forms is like the current of electricity. It cannot be seen, though it can be felt.

Sri Ramakrishna: Yes, both are true,—God with forms and without forms. Do you know what it is like to

say that God is without forms alone? It is like a person who keeps on playing on a single note in a concert, though there are seven reeds in his flute. But, look at another how he plays a variety of melodies. You see how in a similar manner the believers in form enjoy God in many different ways—as father, mother, as master, friend, child, husband or wife.

It is necessary somehow to get into the vessel of nectar. Whether you get

there by singing praises or by being pushed into it by some one, the result is the same. Both will be immortal.

The analogy of water and ice is right for the Brahmos. The Existence-knowledge-Bliss is, as it were, an endless expanse of water. As the waters of the ocean congeal into ice at places in cold regions, even so the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (the qualified Brahman) assumes forms for the sake of devotees under the influence of the cold of devotion. The *rishis* saw that luminous form beyond the reach of the senses and talked with Him. That luminous form is seen by the divine body of the devotee, made of love.

And it is further said that Brahman cannot be grasped by speech or mind. The formed ice melts under the heat of the sun of knowledge. After the dawning of the knowledge of Brahman, after *nirvikalpa samâdhi* (concentration where all mentations cease), there is again that infinite, formless Brahman, beyond the reach of speech and mind.

The nature of Brahman cannot be described in words; one falls back into silence. Who can explain the Infinite by speech? However high a bird may soar, space extends even beyond that. What do you say?

The Minister: Yes, sir, similar things have been said in the Vedânta.

Sri Ramakrishna: A salt doll went to fathom the sea; it never returned to report. According to one school Suka-deva and others only touched the sea; they did not dive into it.

I said to Vidyâsâgar that everything had been defiled, as it were, like the leavings of food; but Brahman had never been defiled. That is to say, none has been able to describe in words what Brahman is like. A thing becomes defiled as soon as it is uttered. Being a Pundit, Vidyâsâgar was immensely pleased to hear this.

I have heard that there are snow-covered mountains in the regions near Kedar. One cannot return from them if one climbs too high. Those who climbed up to discover what existed at the higher altitudes and how one felt there, never came back to report.

Man is overwhelmed with delight, and lapses into silence at His sight. Who will report and who will describe?

The king dwelt beyond the seventh vestibule. At each vestibule there sat a man surrounded with lordly splendours. At each entrance the disciple was asking, "Is this the king?" The Guru too was replying, "Not this, not this." Reaching the seventh vestibule, the disciple was struck with speechless wonder at what he saw. He was beside himself with joy. He no longer needed to ask, "Is this the king?" All his doubts disappeared at the very sight.

The Minister: Yes, sir, the Vedânta contains similar things.

Sri Ramakrishna: I call Him qualified Brahman, the Primal Energy, when He creates, sustains, and destroys. When He is beyond the three *gunas* He can be called the unqualified Brahman, who is beyond speech and mind—the Supreme Brahman.

Under the spell of His *mâyâ* man forgets his own nature; he forgets that he is an heir to the infinite treasure of his Father. His *mâyâ* is made up of three *gunas*. All these three *gunas* are bandits who rob everything and make man forget his own nature. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the three *gunas*. Of these *sattva* alone points out the way to God. But even the *sattva* cannot take one to God.

A rich person was going by a forest road, when three bandits came and surrounded him and took away his everything. After despoiling him of all his possessions one of the bandits said, "What's the good of letting him go?"

Let us kill him." So saying he advanced to put him to the sword. The second one replied, "There is no use in killing him. Let us pinion his arms and legs and leave him here, so that he may not inform the police." So saying the bandits tied him and went away.

Sometime after, the third bandit returned and said to him, "Ah, you have suffered greatly. Haven't you? Come, I am going to release you." After untying him the bandit took the man with him and showed him the way. Coming near the public road, the bandit said, "Go by this road; you can now easily reach your house." The man replied, "How can that be? You also come with me; you have done so much for my sake! How glad we shall be if you come to our house." "No," said the bandit, "I cannot afford to go there; I shall be arrested by the police in that case." So saying he left after pointing out the way.

The first bandit who said, 'What's the good of letting him go? Let us kill him,' is *tamas*. *Tamas* destroys. The second one is *rajas*. *Rajas* ties man to the world and entangles him in a variety of works. *Rajas* makes man forget God. *Sattva* alone points out the way to God. Compassion, piety, and devotion—all these spring from *sattva*. *Sattva* is like the last step in a staircase; next to it is the roof. The real abode of man is the Supreme Brahman. The knowledge of Brahman cannot be gained unless one goes beyond the three *gunas*.

The Minister: We had an excellent discourse.

Sri Ramakrishna: Do you know the nature of a devotee? Sometimes he says, "Let me talk and you listen;" and sometimes, "Let you talk while I listen." You are a minister; you teach many. You are steamships, while we are fishing boats.

WOMAN'S PLACE IN HINDU RELIGION

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

Woman's position in a religion is a subject of fascinating interest. In the present age religion is losing its hold on popular mind, and the subject may therefore appear to some persons as of no great importance. Such, however, was not the case in the past. Religious rights and privileges were valued most highly; even political and proprietary rights faded before them in importance. The social status also of an individual was vitally connected with the place which religion accorded to him in its rites and rituals.

To the student of sociology, the place which was accorded to women in Hinduism is a topic of great concern.

How far Hinduism stood for justice and fairplay, and how far it had succeeded in exploding prejudices and shibboleths of a primitive age can be fairly ascertained from the position it had accorded to women. Luckily for us, we have ample data to throw light on the subject and it will be possible for us to survey the position from the earliest times to the modern days.

In early societies there was a general tendency to exclude women from religious rites and rituals because they were regarded as unclean, mainly on account of their monthly course. The Aryans also held women as impure during this period, but did not come to

the conclusion that they should be therefore for ever excluded from religious privileges and functions. The impurity was regarded as only of a temporary duration, and women were regarded as perfectly fit to participate in religious rites and rituals after it was over. It is true that a ceremony to purify the wife before her participation in sacrifice has been enjoined (*S. Br.*, V, 2, 1, 8-10). We cannot however attach much importance to it, because a similar purification has been prescribed for men as well (*T. Br.*, 1, 3, 7). In the Vedic age women enjoyed all the religious rights and privileges, which men possessed. They used to receive Vedic education. Many of them were even the authors of Vedic hymns. Women therefore could recite Vedic hymns as a matter of course. Some women, especially unmarried ones, are seen offering Vedic sacrifices all by themselves. In one place we find a maiden finding a shoot of the Soma shrub while returning from her bath, and straightway offering it in sacrifice to Indra when she returned home.¹ In another place we find a lady, named Visvavârâ, getting up early in the morning and starting the sacrifice all by herself.² In the Vedic age there were no images to be worshipped and temples to be visited. The Bhakti school, advocating simple prayer to God by songs of devotion was yet to come into prominence, as also the Jnâna school emphasizing the contemplation either of Atman or of Brahman. So the offering of sacrifice was the only popular and well-established mode of worship. It could not therefore be interdicted to unmarried women or ladies whose husbands were away, especially in view of the Vedic initiation being then quite common among girls as well.

¹ *R. V.*, VIII, 91, 1.

² *R. V.*, V, 28, 1.

Marriage, however, was the normal ideal recommended to society by Vedic religion. The woman was not an impediment in the path of religion; her presence and co-operation were absolutely necessary in all religious rites and ceremonies. This naturally increased her religious value. Man could not become a spiritual whole unless he was accompanied by his wife: gods do not accept the oblations offered by a bachelor. The husband alone cannot go to heaven; in the symbolical ascent to heaven in the sacrifice he has to call his wife to accompany him on the occasion (*S. Br.*, V, 2, 1, 8). A son was indispensable for spiritual well-being in the life to come and he could be had only through the wife. The wife was thus indispensable from the spiritual and religious points of view. This circumstance was responsible for ensuring her a status as high as that of her husband.

Normally religious prayers and sacrifices were offered jointly by the husband and the wife. There are several references to couples waxing old in their joint worship of gods (*R. V.*, V, 53, 15; I, 133, 3, etc.). The wife used to take an active and genuine part in family sacrifices. Like the husband she too had to perform a special *upanayana* on the occasion of special sacrifices. She had her own hut in the sacrificial compound, and also her own cow to provide her with sacred milk during the sacrifice (*S. Br.*, X, 2, 3, 1; XIV, 3, 1, 35). In the early Vedic period, the duty of reciting musically the Sâma songs was usually performed by her;³ later on it came to be entrusted to a special class of male priests, *viz.*, *udgâtris*. The wife had to pound the sacrificial rice, give bath to the animal that was to be immolated and lay in bricks when the altar was to be built (*S. Br.*, VI, 5, 3, 1; III, 8, 2,

³ *S. Br.*, XIV, 3, 1, 35.

1-6). She participated with her husband in the preparation of the offering, the consecration of the fire, the offering of the oblations and the concluding ceremonies. She herself had to recite some Mantras. It is true that sometimes these had to be dictated to her;⁴ but the case was probably the same with the husband with reference to the Mantras in many of the sacrifices. Wife's participation in the Vedic sacrifice was thus a real and not a formal one; she enjoyed the same religious privileges as her husband.

If the husband was away on a journey, the wife alone performed the various sacrifices, which the couple had to offer jointly. This was the case in the Indo-Iranian period as well (Erpatistan, Fargard 1). This practice continued down to the Sutra period (c. 500 B. C.).

Indrâni in one place proudly claims that she is the inventor of some rites and rituals.⁵ We may then well infer that some lady theologians may have made some important contributions to the development of the Vedic ritual. Gods and goddesses are usually fashioned after the human model. What Indrâni did may well have been possible for some of the cultured ladies of the Vedic age some of whose songs have been honoured by an inclusion in the Vedic Samhitâ. We have, however, no direct evidence on the point.

There were some sacrifices which could be performed by women alone down to c. 500 B.C. Sitâ sacrifice, intended to promote a rich harvest, was one of them. Rudrabali was another; it was intended to ensure prosperity and fertility among the cattle (*P. G. S.*, II, 17; III, 8, 10). Rudrayâga, intended to secure good luck to maidens in

marriage, was a third one. The last-mentioned sacrifice could of course be performed by women alone; in the case of the earlier two, it is possible that the exclusive association of women with them was due to the theory that since they are intended to promote rich harvest and fertility, they should be performed by women alone, who are their visible symbols.

If the husband was out on journey, or if his co-operation was unavailable for any other reasons, then the wife could perform the sacrifices alone. On the morning of Râma's installation as the crown prince Kausalyâ is seen performing by herself the Svastiyâga to ensure felicity to her son; she was the neglected wife and probably she felt that it would be futile to expect Dasaratha to come to participate in the sacrifice. At that time Dasaratha was as a matter of fact engaged in assuaging the wrath of his favourite wife Kaikeyi. Similarly Târâ is represented as performing alone the Svasti sacrifice, when her husband Vâli was about to issue out to fight with Sugriva. This was probably because Vâli was then too busily engaged in equipping himself to find time to participate in his wife's sacrifice. These instances show that in the early period, women's participation in sacrifice was a real one; nay, very often husbands used to leave the whole affair to the exclusive charge of their wives, when they were otherwise busy. The usual practice, however, was that the couple should jointly perform the sacrifices.

Intercaste *anuloma* marriages were permitted during this period. What then was the religious status of the wife if she belonged to a lower caste? Could she participate in the sacrifice? Later writers like Manu no doubt ordain that only the wife of the same caste could be associated with the husband in the sacrifices. The view of the earlier age was

⁴ *S. Br.*, III, 8, 2, 4.

⁵ *R. V.*, X, 86, 10.

different; it allowed the wife of the lower caste full religious privileges, if she were the only wife of the husband (*B. G. S.*, II, 9, 11). A Sudra wife, or a wife for whom a bride price had been paid, was, however, not entitled to any religious rights and privileges (*Manu*, IX, 86; *V. D. S.*, XVIII, 17).

The participation in sacrifices presupposed Vedic study, and we have shown already how girls used to devote themselves to it during their maidenhood. The sacred initiation ceremony (*upanayana*) of girls used to take place at the usual age as regularly as that of boys. This was the case as early as the Indo-Iranian age. The custom is still observed by the modern Parsis. In India the initiation of girls used to take place regularly down to the beginning of the Christian era. The Vedic age held that Brahmacharya and Vedic study were as much necessary for girls as they were for boys. It was apprehended that if this most important religious *sanskâra* was not performed in the case of girls, women would be automatically reduced to the status of Sudras; how then could Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas be born of them? *Upanayana* of women was indispensable, if the cultural continuity of the different Aryan classes was to be preserved.

After their *upanayana* girls used to follow a discipline more or less similar to that of the boys. They were however shown certain concessions. They were not to grow matted hair. They were to go out to beg their daily food. As far as possible they were to be taught by their near relations like the father, the uncle or the brother.⁶ They were permitted to discontinue their Vedic studies when their marriages were settled at about the age of 16 or 17. A

few, however, continued their studies for a much longer time and were known as Brahmavâdinis.⁷ It is a great pity that most of the above rules about the *upanayana* of girls should have to be gathered from works written at a time when the custom was rapidly going out of vogue or had already ceased to be followed. We therefore get only very scrappy information on the subject.

We have already seen how after their *upanayana* ladies used to specialize in Vedic studies, theology and philosophy. Nay, some of the ladies figure among the authors of the Vedas, which a later age was to pronounce them as ineligible to read. Ladies held that they were inherently entitled to study the Vedas; we find a maiden flatly declining to marry her lover, when she suspected that he was disinclined to reveal to her some of his Vedic dogmas and theories (*T. Br.*, II, 3, 10). When *upanayana* of girls was common, it is needless to add that women used to offer morning and evening prayers as regularly as men; the *Râmâyana* twice discloses Sita discharging this religious duty (II, 88, 18-19; V, 15, 48).

In the age of the Brâhmanas (c. 1,000 B.C.) the volume of Vedic studies became very extensive as a number of subsidiary sciences were developed and extensive commentaries were written on Vedic texts. The spoken dialect of the age had begun to differ considerably from that of the Vedic Mantras and the theory had found universal acceptance that to commit a single minor mistake in the recitation of a Vedic Mantra would produce most fatal consequences to the reciter.⁸ As a natural consequence society began to insist that those who wanted to undertake Vedic studies must be prepared to devote a very long period, say 12 to

⁶ *Hârîta Smriti*.

⁷ *Hârîta Smriti*.
⁸ *Pânini Sikshâ*, 5.

16 years at least, for the task. Women used to be married at about the age of 16 or 18 and could devote only about 7 or 8 years to their Vedic studies. So short a period was quite insufficient for an efficient grounding in the Vedic lore in the age of the Brâhmanas. Society was not prepared to tolerate dilettante Vedic studies, and as a consequence women Vedic scholars began to become rarer and rarer.

Vedic sacrifices also became very complicated at this time; they could be properly performed only by those who had studied their minute intricacies very carefully. As a consequence, the participation of women in sacrifices gradually became a mere matter of formality. Wives continued to perform the duties that were once allotted to them in sacrifices for some time, but gradually a tendency arose to assign most of the sacrificial work to males. Many duties in the sacrifice, that could be once done by the wife alone, came to be assigned to male substitutes in the age of the Brâhmanas.⁹ In some rituals like the Srastarârohana women continued to take a prominent part and recite the Vedic Mantras down to c. 500 B.C. (*P. G. S.*, I, 4), but the practice was becoming gradually unpopular. Wife was originally entitled to offer oblations in the Grihya fire in the absence of the husband; now a son, or a brother-in-law began to act in her place (*S. G. S.*, II, 17, 13). She continued to perform the evening sacrifice down to the beginning of the Christian era, but the recitation of the Vedic Mantras was prohibited on the occasion.¹⁰

As amateurish studies of the Vedas could not be encouraged, and as women had now to take a more or less very formal part in sacrifices, the *upanayana*

of girls began to become a mere formality in course of time. At c. 500 B. C. we learn from Hârîta that only a few Brahmavâdinis used to devote themselves seriously to Vedic studies after their *upanayana*; in the case of the vast majority of girls the formality of the ceremony was somehow gone through just before their marriage. A few centuries rolled on in this way and then writers like Manu began to advocate that girls' *upanayana* may be performed, but no Vedic Mantras should be recited on the occasion.¹¹ This development may be placed at about the beginning of the Christian era. *Upanayana* without Vedic Mantras was a contradiction in terms, and so later writers like Yâjñavalkya (c. 200 A.D.) began to advocate the more honest and straightforward course of prohibiting the ceremony altogether in the case of girls. A theory was started that the marriage ritual in the case of girls really served the entire purpose of *upanayana*: service to the husband corresponded to the service of the preceptor and household duties were a nice substitute for the service of the sacrificial fire.¹² *Upanayana* therefore was unnecessary for girls. It may have been prescribed for them in a former age, but that rule was a dead letter in the present one. It is interesting to see how medieval writers like Medhâtithi proceed to explain away clear passages in earlier writers permitting women's *upanayana* (*Manu*, V, 155). Eventually medieval Nibandha writers like Mitramisra made wonderful discoveries of otherwise unknown Purânas, which boldly declared that women are of the status of the Sudras and so altogether ineligible for *upanayana*.

Minor religious rituals like the *Jâta-karma*, *Nâmakarana*, *Chudâ*, etc., were

⁹ *S. Br.*, I, 1, 4, 13.

¹⁰ *Manu*, III, 121.

¹¹ *Manu*, II, 66. This verse occurs after the description of *upanayana*.

¹² *Ibid.*, II, 67.

originally performed just as regularly in the case of girls as they were in the case of boys. When *upanayana* was discontinued in the case of girls, it began to be advocated that other rituals also should be permitted in their case, only if they were performed without the recitation of the Vedic Mantras. This position has been taken up by almost all the Smriti writers.

Discontinuance of *upanayana* amounted to spiritual disenfranchisement of women and produced a disastrous effect upon their general position in society. It reduced them to the status of Sudras. We have seen how in the earlier age, women could, if necessary, perform sacrifices even by themselves. But now Manu came forward to declare that a pious Brahmana should not attend a sacrifice, which is performed by women (IV, 105). There were many Vedic texts which clearly declared that the husband and the wife were to perform the Vedic sacrifices together. When the *upanayana* of women became a mere formality at about 200 B. C., there arose a school which advocated that wives should not be associated with their husbands even formally in the performance of Vedic sacrifices. It argued quite seriously that the references in sacred texts to the sacrificers in the dual number did not refer to the husband and the wife but to the sacrificer and the priest (*P. M.*, VI, 1, 2).

This new theory was opposed by the orthodox tradition as it was all along accustomed to see sacrifices being jointly performed by the husband and the wife. The wife's participation had no doubt become a formal one, but society was not prepared to eschew it altogether. Jaimini was the spokesman of the orthodox school, and he has explained very clearly how the references to the sacrificers in the dual number can denote only the husband and the wife. While

doing so, however, he emphatically declares that a woman alone is quite ineligible to perform any sacrifice. 'The woman can stand no comparison with man. The sacrificer is learned, his wife is ignorant'.¹³ The new theory took some time to be popularized. In Jaimini's own time Queen Nayanika of the Deccan performed a number of Vedic sacrifices during her widowhood, and there was no dearth of learned Brahmanas to accept her handsome gifts on the occasion (*A. S. W. I.*, V, p. 88). The practice of women performing sacrifices by themselves, however, died down by the beginning of the Christian era. As pointed out already, Manu is seen condemning it sternly in his code.

It is interesting to note that the Smriti school on the whole was more hostile to the recognition of the religious privileges of women than the Vedic school. The former had reduced them to the status of the Sudras by about 800 A.D. The latter however was not prepared to exclude them from formal association in sacrifices even in the 14th century A.D. Thus Sâyana admits that a difficulty will arise in the sacrifice on account of the wife not being able to recite the Vedic Mantras, she not having studied them before. He tries to get over the difficulty by suggesting that she should be given a manuscript and be asked to read from it.¹⁴ Sâyana, however, forgets that in his days not even 5% women were able to read the Mantras even from a manuscript. It is interesting to note that the passage in the Asvalâyana Srauta Sutra on which Sâyana relies does not support the procedure at all. It lays down that *veda*, i.e., darbha grass, should be given to the wife before formulæ are dictated to her for recital. In order to support

¹³ *P. M.*, VI, 1, 24.

¹⁴ Sâyana on *R. V.*, I, 131, 3.

their theory of the wife's association in sacrifices, the followers of the old Vedic tradition were thus straining even the interpretation of the old Vedic texts. We have referred to this passage of Sâyana and his wrong interpretation of the Sutra text in order to illustrate how the Sruti school was more sympathetic to women than the Smiriti school. Medieval Hindu society was however influenced more by the latter than by the former. So nothing could save women from being reduced religiously to the status of the Sudras from about 800 A.D.

In actual practice the prohibition of Vedic sacrifices to women did not produce any hardship ; for these sacrifices themselves soon went out of vogue. Neither men nor women paid much attention to them from about the beginning of the Christian era. What however did infinite harm to women was the theory that they were ineligible for them because they were of the status of the Sudras. Henceforward they began to be classed together along with the Sudras and other backward classes in society. This we find to be the case even in the *Bhagavad-Gitâ* (IX, 32).

It must be pointed out that the exclusion of women from Vedic studies and sacrifices was not due to any deliberate plot to lower their status. Custodians of the Vedic lore honestly believed that no one should be allowed to recite the Vedic Mantras who had not studied them properly ; women found it impossible to devote the necessary time for this purpose on account of their early marriages. It was therefore but fair that they should not be allowed to invite on themselves and their relations those dreadful calamities, which were honestly believed to result from an incorrect recitation of the Vedic stanzas. The desire was not to humi-

liate women, but rather to save them from dire consequences.

When the Vedic Karmamârga rapidly went into background, its place was taken by the new Bhakti and Pauranik schools which rose into prominence at c. 500 A. D. The leaders of these movements were catholic in their outlook and threw open their doors to all, irrespective of sex and caste. This was a welcome development for women. Their religious disenfranchisement by the Sruta school had created a vacuum ; it was filled by the Bhakti-Pauranik religion. In fact they became its *de facto* custodians.

Women are by nature more religious and sentimental than men. They can visit temples with greater regularity, perform religious rites with higher devotion and submit to religious fasts with more alacrity than men. The Pauranik religion, which came into prominence by c. 500 A.D., made ample provisions for the religious requirements of women. As early as the 3rd century B. C. women were already accustomed to perform a number of vows and fasts (*vratas*), which were unknown to the Srutis and Smritis. They are referred to by Asoka in his Rock Edict No. IX, and the *Vivâdavatthukathâ* refers to a lady, who being anxious to devote herself to some *vrata* without being disturbed by her gay husband paid him some money from her own stridhana, so that he might get his pleasure elsewhere (I, 15). *Vratas* thus were quite common even before the beginning of the Christian era. The reorganizers of the Pauranik religion increased their number, spread them evenly over the whole year and invested them with a moral fervour by associating a number of ethical and edifying stories with them. Hinduism, as it is known to and practised by the masses, is not the Hinduism of the Srutis or Smritis, but the Hinduism of the Puranas, and

women have been its most devoted followers and patrons. Most of the women in society at this time were uneducated and therefore incapable of understanding or appreciating subtle intellectual arguments like those advanced by the Vedânta school. The new religion also mostly relied on an appeal to faith and devotion. It therefore appealed to women immensely. Being certain that the sections of society, which were its devoted followers, had an inexhaustible fund of credulity, the Purana writers did not take much care to offer a reasonable or rational explanation in every case. Very often virtues were so much exaggerated that they assumed the garb of vice. Vices were sometimes condoned because they were associated with some heroes or demigods. Hindu women who went on performing the *vratas* and listening to the stories contained in the Puranas, became by temper and training very credulous and devotional. Most of them became strangers to rationalism based upon discriminative reason under the influence of the new religion. The same however was the case with men at this time, if perhaps to a slightly less extent. It, however, cannot be denied that the continuance of the old religious vein, moral fervour, and spiritual tradition is largely due to the zeal, sincerity and devotion of women. Those very women whom religion had once regarded as outcasts eventually enabled it to tide over most difficult times.

In the modern feminist movement in India, we hardly notice any tendency to get the religious disabilities of women redressed. This is natural. When men themselves have given up Vedic sacrifices, women feel no inclination to agitate for the right to perform them. The Arya Samâj, which has revived the sacrifices, has extended the right to

perform them to women as well. In the modern materialistic world, the average woman feels no grievance because she has been deprived of the right to become a nun. She looks with a contemptuous smile on a dogma, which would declare that she is ineligible for spiritual salvation. *Upanayana* has become a meaningless formality even in the case of boys ; women naturally feel that they have nothing to gain by becoming re-eligible for it. It is true that the religious disenfranchisement that resulted from the ineligibility for *upanayana* produced a disastrous consequence upon the general status of women in society ; but women have realized that improvement in this direction in modern days depends mainly upon spread of education and acquisition of economic rights and independence. They therefore naturally feel no inclination for initiating an agitation for the restoration of their old religious rights and privileges.

It would be however in the interest of Hindu society if it remains constantly alive to the full implications of the Vedic viewpoint that the husband and the wife are equal and necessary partners in divine worship. The principle implies that men and women have equal rights and responsibilities in matters temporal as well. Since the spiritual disenfranchisement of women, men have become accustomed to regard women as their inferiors in all the spheres of life. This outlook must disappear. We must remember that women have done greater service to religion than men by preserving the old religious tradition, moral fervour and spiritual vein in Hindu society. These constitute priceless heritage and men ought to be grateful to women for preserving it. If an effort is made to spread a rational knowledge of the fundamental principles of Hindu-

ism among women, they would undoubtedly become much better representatives of our culture and religion than what men are to-day.

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY*

BY JEAN HERBERT

Since some time past the West has no more the blind confidence in its science and technique which it showed during one or two centuries. The cult of the quantity—greater knowledge and greater production—born in the United States and embraced with growing fervour by the rest of the white race, no longer awakens in us an enthusiasm without reserve. We have seen the noblest and most beautiful discoveries of our savants sacrificed to the God of war and of destruction; we have seen the most admirable conquests of our engineers pressed into the service of narrow and cruel selfish interests. We can now make all that is necessary to nourish, nurse and clothe the whole of humanity. But we use them too often as offensive weapons and we destroy deliberately the very wealth which we do not know how to distribute to hungry people.

In discovering that a certain discrimination is necessary and that the notion of quality is not less important than that of quantity, the West is being led to reinstate the principles of ethics, of disinterestedness, as well as of spirituality, lately considered as obsolete. People have a presentiment that the grand ideals of service and love might be the goal and that pure science and blind technique should only be their docile slaves and nothing more, if we are to save humanity from a new cataclysm. In our churches and sects, many groups have arisen to reconcile religion and practical life, whose divorce seemed to

be irremediable. Some people have discovered that the golden rule is not incompatible with properly understood personal interests. And in the political and international field the most brutal appetites are today obliged to render to this spiritual ideal the homage that the jay paid to the peacock.

This process of readjustment did not go on without great practical difficulties; because we have not, or we have no longer, the necessary spiritual technique which it is difficult to improvise. Meanwhile as this evolution took place in our countries, the East in general and India in particular, tired of being exploited by us and tired also of paying with their deep poverty the high standard of living of which we are so proud, submitted to a critical examination their traditional attitude of renunciation, abnegation and asceticism. Some of the great thinkers of Modern India came to study the West as some of our thinkers went down there to search for inspiration.

And in many groups in India we find today a tendency no longer to reject systematically all material goods as hindrances to spiritual development. People endeavour there also to realize the same grand synthesis of science and spirituality, whose necessity we have commenced to see. But instead of starting anew from material science and technique, people there take spiritual

* Translated from French by Swami Siddheswarananda of the R. K. Mission, who is now working in France.

life as a starting point and try to integrate into it the conquests of savants and engineers without minimising their usefulness.

It is of the highest practical interest

for us to be constantly informed of these attempts which are made with actual spiritual techniques, in comparison with which ours appear still very rudimentary.

TWOFOLD UNIVERSAL CAUSE : A VEDANTIC VIEW

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

The different sub-schools of the Advaita system of thought are divided among themselves with regard to the solution of the problem of Universal Causation. Thus while some of the thinkers regard Brahman to be the Universal Cause, others posit Mâyâ to be the cause of the world. The author of the *Padârthatattvanirnaya*, however, believes that Brahman and Mâyâ are both material causes of the universe, since the diverse characteristics of both Brahman and Mâyâ [*i.e.*, being (*sattâ*) and insentience (*jadatâ*)] can be predicated of the material world. The world is non-different from Brahman, which alone as the true Being appears to undergo transformation. The reality that is Brahman is seen to underlie this material world also. For, in all our worldly experiences, we call it existent (*sat*). Again, this universe is said to be non-different from Mâyâ, which is non-conscious and as such actually undergoes transformation in the shape of the world. Invariably do we represent this world of experience as non-conscious (*jada*); and it is the insentience of Mâyâ that gives the stamp of non-consciousness to the universe. The conditions of material causality (*upâdânatâ*), *viz.*, that it must be the cause and at the same time be the substratum of the product¹—are

satisfied by Brahman also. The world as a product appears in and upon Brahman, and so Brahman is the material or the substantive cause (*upâdâna*). Brahman, the substratum, hidden by the power of concealment belonging to Mâyâ, appears as the universe, *i.e.*, Brahman is the apparent cause (*vivartopâdâna*). Mâyâ, on the other hand, is itself the really changing cause of which the world is the product or transformation.

The main reasons to justify the acceptance of the view of twofold material cause are these:

In the Advaita system, only the Ultimate Consciousness (Shuddha-chaitanya) is regarded as self-luminous (*svaprakâsha*) and the Ultimate Reality is regarded as one and one only (*ekam-eva*), and is thus opposed to all dualistic conceptions of Realistic systems of thought. But all determinate knowledge is essentially dualistic in character, and presupposes the existence and relation of two factors, *viz.*, Consciousness and the material object. Leaving apart the question of the extra-subjective existence of the objective data, even the problem of perceptual

cient cause also. It must be the substratum of the effect also. So, only a thing, which produces an effect of which it is the basis, is the material or substantive cause. Cf. "*Kâryâdhâratve sati kâryajanihetutvam upâdânatvam*"—*Siddhântalesha Samgraha-Tikâ*, Benares ed., p. 72.

¹ The material cause is not the mere cause of product; as this is common to the effi-

knowledge presents a difficulty, *viz.*, how can two independent entities, existing apart from each other, be brought together at all. The knowledge of a thing means that the object known and the fact of knowledge have been brought into a systematic whole. The existence of material objects is proved by virtue of such knowledge alone and not by any inherent prerogative of the objective datum. The material object, being dead, inanimate, unthinking matter, cannot be supposed to illuminate itself and thus prove its existence, unless the light of knowledge be brought to bear upon it. For this reason, Vedântic writers of the Advaita school have postulated a *tertium quid*, *viz.*, the inner organ or mind (*antahkarana*) which by its activity, technically called *vritti*, brings the two poles together and makes knowledge possible. The consciousness cannot be supposed to move out, because all motion is predicable only of material objects. So it is the mind that moves out to reach the objects. In the case of auditory perception, however, the object itself reaches the subject. It is immaterial whether the movement proceeds from the internal knower or the external object, but what is essential is that the relation must take place.

Now a question may be raised: Consciousness being the only ultimate fact, how can there be any objective existence at all? The answer is that the existence of the objective world cannot be denied as it is directly felt in experience, although the ultimate reality of such an existence is denied both by logic and by sacred Revelation. So what we are concerned about in perception is to find an explanation of the situation, and we cannot remain satisfied with a denial of its existence. The fact remains that, though unreal, the objec-

tive data somehow present themselves to consciousness. The Monistic Vedânta holds that these objective data, though absolutely illusory, somehow exist in Pure Consciousness, and divide each into apparently water-tight compartments. So when even an empirical knowledge is supposed to take place, what happens is this: the apparent fictitious divisions are removed and the unity of Consciousness, underlying the different objective manifestations, is only revealed. So practically it can be said in the language of the poet that here "The Spirit greets the Spirit".

We have explained the philosophy of perception. It is, however, necessary that we should say something on the technical devices adopted in Vedânta in explaining perception, which, however, have no other value than convenience of treatment and psychological explanation. The objective datum is not mere dead, inanimate matter, but matter superimposed upon Consciousness. The pen is not mere pen, but Consciousness defined and determined by pen. Similarly, the subject (*jnâtri*) is not the mere mind, but Consciousness as determined by the mind. This is technically called the subject-consciousness (*pramâtrichaitanya*). The object is similarly called the object-consciousness (*prameyachaitanya*); and the modification of the mind (*vritti*) is called the instrumental consciousness (*pramânachaitanya* or *vrittichaitanya*). These are purely technical devices, but are nevertheless necessary to explain all empirical knowledge in which the modification of Consciousness into a subject, object and cognitive process is a necessary condition. Unlike in the Realistic systems of thought, the three modes are characterized as consciousness with the limiting objects qualifying it. The delimitations and divisions, however, are non-existent in pure transcendental Consciousness,

but are felt owing to the working of *Mâyâ* or *Avidyâ*.

Let us now follow the process of perception (and particularly ocular perception) in a little more detail. As we have already stated, non-conscious material objects are not directly (*i.e.*, by the right of an intrinsic prerogative) perceptible, since they are not self-luminous. Only when enlightened by something else which is self-luminous, these can be perceived by us. So we are to search for an illuminating source which is self-luminous. The Advaitins call this the cognizing subject (*jñâtri*)—the *pramâtrichaitanya* (cognizing consciousness determined by the internal organ). But this cognizing subject, being situated within the body, cannot possibly illuminate the object directly, as it is situated outside. So an illuminating medium also is required. This is known as the *vritti*—the modification of the internal organ.² It has been called the illuminating medium, since it is non-conscious and as such non-luminous. Even the internal organ itself is not self-luminous, as it is also inanimate, and as such has no power to cognize other objects. But being the most proximate to the substratum consciousness (*svâdhishtânachaitanya*) and extremely transparent (unlike other non-intelligent objects), it is the most fitted receptacle to receive the reflection of the consciousness on it. By its close relation with the consciousness which is reflected on it, it acquires the power of illuminating other less transparent objects. The opaque objects, too, though themselves unable to catch the reflection of the all-

² When the sense-organ (say, the eye) is fixed on the external object, the internal organ undergoes a change and issues out through the organ (which serves the purpose of the door), goes to the object and takes its shape. This modification of the internal organ is known as *vritti* (particular mental state or mode).

pervading Consciousness, can easily acquire the power (in a form, more or less illuminated) of reflection, when they come in contact with the transparent medium of reflection (*vritti*)—the modification of the transparent internal organ, just in the same way as the walls, being opaque, cannot themselves reflect the face, but when splashed all over with water, they acquire some degree of transparency and serve as reflectors. Thus the internal organ serves merely as a mirror or a reflector, and its modification moves out like an elongated ray of light or a stream of water, and takes the shape of the external object.

To take a more particular case, during the process of ocular perception, the eye is fixed on an external object. The internal organ, modified in the form of the *vritti*, shoots out like a ray of light (reflected by a mirror) and goes towards the object. Then the *vritti* assumes the shape of the object; and the object is said to be illuminated by the *vritti*, which is itself enlightened by the consciousness reflected on it. The non-conscious object is thus perceived by its indirect connection with the consciousness reflected on the *vritti*, but not by its connection with the *vritti* only; because, as we have already pointed out, the *vritti* itself being non-conscious, cannot possibly illuminate another non-conscious object; or, in other words, the veil of ignorance, covering up the form of the non-conscious object, being lifted up by its connection with the illuminating medium (*vritti*), the consciousness, particularized by the object, is reflected on it;³ and the non-conscious object, while reflecting the consciousness, determined by it, is itself illuminated. For, consciousness, being self-luminous, illu-

³ Up till now, it had remained unreflected on account of the opaque covering of ignorance over the object. *Vritti* gives it transparency, and thus the object reflects the consciousness underlying it.

mines anything that comes in contact with it, provided that it has the fitness to receive and reflect the light of consciousness. So the expression—'the object is perceived'—only means that the substratum consciousness, determined by the object, manifests itself by its unification with that determined by the modification of the internal organ. The identity between the consciousness particularized by the object and that belonging to the *pramāna*, or, in other words, the appearance of the substratum consciousness as the external object is thus the defining feature of perception. As Dr. Das Gupta puts it: "Phenomenal creations are there in this world moving about as shadowy forms on an unchanging basis of one *chit* or reality, but this basis, this light of reality can only manifest these forms when the veil of nescience covering them is temporarily lifted by their coming in touch with a mental mould or mind-modification."⁴

It should be noted in this connection that Monistic Vedānta does not hold brief for the theory of *vritti* and this is evident from the fact that there have been authors who do not subscribe to this theory. After all it is only a makeshift—a device—a mere hypothesis to explain the ultimate pre-supposition of all empirical knowledge, pre-eminently of perception, *viz.*, the pre-supposition of the identity of the subject and the

object, *i.e.*, consciousness and the object. So Vedānta does not debar any other suitable hypothesis which can satisfactorily explain this fact of identification of the object and consciousness. It may not be out of place to mention here that this *vritti*-theory of perception is advocated in the Sāmkhya Philosophy also, and it is quite likely that Vedānta may have borrowed the theory from Sāmkhya. The theory may appear to be crude and cumbrous, but has got to be adhered to so long as a better hypothesis does not present itself.

Now, to come to our point, we find that when with the help of the illuminating mental mould, the individual ignorance, concealing the particular object from our view, is temporarily dispersed and the identification of the object and consciousness takes place, the particular unknown object is said to be perceived for the first time. What is true of the individual case can also be regarded *a posteriori* to be universally true by the process of correct generalization based upon the careful observation of particular facts. Hence the Advaitins admit that when Brahman (*i.e.*, Self-luminous Pure Consciousness) comes to be looked upon as identified with the objective world by the power of the cosmic Mâyâ, *It* appears as the world. Thus Brahman and Mâyâ, operating in unison, are said to be the joint material causes of the world.

⁴ Das Gupta: *A Hist. of Ind. Phil.* Vol. I, pp. 448-51.

MAHATMA GANDHI AND HINDU TRADITION

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In approaching Gandhiji as a philosopher, sage and seeker of Truth alone, to the exclusion of his dominant and dynamic personality as a politician and social reformer, there is always the risk of doing injustice to the man and distorting his work. But a vast subject can, in the nature of things, lend itself only to a partial treatment, and it is a strange paradox and yet nothing more than the obvious truth that the ideas of Gandhiji have an appeal more universal than his actions. Besides though philosophy proceeds in his case on the facts of experience, there is no need to illustrate it—all the facts being so very well known.

The question is often raised to what extent Gandhiji's thought and philosophy borrowed its ideas from the background of Hindu religion and Indian philosophy. In this connection Gandhiji's article on Hinduism in *Young India* of the 6th October, 1921, at once proposes an answer and provokes a discussion: "My belief in Hindu religious scriptures does not require me to accept as divinely inspired every word and every verse. Nor do I claim to have any first-hand knowledge of all these wonderful books. But I do claim to know and feel the truths of the essential teachings of the scriptures. But I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason and moral sense."

Gandhiji's words are specially significant as indicating his profound insight into the spirit of Hindu scriptures as well as of Hindu philosophy. For philosophy of India is essentially spiritual, and fundamentally the history of

both Hindu religion and philosophy illustrates, in the words of Prof. Radhakrishnan, the endless quest of the mind for Truth against untruth, for right against wrong, and, if I may say so, for redeeming light against baffling darkness. Gandhiji very wisely stresses the spirit as against the letter, yet the Pundit often plods to put it all wrong. Therefore Gandhiji protests against the perverse interpretation and insists, "Like the watch the heart needs the winding of purity, and the head of reason, or the dweller ceases to speak." From this angle of vision Gandhiji has imbibed the mighty purpose which is also the end of all Hindu religious endeavour, namely, to seek truth against error. He may have blundered at times, as he himself was the first to admit, but he did what he felt able and called on to do. His whole life he calls an experiment in Truth, and a spiritual motive dominates it all along, and in this he falls in a line with the essential Hindu character at the peak of its splendour.

Coming now to details we find Gandhiji has been a profound student of the *Gîtâ*, and has contributed several illuminating articles on it. He has felt that the *Gîtâ* has ceased to be a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life as it was meant to be and has tried to enunciate its principles anew as he realized them in life and thought. We must observe that in this also he has followed the traditionally accepted method of the great Indian sages who have all interpreted the *Gîtâ*

to establish their own special standpoints. We know how again and again when the traditionally accepted beliefs became inadequate, nay false, on account of the changed times, and the age grew impatient with them, the insight of a new teacher supervened, stirring the depths of spiritual life. In his *History of Indian Philosophy*, Prof. Radhakrishnan has called these "great moments of Hindu thought, times of inward testing and vision, when at the summons of the spirit's breath, blowing where it listeth and coming whence no one knows, the soul of man makes a fresh start and goes forth on a new venture." Gandhiji's annotation of the *Gitâ* in the light of *ahimsâ* has stressed the intimate relation between the truth of philosophy and the daily life and thought of the people as he tried to mould them with equal significance.

Yet he is the first to testify to the supreme lesson of that part of the *Gitâ* over which controversial interpretation has not left its dust. In his article on the meaning of the *Gitâ* he writes, "The last 19 verses of the second chapter have been inscribed on the tablet of my heart. They contain for me all knowledge—the truths they teach are the eternal verities. There is reasoning in them but they represent realized knowledge."

But while going so far, he is none the less true to his own sheet anchor of *ahimsâ*. His enunciation of the meaning of the *Gitâ* gives out what he has felt in his heart of hearts after profound self-enquiry, which has been in his case equally profound self-effacement. "Self-realisation and its means is the theme of the *Gitâ*, the fight between the two armies being taken as the occasion to expound the theme. You might, if you like, say that the poet himself was not against war or violence, and he did

not hesitate to press the occasion of war into service. But a reading of the *Mahâbhârata* has given me an altogether different impression." Thus Gandhiji has worked for a rational synthesis which goes on gathering into itself new yet age-old conceptions as the age progresses.

Nor is his own contribution of *ahimsâ* simply a reorientation of the old Jaina creed. It is an all comprehensive mode of living with the widest implications of non-violence, yet as he has made it clear, it is not non-violence at any cost. He explained in two articles on the 23rd February, 1922, and 25th August, 1920, how he accepted the interpretation of *ahimsâ*, not merely as a negative state of harmlessness but as a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer. But he says, "It does not mean helping the evil-doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love, the active state of *ahimsâ*, requires you to resist the wrong-doer by dissociating yourself from him even though it may offend him or injure him physically." Thus Gandhiji, like all great sages, has felt that the ultimate truths are the truths of the spirit, and he has felt the call to ask not only his countrymen but all who will see and seek, to *refine life* in the light of these truths.

Above all, the interest of Hindu religion and philosophy is the *self* of man, and often the Hindu sage shuts out the rush of the fleeting events engaging the mind to enable the vision to turn inward and know the self. "*Atmânâṃ viddhi*" has been the law of the prophets, and Gandhiji has not failed to fall in here with the main current of his ancestral religion. In his article on *My Mission* (3-4-24) he has boldly stated, "I am a humble seeker of Truth. I am impatient to realize myself, to attain *moksha* (salvation by self-realization) in

this very existence. My national service is part of my training for freeing my soul from the bondage of the flesh. Thus considered, my service may be regarded as purely selfish. I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the kingdom of Heaven which is *moksha*." His religion is the dominant note of his life, and this most unselfish of men is selfish in so far as he prizes his own salvation above every thing else.

Yet there is hardly any conflict, because this higher self is only selflessness transmuted. On our dead selves we rise to this elevation. In his own inimitable words, "When I say that I prize my own salvation above everything else, above the salvation of India, it does not mean that my personal salvation requires a sacrifice of India's political or any other salvation. But it implies necessarily that the two go together. Just in the same sense, I would decline to gain India's freedom at the cost of non-violence, meaning that India will never gain her freedom without non-violence or through violence. That I may be hopelessly wrong in holding this view is another matter, but such is my view and it is daily growing on me."

The other day, speaking at the Madras Rotary Club, Prof. Radhakrishnan explained the standpoint of Gandhiji's absolute adherence to non-violence by stating that he was a free and true intellectual who had verily shaken himself absolutely free from national prejudices and psychological environments. This is so far true, as the seeker for Truth cannot allow these to obscure his vision. But the point will bear further elucidation as Gandhiji himself has provided some clue to its solution. And this, while stressing his personal religious leanings, goes to show that he is not adrift from the cultural back-

ground of his ancestral faith. Nobody questions his supreme gift of intellect; yet when his intellect is weighed in the scale against his religion, nobody can have any doubt. As Prof. Radhakrishnan has himself said elsewhere, "Religion in India stimulates the philosophic spirit." In the case of Gandhiji, it has not only stimulated his philosophic spirit, but his intellect, politics and every minute phase of daily life. At the risk of labouring the point, the following quotation from *Young India* (12-5-20) on *Neither a Saint nor a Politician* must be reproduced: "The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I take part in politics it is only because politics encircle us to-day like the coil of a snake, from which one cannot go out, no matter how much one tries. In order to wrestle with this snake, I have been experimenting with myself and my friends in politics by introducing religion into politics. Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is certainly not the Hindu religion which I prize above all other religions but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within, and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself."

No doubt Gandhiji indicated by the religion transcending Hinduism the very essence of Hinduism, that eternal Being of God which pervades Hinduism through and through.

But the inward significance of the above passage is missed unless we appreciate the experiment with truth that is implicit in the experiment of introduc-

ing religion into politics. Apparently here Gandhiji has a break with the tradition of great sages. Yet it is not so. The Indian tradition ever sought a close communion between theory and daily practice. Doctrine and life, life and theory, in the vital period of Hindu culture, were not separate. Thus often enough, philosophy became a way of life, a mode of living, an approach to spiritual realization. It is often said that in Gandhiji's case the influence of Christ, and Tolstoy and Mohammed mattered immensely, bridging the gap between theory and practice, doctrine and reality, and between ideal and its endeavour. Gandhiji's own writings admit his profound debt to these teachers. When it was said that Jesus never dabbled in politics, Gandhiji explained thus, "Jesus was a prince of politicians, only the politics of his time consisted in securing the welfare of the people by teaching them not to be seduced by the trinkets of priests and pharisees. No doubt he rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's. But to-day the system of government is so devised as to affect every department of our life. If therefore we want to conserve the welfare of the nation, we must religiously interest ourselves in the doings of the governors and exert a moral influence on them by insisting on their obeying the laws of morality." A more profound apologia of a saint turning politician can hardly be given, and this holds good when the comparison is with Mohammed. No doubt Gandhiji received inspiration from Jesus and also to a certain extent from Mohammed; but if his philosophy and life are the same thing, he does not therein depart from the Hindu tradition. None need say that the Hindu sages led away men from life in its usual aspects and called them to renunciation alone. Renunciation has been inculcated no doubt, and so has

Gandhiji done in keeping renunciation in the forefront of his philosophy. "Highest fulfilment of religion requires a giving up of all possession," he has said.

But equally true has been his understanding of the spirit behind the conception of giving up. As he writes with deep penetration in *My Mission*, "To attain my end of *moksha*, it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave. I carry one about me, if I would but know it. A cave dweller can build castles in the air whereas a dweller in a palace like Janak has no castles to build. . . For me, the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and therethrough of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives."

Revitalized though the last line is by the context of it and the personal accent of the man himself, it reads like a translated verse of the Upanishads. And this is the dominant and recurring note: "It will be seen that for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion."

This intense religious motif has been a way—the secret of Mahatmaji's unparalleled success with the masses, for the average Indian, Hindu or Musalman, always stands to attention when the call comes in the name of religion and truth. What is most tragic is that it is exactly this spiritualizing touch which has erected a barrier and separated Mahatmaji from some of the intelligentsia. The most intimate of his sophisticated colleagues feels a little out of element in his presence; it is, as it were, a seed of loneliness in a bed of intimacy. Some of the intelligentsia have responded no doubt, but by far the larger majority who want cent. per cent. undiluted politics seek refuge in expediency and policy, and their glib political persiflage cripple the greatness of their leader.

Thus though Gandhiji himself would recognize no distinction between ideal and practice, the fullest knowledge and its most intense action, critics try to justify a sliding down the scale by suggesting that the "one flaw in Mahatmaji's politics is the assumption that a formal acceptance of a principle by anybody requires the practical application of the principle at all times." Yet his whole life, which he has placed as an open book, has been an attempt to bridge the gulf. This apotheosis of the daily life, this rising to a plane of consciousness from which he can bring the Divine down into material body and physical life as well as into the mind, the heart and the soul, mark Gandhiji out as a great seeker of Truth and God, and equally well this points him out as a great exponent of traditional Hindu method of Karma-yoga.

For this absolute surrender to divine intervention in every-day material life, this melting life into a new whole, this utter self-effacement for the realization of self, has been the keynote of the *Gitâ's* Karma-yoga and Gandhiji has been its most persistent practitioner. He wrote himself, "Acceptance of a creed ultimately involves practice in accordance with it." In his own life, there has been a demonstration of the principles laid down in the 2nd chapter of the *Gitâ*, which he has accepted as the canon of his life.

His fasts undertaken for asserting spirit's supremacy over flesh are recognized Hindu methods of purification. They show that he is a *sâdhaka*, a *bhakta*, a *tapasvi* no less than a politician, a social reformer and a philosopher. So also his crusade against untouchability is the result of his burning zeal for pure Hinduism. As he wrote in *Young India* of 24th April, 1924, "If untouchability was a part of the Hindu creed, I should decline to call myself a

Hindu, and most decidedly embrace some other faith if it satisfied my highest aspirations."

All along his life, he has tried to satisfy these aspirations after Truth, and made attempts to know it wherever lay the chance. His deep and reverent study of Christian and Muslim theology are instances in point. But after his own attempts and attempts of others to enlighten him, Gandhiji came to accept the Hindu creed, which came to mean for him "a relentless pursuit of Truth through non-violent means." As he deliberately stated to the missionaries on the 6th August, 1925, "To-day my position is that though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity. I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism, as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul." So also he never hesitated to own the indissoluble bond which bound him to Hinduism. "She is like my wife and moves me as no other woman in the world can" is his final summing up. Gandhiji however is never remiss in professing his debt to Jesus, to Mohammed and to Tolstoy in many ways. Not only that, he is eager to show that in his own life, he does not depart from their traditions. But there is a method after all in his spiritual leanings, and this may be said to be the Hindu method.

He is meek and humble as the most pious of Christians. Yet the idea of original sin is repugnant to Gandhiji though he is enough of a Vaishnava to call himself a sinner whose greatest ambition is to reach the ideal of Brahmacharya. This stress on perfect continence again is another link binding him to the great society of Hindu *sannyâsins*.

India has witnessed saints whose religious and intellectual impulses were not confined to philosophy and theology but extended over logic and grammar, rhetoric and language, and in fact all

arts and sciences. Similarly with Mahatmaji everything useful to life or interesting to mind becomes an object of enquiry and criticism. The comprehensive character of the intellectual range of Gandhiji's mind will be felt if we mention such themes as birth-control and vivisection at one extreme and the use of rick-shaw and sewing machines at the other. Here as elsewhere whatever he has touched, he has illumined with his intellect.

In fact so powerful is the play of his intellect and analytic mind, that there is a risk of losing sight of his synthetic and speculative mind. Yet the greater glory is always there. His first approach

is always with reason to the critical intellect which finds in his propositions a powerful stimulant. Then suddenly he seems to dip down the deeper layers of our being, and like all Hindu sages and mystics gives us a revealing vision and lifts us bodily as it were to a higher plane of consciousness.

Hence we hear Mahatma Gandhi speaking often as the Hindu sage, that is, the man "who applies and seeks in practical life such guiding rules as may enable the individual to reach through an integral development of his whole being—an ever wider, ever fuller unfoldment."

THE ESSENTIALS OF BHAKTI

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

The origin of the Bhakti cult is interesting. Scholars would trace it from some of the texts of the later Upanishads, the Purânas and the Ahirbudhnya Samhita, and the literature of the Nârada Pancharâtra School. The extensive literature of the Bhakti School shows that it was a very important and powerful School with a long tradition and history. It is not our purpose to give a historical account of it; we intend to give here the main philosophical outlook of the School and indicate its setting in the complex forces of life and to estimate its spiritual value and significance.

The ancient culture left the æsthetic side of human nature out of account. Although the Upanishads speak of divine imagination which idealizes the whole creation and excites in us righteous sentiments which find satisfaction in a theistic conception of the world system, still the free reading of the Upanishads will

naturally indicate that the tendency in the most important texts is towards Transcendentalism.

The Mimânsakas stressed the activism of life, which finds satisfaction in the sensuous enjoyment, gross or subtle, either in the plane of physical or subtle existence. But any higher ideal than a hedonic felicity was not their objective. The right regulation of our conduct under the sanction of the Vedas together with the performance of rituals was instrumental to the satisfaction of desires of the vital being. But the vital seeking confines us to the earthly life and cannot give us freedom and rest from its insurgent impulses. This activism was confined not only to the adjustment of the earthly forces but also to the regulation of the cosmic forces to yield us gratification of our vital needs. The Devas, shining cosmic forces, were worshipped for these ends.

This activistic attitude of life cannot satisfy us for long, because its fruits

yield gratification to the surface being of sensibility and it does not grant freedom from the crude desires of our vital being. And hence it is said that when the merit is exhausted, the souls are to return to the earthly life from the heaven of desires. Man has to suffer from endless births and go through the unending cycles of earthly existence.

The Upanishads discover the path which could give freedom from this unceasing activism of life. They teach Transcendentalism and declare the essence of our being to be fundamentally one with the Absolute. The division between the human and the divine is more seeming than real. Reality is undivided, integral existence, and man in his inmost existence is fundamentally the same with the Absolute. The realization of his being as identical with the Absolute gives him freedom from the compelling forces of desires causing his birth pang through the cycles of exit from, and return to, earthly life. Attention was directed from the Vedic rituals and sacrifices and Vedic Pantheon to the sublime wisdom of the sages in the Upanishads as offering the clue to the freedom from the meshes of desires. The quietism and the transcendence of the Upanishads were therefore in bold contrast to the activism and the vital satisfaction of the Samhitās. The desireless existence in the quietus of being becomes the sole objective of life. Between activism and quietism no *via media* was found out, and even if an ascent of the soul through the intermediary grades or planes of existence was taught in the Upanishads, still they were not looked upon with favour. Their values were based upon the emphasis laid upon transcendence.

The Vaishnava teachers soon discovered definitely a new tendency of the Soul, which makes it free from the

pressure of desires and allows it to enjoy the movement and expression of life along with illumined silence. The genius of the Vaishnavic teachers lies in discovering the *dynamism of spirit* different from the *dynamism of desires*, offering spiritual felicities and spiritual harmony and expression. Life was stifled between the activist urge on the one hand, and the barren silence on the other. The Vaishnavas take away the thorns of the one by discovering the true movement of spirit, and of the other by endowing it with life and inspiration, with dynamic fullness and variety.

With this change in the basic principle, new metaphysical concepts, epistemological ideas and spiritual values were introduced into philosophy. Vaishnavism gives us the complete philosophy of life in all its phases. It introduces the dynamic conception in metaphysics, theology and epistemology. In the Metaphysics of Samkara *dynamism* is not completely ignored but still it is given a lower place and has been denied an absolute existence. Vaishnavism installs *dynamism* in the Absolute, and makes the ultimate reality the centre of *self-expression* through the orders of spirit and nature. This spirit of self-expression makes the Absolute concrete and puts it in touch with the order of nature which expresses its constant creativeness, and with the realm of spirit which reveals its holiness and grace. These two movements are constant in it and account for the unceasing creation, and reveal the finer world of values.

The Absolute presents a concrete unity of nature and finite spirits; but it is not merely a logical principle allowing eternal distinctions in its nature ultimately enfolded by it. This metaphysical concept of concreteness covering universality and individuality allows the theological possibility of love and adoration and the spiritual possibilities

of radiant feelings and transparent delights and joys. The metaphysical concept of concreteness at once makes the divine life essentially a concrete life expressing not only a basic metaphysical unity, but revealing æsthetic, moral and spiritual values as well. All the tendencies of life were thus recognized and the values and excellences were finely integrated with the Truth of Existence. Vaishnavism has the chief merit of recognizing all the tendencies of the soul and of affording satisfaction to them and discovering their permanent place in the Absolute. And this was possible by emphasis on the concreteness and the personal character of the Absolute.

Reality is Truth. It is the stay of all existence. It is the concrete synthesis. It is the meaning of life.

Reality is Beauty. It is the harmony of existence. It enjoys ineffable delight, exquisite love in the cosmic rhythm from which all conflicts and discords are absent.

Reality is Holiness. It is free from all imperfections and sins of the flesh. It impresses us with its moral beatitude.

Reality is Grace. It is the saving power in the heart of Existence. It is the up-lifting urge which redeems and elevates.

The Vaishnavas of all schools have characterized Reality in the above terms, though different degrees of emphasis have been laid upon them in different schools. Each one of them presents Reality in specific character answering to the specific need of the aspirant soul. And it exhibits the dynamical fullness and completeness of the Absolute.

Though in the canons of faith and in the basic conception the Vaishnavas have no great divergence amongst themselves, yet they have not been

uniform in their views about the nature of ultimate realization. Some have stressed the intellectual intuition of Reality in its complete integrity (e.g., Râmânuja), some have emphasized the devotional intensity with its peculiar taste and modulations of feelings (Vallabha), and some, the æsthetic sweetness, intensive attractiveness and divine amorous feelings (Chaitanya.) But it is indeed impossible to make such categorical distinctions of spiritual realizations, inasmuch as the spiritual life is essentially dynamic and the dynamism of life can exhibit different shades of realizations at different moments of life. None can be exclusively intellectual or devotional, for the Vaishnavas characterized the spiritual life as a life of knowledge, of devotion and of service yielding satisfaction to the composite being of man. There are moments, indeed, when the intellectual intuition and sympathy presents Reality in its integral completeness. There are moments when it reveals its felicitous expressions and joyous movements; there are moments when inspiration for service and self-giving becomes irresistible and spontaneous. But all of them emphasize *Love* as the central principle of life which binds man and God in indescribable unity. Life comes out of light; love is the first expression of life.

Love enjoys the rhythm of life, the beauty of the soul and the radiance of light. But Love has also in it the movement to give itself up completely for the cosmic movement. The obstruction of self-will is removed in Love, it becomes the spirit of service giving the perfect concord of life.

Apart from the central principle of Love which reveals the transcendental beauties and dignities, there is the principle of *Grace* which exhibits God, as the Saviour, the Redeemer. Love

presents God in relation to eternally redeemed souls, and grace in relation to the new aspirant souls. And Power presents him in relation to the creative order and the order of Karma. These are the aspects under which Divinity is generally viewed in Vaishnavism.

There are delicate differences amongst the Vaishnava teachers regarding the spiritual discipline. Some emphasize integral discipline of knowledge, love and service (Râmânuja). Some lay stress on attachment (Sândilya, Vallabha). Some make intense yearning and devotion more prominent (Bengal School). Some combine devotion with yogic practices (Nimbârka School); but every school emphasizes *prapatti yoga*,—the absolute sense of dependence, resignation and surrender with the intense yearning for the realization of the divine life in wisdom and love. In the history of devotional mysticism innumerable shades of differences will be found either in discipline or in realization, for the dynamic spiritualism has shades of expression relative to the psychic constitution of the devotee. But the main objective is to realize the community of spirits enfolded in God, inspired by divine love, and enjoying the radiance of spirit

in divine communion. The Vaishnavas conceive the Kingdom of Heaven, the *Civitas dei*,—the Vaikuntha — (from which all stings and inflictions of life have vanished) as the supreme height of existence saturated with love where the souls enjoy the riddance of blissful life. In Vaishnavic mysticism the Vaikuntha is located as the supreme sphere of existence where life is light, love and joy. It is the holy abode of Supreme Bliss.

Union with God is the universally accepted ideal in spiritual life, but the Bengal School sounds a different note when even in this height of love, union and ecstasy, it emphasizes *the sense of separation*, as exhibiting many shades of love-consciousness, otherwise inaccessible. Separation which comes after union intensifies the yearning, through which love makes subtle and deeper expressions, *e.g.*, it reveals the idealizing spirit of love in which Love fancies union and identification, and impersonates God in its own being. This is not to be supposed as the fanciful creation of Love but rather as a phase of its expression which cannot be realized in union. The flame of Love does not die, but its intensification is increased in ideal separation, in beatific consciousness.

SWAMI VIJNANANANDA : IN MEMORIAM

BY SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

Another great luminary of that firmament of which Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was the central Sun has set. Srimat Swami Vijnanananda, the fourth President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, entered Mahasamadhi at Allahabad on the 25th April, at 3-20 p.m. The Swami had been suffering for some months past from an attack of dropsy, but no one was prepared for the sudden

end. He was positively averse to medical treatment, and it was only during the last few days that he allowed homœopathic treatment. Before, however, it could be given a fair trial, he discontinued taking any medicine, with the result that the body succumbed to the ravages of the disease. The next day, it was consigned with appropriate ceremonies to the sacred water of Tri-

veni, the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, in the presence of a large number of monks and devotees.

The Swami, before he took orders, was known by the name of Hariprasanna Chattopadhyaya. He was born on the 28th October, 1868, in a respectable Brahmin family of Belgharia, which is within a couple of miles of Dakshineswar, the place immortalized by Sri Ramakrishna's superhuman devotional practices and the scene of his wonderful spiritual ministrations to thousands of thirsty souls. It was in the year 1883 that Hariprasanna, then a student of the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, first had the privilege of meeting Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. The Master's fame as a religious teacher *par excellence* had already spread far and wide, thanks to the publicity given to it by S. J. Keshub Chandra Sen, the great Brahmo leader. Sarat, one of his favourite disciples—afterwards known as Swami Saradananda, happened to be a college mate of Hariprasanna, and it was in his company that he met Sri Ramakrishna. He retained vivid recollections of that first visit, and the profound impression he received on that memorable occasion subsequently culminated in his renouncing home and worldly connections. The Master, as was his wont, showed great love and kindness towards the newcomer, which bound him indissolubly to him. Young as he was, it did not take Hariprasanna much time to find out that here was an extraordinary man in every sense of the word, and he was as much captivated by his words of wisdom as he was drawn by his charming *naïveté*. He saw the Master a few times more, but was compelled by force of circumstances to live at Bankipore, in Bihar. After graduating from there, he went for studying Civil Engineering to Poona, where he was when Sri Ramakrishna left his mortal body in 1886. It is said that

he had a vision of the Master at the time.

After taking his degree of L.C.E. he joined Government service, and rose in the course of a few years to the position of a District Engineer. By that time the monastery at Baranagore had been founded, and the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna often became his guests at different places. The flame of renunciation, however, that had been kindled in him by the Master, was burning within him, and he found it impossible to remain in the world any longer. Accordingly, in the year 1896, shortly before Swami Vivekananda returned for the first time from his triumphant mission in the West, Hariprasanna joined the Brotherhood at Alumbazar, where the monastery had meanwhile shifted and came afterwards to be known as Swami Vijnanananda. He accompanied Swami Vivekananda in his trip to Rajputana and elsewhere.

Just before the monastery was removed to its permanent home at Belur in 1899, the task of constructing the necessary buildings had been entrusted to Swami Vijnanananda, who later also supervised the construction of the embankment on the Ganges in front of the main building. Swami Vivekananda, who was then living at the Belur Math, one day saw him at work in the hot sun, and, as a favour, but mostly in fun, sent him, through a disciple, the little remnant of a glass of cold drink. Swami Vijnanananda took the glass and, although he noticed the minute quantity of the sherbet sent, he quaffed it just the same. To his wonder, he found that those few drops had completely allayed his thirst! When he next met Swamiji the latter asked him how he had enjoyed the drink. He replied that though there had been very little left, yet it had the effect of quenching his thirst. Thereupon both laughed. This

is but a solitary instance of the pleasant things which took place to sweeten the relationship among the brother disciples.

Another humorous incident illustrative of their cordiality deserves mention. While the construction work was going on at the Belur Math, some materials were being eagerly expected. One evening Swami Brahmananda said that the materials would arrive by boat before the next morning, which Swami Vijnanananda doubted. Thereupon a wager was laid. Both retired for the night. In the early hours of the morning Swami Vijnanananda got up to see whether the boat had come. It had not. So he returned to his bed, elated at the prospect of winning the wager. A little later, the other Swami also came out, found the boat moored, and quietly retired again. After daybreak Swami Vijnanananda, without suspecting anything, came to him and joyously demanded the wager. "What for?" said the other. Then the disconcerting truth dawned upon Swami Vijnanananda, and finding the tables turned on him, he said, "Well, I have no money, you pay it for me!" A general laughter followed. On another occasion, a similar result greeted his prediction about rain. Afterwards the Swami would narrate these incidents, by way of a tribute to his illustrious brother-monk.

Swami Vivekananda, as is well-known, was a man of varying moods. Sometimes he was playful, when everybody could approach him with freedom. But at other times he became very grave, when none dared to ask him questions. One day he was having a talk with Swami Vijnanananda, when the latter, encouraged by his light mood, not only had the boldness to differ from him, but even went so far as to say, "What do you know? You know nothing!" Swami Vivekananda's countenance at once changed. He

became very grave, and after a few moments he called out to Swami Brahmananda, "Look here, Rakhal, Prasanna tells me that I know nothing!" Swami Brahmananda made light of the incident, remarking, "Why do you listen to him? He knows nothing!" Meanwhile Swami Vijnanananda, who had seen his mistake, apologised, and everything was all right. On another occasion Swami Vivekananda, at the end of a spell of deep thought, suddenly put this question to Swami Vijnanananda: "Suppose there is an elephant, and a worm has got into its trunk; it is slowly working its way up, and growing at the expense of the animal. What will be the ultimate result?" Swami Vijnanananda could not make out what exactly was in Swamiji's mind, and said he did not know. Swamiji, too, did not answer it himself. Swami Vijnanananda had not the courage to press for a solution of the problem at the moment, nor did he happen to raise it afterwards. Questioned later as to what he thought of it, he replied that it might have a reference to the condition of India. By way of a solution he laconically said that if the elephant could not eject it, it was anyway sure to outlive it by overwhelming odds.

Swami Vivekananda had a great desire to raise a big memorial temple to his Master at the Belur Math, and entrusted the task of planning it to Swami Vijnanananda, giving him specific instructions for it. The Swami, in consultation with a noted European architect of Calcutta, prepared a design of the proposed temple, which had the approval of Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji's premature passing away in 1902 nipped the project in the bud. But the serious thoughts of spiritual giants never die out; they only bide their time. Thirty years after Swami Vivekananda's exit

from this world, a magnificent offer of help came from some devoted American students of his thought, which has made it possible for the authorities of the Belur Math to erect the beautiful temple of Sri Ramakrishna after the design left by Swamiji. The foundation-stone of this noble edifice was set in its proper place in July, 1935, by Swami Vijnananda as Vice-President of the Order. We shall come to it later.

Swami Vijnanananda passed the latter part of his life mostly in Allahabad, first at the Brahmavadin Club, of which he was the guiding spirit for some years, and subsequently at the Ramakrishna Math, Muthiganj, which he founded in 1908. In both these places he lived an austere life, devoted to contemplation and study. In 1909 he supervised the construction of the permanent home of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares. He was a scholar, and besides writing two works in Bengali entitled *A Manual of Engineering and Waterworks*, translated from Sanskrit into English the voluminous Purana, *Devi-Bhâgavata*, two ancient astrological and astronomical works, Varâhamihira's *Brihajjâtaka* and *Surya-Siddhânta*, the latter in Bengali as well. Recently he was engaged in translating the *Ramayana* into English, which he left unfinished. In the intervals of his work he conversed with devotees, a large number of whom regularly visited him for instruction. He was an impressive conversationist, and by means of a few words could drive a truth home into the minds of his hearers. He loved fun too, and would often throw his audience, particularly the younger folk, into fits of laughter. The most outstanding trait of his character was renunciation. In this he but carried out, to the end of his life, his Master's command: "Even if a woman be like sterling gold,

and roll on the ground in a frenzy of devotion, never look at her."

On account of his humility and love of retirement he refused for years on end to be a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math. But when after the passing away of Swami Shivananda, the second President of the Ramakrishna Order, in 1934 the necessity arose for his becoming a Trustee, he could not decline it any longer. He became Vice-President of the Order that very year, and on the demise of Swami Akhandananda, the third President, he became President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in March, 1937. Feeling in his heart of hearts the urge to initiate people—worn pilgrims in the wilderness of life—he broke, within recent years, his lifelong practice of not initiating anybody, although he was pre-eminently qualified to be a *guru*. This sense of duty marked him throughout. Through his grace thousands of men and women were blessed with the Lord's name. To each of them he gave instructions in brief, so that they might practise the truths taught in life. During the last few years of his life he travelled much, and visited many centres of the Ramakrishna Order, including Colombo and Rangoon. Everywhere his presence was the occasion of spiritual awakening to hundreds of persons.

Ever since the construction of Sri Ramakrishna temple at Belur began, he was anxiously watching its completion, in order that he might install his great Master there as early as possible. In view of his failing health, it was decided to have the installation ceremony done just after the completion of the main shrine. On the 14th January, 1938, Swami Vijnanananda performed the dedication of the temple and the consecration of the marble image of Sri Ramakrishna amid imposing rites—a function which was witnessed by

fifty thousand devotees and spectators. Having done this he felt that the great task of his life was finished, and he was getting ready to join his beloved Master. He paid only one more visit to Belur, and that was in March last, on the occasion of the Master's birthday. He looked very much emaciated, and those who saw him then were apprehensive of the approaching end. In spite of this, however, he initiated hundreds of aspirants, lay and monastic, and answered their eager queries.

Swami Vijnanananda's passing away removes one of the most lovable spiritual characters from the world. Not only the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, of which he was the leader, but the whole world has suffered an irreparable loss at his demise. We are too near the melancholy incident to appraise

it properly. His was an eventful life, and our only consolation at this bereavement is that he is enjoying a well-earned rest at the lotus-feet of his Master. It is also a fact to be borne in mind that when great illumined souls pass away, their power for spiritual uplift gets a better chance of manifesting itself, for then it is not subject to the limitations of the body. Swami Vijnanananda came to the world by the will of the Lord and he has passed out of it also in persuanance of the divine will. We bow down our heads in submission to it. The memory of his life and personality will always be an invaluable asset to all of us, and we feel sure that he will ever shower his blessings on us from his new abode of bliss. May we succeed in moulding our lives after the beautiful model he has left for us!

PROFESSOR EDDINGTON ON THE NATURE OF RELIGION

BY DR. SUSIL KUMAR MAITRA, M.A., Ph.D.

Professor Eddington's view of the nature of religion is closely bound up with his general theory of experience and is best studied in relation to the latter. The following brief statement of his general position* may be useful to the reader for a right appreciation both of his religious theory and his general philosophical position.

Professor Eddington resolves experience into:—

- (a) Mental Images,
- (b) Certain pointer-readings which

* For a detailed account the reader is referred to Prof. Eddington's Gifford Lectures, "The Nature of the physical Universe" and to Mr. C. E. M. Joad's excellent summary of Prof. Eddington's philosophy in "The Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science".

science connects with other pointer-readings, and

(c) An inscrutable external counterpart to our mental images and to the abstractions of science.

(a), according to Prof. Ed., is our familiar world of sense. It consists of primary and secondary qualities, and both these are constructions out of (c). Thus secondary qualities like colour, temperature, etc., and primary qualities such as permanence, substance, etc., are products of the mind's "faculty of world-building." Hence our familiar sense-world is a subjective construction, though it pre-supposes (c) as its inscrutable, trans-subjective ground.

(b), according to Prof. Ed., is the world of science. It consists of differen-

tial equations and symbols and is therefore abstract comparatively to the familiar world of sense. Science, however, means, for Prof. Ed., the science of physics which again includes, according to him, (1) "field physics" and (2) "the physics of discontinuity." The former deals with relations and relata and ends at last with sixteen co-efficients for each relation, ten being symmetrical from which are constructed geometry and mechanics, the rest asymmetrical whence arises the science of electromagnetism. The physics of discontinuity deals with (a) quanta and (b) electrons, and its discoveries are based on the empirical methods of the laboratory.

(c) Both the sense-world and the scientific world however pre-suppose a trans-subjective counterpart which in itself is inscrutable. This is (c). Prof. Ed. however repudiates the unknowable Kantian thing-in-itself when he speaks of this background as something that may be conceived as "a spiritual substratum." It is not mental activity or consciousness, he says, but may yet be conceived as mind-stuff, more generalized than individual conscious stuff but not altogether foreign to it. As stuff, however, it is not substance, but only "a basis of world-building." Thus Prof. Ed. speaks of it both as something external, trans-subjective and inscrutable and as something akin to our own mind and as continuous with our conscious life.

Professor Eddington's view of *religious experience* also betrays the same wavering and hesitation between objectivism and subjectivism.

Religion, he holds, is a mystical experience, the various theologies being their conceptual symbolisms. It springs from our spiritual nature just as the sense-world springs from our sensuous nature. "The spiritual environment" that we construct "is just another world com-

parable to the material world of familiar experience" and is "no less real than" the latter.

The reality of the spiritual world is, however, conceived from one of three different standpoints.

(1) Thus *sometimes the objective standpoint* is maintained as when Prof. Ed. speaks of our "deeper feelings" as "glimpses of a reality transcending the narrow limits of our particular consciousness."

(2) *Sometimes* again the standpoint of a *qualified subjectivity* is substituted for that of pure objectivity as when Prof. Ed. speaks of a higher reality which is continuous with our consciousness and is "Universal Mind or Logos."

(3) *Sometimes* even qualified subjectivity is given up and we have *pure, unqualified subjectivism* instead. "We see in nature," he says, "what we are equipped to look for;" we "build the spiritual world out of symbols taken from our own personaliy." Indeed Prof. Ed. sometimes goes so far as to affirm that value and significance are projections of our spiritual nature on a valueless non-significant reality.

What will strike the critical reader of this brief statement of Prof. Ed.'s position is the narrow view of science with which Prof. Ed. starts. In fact, science means for Prof. Ed. only physical science. Prof. Ed. thus unduly restricts the sphere of science by excluding from it the biological and psychosociological sciences. His view of science as mere symbolism restricted only to certain physical aspects of the universe thus misses the organic unity and interdependence of the different sciences physical, biological and psycho-sociological. Prof. Ed.'s view, in fact, results in an abstract, physical science of pointer-readings altogether cut off from the rest of the sciences.

And it is not only the symbolic world of pointer-readings that thus gets detached from the rest of the sciences. The same disruption and sundering also characterize Prof. Ed.'s view of the familiar and the scientific worlds and their objective background. Thus the unity of experience is disrupted into independent and diverse realms. Prof. Ed., in fact, exalts into fixed divisions what are only manufactured distinctions within one unitary experience. Prof. Ed.'s tripartite division of experience into images, pointer-symbols, and objective counterpart may not in itself be illegitimate, but it is admissible only within such limits as will permit the reconstruction of the whole which makes such distinction possible. Prof. Ed.'s three strata however are so sundered in origin as well as character as to pre-

clude all possibility of a reconstruction of the original unity.

And what holds good of Prof. Ed.'s general position applies with equal force to his views about the nature of religion. Just as Prof. Ed. restricts the sphere of science to the physical aspects of the universe, so also he restricts religion to a form of mystical experience thereby degrading all other religions to the position of theologies or conceptual symbolism. Nor does Prof. Ed. say how the spiritual world of religion which he avers to be as real as the world of sense, can both be a construction and a reality at the same time. And so here as in his general theory of experience we have not merely an arbitrary starting-point but a medley of subjectivism and objectivism without any internal unity or cohesion.

THE FLAME OF THINGS

(DIARY LEAVES)

BY PROF. NICHOLAS ROERICH

It is mentioned in literature how by restriction of food and by other spiritual strivings St. Isaac of Syria changed the entire form of his life. After a stay of five years as a bishop, he went back into the desert. There in the great stillness of the desert, he perfected his precepts and admonitions in order to leave them in an expressive, brief, and unforgettable form :

“Those who are guided by benefaction always feel that some sort of thought-ray traverses the lines of a written work and distinguishes in their minds the external words from that which is spoken with great thought by the soul's knowledge. If a man reads verses of great significance with-

out plunging deeply into them, his heart remains impoverished, and in him is extinguished the sacred force which, through actual soul cognition, imparts the sweetest savour to the heart. The spirit-bearing soul, when it hears a thought containing a hidden spiritual force, flamingly accepts the contents of this thought. Not every man is roused to wonder by what is told spiritually and has in itself great mysterious force. A word about heaven requires a heart not preoccupied with the earth.”

“The Scripture has not interpreted for us the things of the future age, but it has simply taught us how, while yet here on earth, we can receive a

sensation of delight with them, up to the point of our natural transmutation at departure from this world. Though the Scripture, in order to arouse in us a longing for future blessings, has portrayed them under the names of things always desirable and glorious, acceptable and precious to us, yet when it says that 'the eye has not beheld that, nor the ear heard', it hereby announces that 'future blessings are inscrutable and bear no resemblance to the blessings of this place.'

"Preciseness of naming is established for objects here, but for objects of the future age there are no true authentic names; there is about them one simple cognition which is higher than any denomination and any component principle, form, colour, outline, and all fabricated names."

"He is no lover of good works who has to struggle to do good, but he who takes upon himself with joy subsequent afflictions."

"The cross is a will which is ready for any sorrow."

"With the destruction of this age immediately begins the future age."

"What is knowledge?—Realization of immortal life."

"What is purity?—Briefly put, the heart which forgives every living thing in nature." "What is such a forgiving heart?—Incandescence of a man's heart about all creation, about people, about birds, about animals."

"The timorous man shows that he suffers two infirmities, love of his body and lack of faith."

"The thoughts which intimidate and horrify a man are usually engendered by the thoughts which he directs toward repose."

"The hope of rest at all times compels people to forget the great."

"Who does not know that birds fly into nets while having rest in view?"

"The first of all passions is self-love; the first of all good works is scorn of repose."

"Strive not to hold back the wind with your hand, that is, faith without works."

"For every comfort there follows suffering, and for every suffering, for the sake of God, there follows consolation."

"Fear habits more than enemies."

"He who is sick in feelings is in no condition to encounter and sustain the flame of things."

The very expression "the flame of things" shows an extraordinary plunge into the subtlest world. Indeed, that is why what was enjoined by St. Isaac is so heartily conclusive, because it is based on the discernment of the fiery essential nature. Many works of St. Isaac have vanished and not come down to us, but they did exist and this is evident from repeated references in literature. No matter that to some the paths of St. Isaac are regarded as gno-siological. Except the definition "the flame of things", no other one will be right.

In all his ordained precepts, first of all there resounds everything flamingly derived. That thought, that word will have a special consequence which has been intertwined with the flame of the essence of things. To write down and remember the fiery counsels will be a reinforcement on all paths, a steadfastness not from earth, but from the heavens. People have realized this fiery firmament and felt in themselves a cognizing sacred palpitation of the heart.

"Spiritual contemplation—It is not to be sought in mental labour, but it can be imbued only through Bliss. And so long as man does not cleanse himself, until that time he does not have enough forces within himself even to harken to

it; no one can thus acquire it only through study."

"Just as it is impossible for one with his head under water to breathe the air, so is it impossible for one whose thought is plunged into mundane concerns to breathe sensations of the new world."

Thus, away from transitory earthly cares, St. Isaac strives towards sensations of the new world. Verily, he knows spiritual values when he says: "Irritate no one and hate no one"; "Be not inflamed with anger at him, lest he should see in thee the signs of enmity." These are counsels of the true builder who realizes that inflammation with anger is disastrous.

St. Isaac could noteworthily speak about the indispensable: "Agitated are the waters at the descent of angels." But this agitation is not wrath nor enmity, but only the flashings of sacred fire which spiritualizes all that exists in the flame of things.

"The unburnable bush"—This icon full of fire reminds one about a beautiful and lofty miracle. The "Great Wisdom" of God rushes along on a fiery steed, and the "angel", benign silence, is also infallibly fiery. Those who first inscribed these symbols understood them not as abstract philosophizing but as inalienable truth, as reality. In this heart, actuality, the flame of things, is nearby and comprehensible and beautiful.

"The infirm in feelings is in no condition to encounter and to sustain the flame of things".

Thus at the beginning of the 8th century enjoined St. Isaac the Syrian. From the Monastery of Maz-Matthew at Ninevah have been handed down to us these remarkable fiery counsels, which resound with invincible persuasiveness. Whether they were spoken yesterday or twelve centuries ago, they remain just as irrevocable.

SRI-BHASHYA

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

CHAPTER I

SECTION I

THE GREAT SIDDHANTA

ADVAITIN'S POSITION REFUTED

The 'knower' is not a product of ignorance

It is not quite sensible to say that this 'I', the knower, is a product of ignorance due to superimposition, even as mother-of-pearl is taken for silver. For in this case of superimposition our experience would have been, 'I am consciousness,' even as mother-of-pearl and silver are experienced as non-different, and not as 'I am conscious' which is

actually what we experience. The experience 'I am conscious', however, shows that consciousness is an attribute of the 'I' and different from it even as the statement 'the man with a stick' shows that the stick is an attribute of the man and different from him; and as our experience in this latter case is not merely of the stick but of 'the man with a stick', so also in 'I am conscious' our perception cannot be merely of

consciousness but of a knower with consciousness as his attribute.

As to what the Advaitins say that the 'knower' means the agent in the act of knowing and for this reason it cannot be an attribute of the changeless Self; that the 'knower' or 'agency' is something changing and *jada* and abides in *ahankâra* which is itself unreal and ever-changing, etc.,—all this is untenable. The 'knower' cannot be *ahankâra*. *Ahankâra*, like the body, is something known, external and a product of Prakriti and therefore material and so like the body, it also cannot be the 'knower' which is something inward, and which knows this *ahankâra* even as it knows the body. Just as the *ahankâra*, according to the Advaitins, cannot be consciousness because it is an object of consciousness, for that very reason it cannot be the 'knower', inasmuch as it is known by this 'knower.' Nor is it true that to be a 'knower' is to be changeful, for 'knower' means the substrate of the attribute, knowledge, even as gems are the substrate of their lustre, and as the knowing Self is eternal, its attribute, knowledge, also is eternal. *Vide Sutras 2. 3. 18-19.*

Though knowledge is eternal and unlimited yet it is capable of contraction and expansion and it is contracted in the embodied state of the Self due to its past *karma* and is determined by the senses, and this is why it appears to rise and disappear along with the activities of the senses and the Self possesses the quality of an agent. A change like this is admitted but what is denied is that the Self undergoes modifications like matter. In this sense it is said to be changeless. This agency is not an essential nature of the Self as it is created by action and therefore the Self is unchanging. This knowership subject to this particular kind of change, *viz.*, ex-

pansion and contraction, belongs to the Self which is of the nature of knowledge and cannot belong to *ahankâra*.

It may be argued that this *ahankâra*, though material, due to reflection and its nearness to consciousness appears to be a 'knower.' This argument cannot hold, for, by such reflection, a quality which is found in one is reflected in the other as the red colour of a flower is reflected in a prism. But here the 'knower' is not, according to the Advaitins, a quality of consciousness and it has been shown above that it cannot be an attribute of the *ahankâra* and so whether the reflection is of consciousness in *ahankâra* or of *ahankâra* in consciousness, the appearance of a 'knower' is inexplicable. Such reflection, moreover, is possible in the case of visible objects and not where both are invisible objects as here. Nor can the 'knower' be the result of contact of the one with the other even as an iron rod gets heated when in contact with fire, for here also the 'knower' must be an attribute of either of them as heat is of fire, but it is not an attribute of either consciousness or *ahankâra*.

Again, it is absurd to say that the *ahankâra* manifests consciousness as abiding in it, for consciousness is self-proved and self-luminous according to the Advaitins and so it cannot be manifested and that by *ahankâra* which is non-intelligent, and if it is manifested it would cease to be consciousness according to the Advaitins. Moreover, of what nature is this manifesting? It cannot be origination as consciousness is self-existent; nor can it be revealing, for consciousness is not an object of perception; nor can it be an indirect help to the means of manifesting it by bringing about the connection of the senses with the object as *jâti* is brought in connection with the senses when an individual

of that class is brought, or by removing some disability in the person even as self-control etc., help him by purifying his mind to comprehend the meaning of Vedic texts ; for, neither kind of service can be rendered by *ahankâra* in manifesting consciousness. The former is not possible since consciousness is not an object of the senses like *jâti* ; nor is the latter possible, for *ahankâra* which, according to the Advaitins, is the 'knower', cannot remove its own disability.

Even if consciousness were an object of another act of perception—which of course the Advaitins do not accept but which is accepted for argument's sake—still *ahankâra* cannot help to manifest it, for it would mean the removal of something which obstructs such knowledge and we do not see any such obstruction. To say that ignorance obstructs it and this ignorance is removed by *ahankâra* cannot be accepted, inasmuch as knowledge alone can, according to the Advaitins, remove ignorance and nothing else can. Further, ignorance cannot reside in consciousness, for ignorance and knowledge have the same seat and the same object. Ignorance and knowledge abide in the same person and with respect to the same thing. Just as a pot cannot be the seat of ignorance because knowledge does not reside in it, so also Pure Consciousness or knowledge, because it is not the seat of knowledge, cannot also be the seat of ignorance. In other words knowledge abides in a 'knower' and so also ignorance abides in a 'knower' and not in Pure Knowledge. Even if ignorance should somehow rest in knowledge or consciousness then it cannot be removed, for knowledge of the object alone and not of others destroys ignorance with respect to it, and since consciousness is not an object of knowledge, the ignorance abiding in it can never be

removed by knowledge. Again, that ignorance as defined by the Advaitins is not a fact shall be shown later on. If ignorance, however, means absence or antecedent non-existence of knowledge, then it is no obstacle to the rise of knowledge and so its removal by *ahankâra* will not be serviceable in any way.

From all this we find that *ahankâra* cannot in any way help in the manifestation of consciousness.

Again, manifesting agents do not manifest objects as abiding in them and so what the Advaitins say that consciousness is manifested by *ahankâra* as abiding in it, is not correct. A flame, for example, does not manifest objects as abiding in it. The nature of such manifesting agents is such that they always promote the knowledge of things in their reality. Even when a face is reflected in a mirror, the manifester is light and not the mirror. The latter only reflects the light and so the face appears in the mirror and laterally inverted. *Ahankâra* not being a reflecting surface like the mirror, such a distorted reflection of consciousness cannot take place in it ; moreover, consciousness being self-proved cannot be an object of perception and is not perceived by the eyes. *Jâti* also is not manifested by the individual but has the individual as its substrate. Therefore, no reason can be shown how consciousness can be manifested by *ahankâra* as abiding in it, whether in reality or due to any misnomer. Hence, *ahankâra* is not the 'knower' nor does it appear to be such.

All this goes to show that the 'I' which appears by itself as the 'knower' and as inward is the Self and not Pure Consciousness, for it has already been shown that, in the absence of the 'I', consciousness cannot be *pratyak*, i.e., inward and therefore cannot be the Self.

The 'I', the knower, persists in deep sleep and release

It is not true that the 'I' does not exist in deep sleep and that only Pure Consciousness exists in that state. One who gets up from deep sleep does not say, "I was Pure Consciousness free from the notion of 'I'," but rather says, "I slept happily", which shows that the 'I' persisted in deep sleep as a 'knower' and experienced happiness. No doubt he also says, "I did not know anything at the time", but this does not deny the existence of everything including the 'I' but shows only that there were no objects of knowledge. The 'I' existed along with knowledge which of course could not function for want of objects to be made known to the 'knower,' the 'I'. If the statement denies everything including the 'I' then it would deny Pure Consciousness also. But then, one after deep sleep also says, "I did not know myself then." True, but here 'myself' cannot refer to the 'I' who is the experiencer of "do not know" but refers to such of the forms of the 'I' with which it was associated in the waking condition, such as due to caste, etc. It means the sleeping person was not conscious of himself as so and so etc. But the 'I' which is a uniform flow of self-consciousness persists in deep sleep also though not very vividly. The Advaitins also accept that the 'I' persists when they say that Pure Consciousness exists in deep sleep as the Witness of Nescience. For, to be a witness is to be a 'knower.' Pure Consciousness cannot be a witness. If the 'I' did not exist we could not have remembered that we slept happily.

The 'I' exists also in the state of release otherwise release would mean the destruction of the Self, for the 'I' is not an attribute of the Self but the very nature of the Self. 'I know' etc., show that knowledge is its attribute and the

'I' is the very nature of the Self. That the 'I' exists in release is also inferred, for it shines to itself. Whatever shines to itself shines as 'I', as, for example, the soul in the state of bondage which is accepted also by the Advaitins. Whatever does not shine as the 'I' does not shine to itself, as, for example, a pot. The Self in release shines to itself and therefore shines as the 'I'. It may be said that in this case, even in the state of release it will be ignorant and bound like the embodied Self which also shines to itself. Scriptures deny such a possibility and, moreover, the inference is faulty, for what causes ignorance in the embodied state is not 'shining to itself' or consciousness of the 'I' but *karma*. Ignorance means want of knowledge or wrong knowledge about a thing. The 'I' is the very nature of the Self; so how can the 'I' which is the knowledge of its real nature possibly bring about ignorance or bondage? Sages like Vâmadeva also experienced the Self as the 'I' in the state of release: "Seeing this Rishi Vâmadeva said, 'I was Manu and the sun'" etc. (*Brih.* 1-4-10). The Supreme Brahman is also spoken of by the scriptures as having the consciousness of the 'I': "May I be many, may I grow forth" (*Chh.* 6-2-3); "As I transcend the perishable, and am above even the imperishable, I am celebrated as the Supreme Being among people and in the Vedas" (*Gitâ* 15.18), and so on. This 'I', however, as already shown, is different from *ahankâra* which causes us to take the body, the non-Self, as the Self. That which makes the not-'I' appear as the 'I' is *ahan-kâra*—this is ignorance. But such knowledge of the 'I' as is not nullified by anything else has the Self for its object while that knowledge of the 'I' which has body for its object is sublated and therefore is Nescience.

The conclusion therefore is that the

'I', the knower, is the Self as it is established by our own experience, reasoning which has established the permanency of the 'I', scriptural authority, and from the wrong notion

pointed out. This Self is different from the body, senses, etc., and even different from knowledge, its attribute; it is self-proved, eternal, minute, different in each body and by nature blissful.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

In the *Editorial* we have made a comparative study of some of the fundamental doctrines of Hinduism and Islam, shown the striking points of similarity between the two and accentuated the need of sinking all differences fancied or real to make a bold stand for national solidarity. The article on *Woman's Place in Hindu Religion* by Dr. A. S. Altekar, M.A., LL.B., D. Litt., Head of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Benares Hindu University, is based on a portion of a chapter of his forthcoming book on "Women in Hindu Civilization," and furnishes a pen-picture of the position held by Hindu womanhood in the hierarchy of India's socio-religious life from the earliest times to the modern days. Mons. Jean Herbert, the great French litterateur and an associate Editor of the illustrious French Periodical, "Action Et Pensee", points out in his *Practical Philosophy* a gradual orientation of outlook in the West to the fundamental truths of Indian Philosophy. In the *Twofold Universal Cause: A Vedantic View*, Prof. Ashokanath Shastri, Vedantatirtha, M.A., P.R.S., of the Calcutta University, discusses the view as embodied in "the Padarthatattvanirnaya", and shows that Brahman and Mâyâ are both material causes of the universe. The article on *Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu Tradition* by Rabindra Nath Bose, M.A., of the Bengal Civil Service,

reveals Mahatmaji's attitude to religion and politics as well as his deep-seated love for Hindu Thought and Culture. Dr. Mahendranath Sircar, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Calcutta, gives in *The Essentials of Bhakti* the main philosophical outlook of the Bhakti school and estimates its spiritual value and significance. In *Swami Vijnanananda: in Memoriam*, Swami Madhavananda, the present Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, gives a pen picture of the Swami whose Mahasamadhi we announced in last issue of this journal. In the article on *Professor Eddington on the Nature of Religion*, Dr. Susil Kumar Maitra, M.A., Ph.D., Present officiating Head of the Department of Philosophy, Calcutta University, critically examines Prof. Eddington's religious theory and his general philosophical position. Prof. Nicholas Roerich of the Art Museum, Naggar, Kulu, Punjab, has given a brief life-sketch of St. Isaac of Syria as also some of his inspiring teachings in *The Flame of Things*.

ALL-INDIA SCHOOL OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

The appeal of the culture of India is not merely in the realm of pure thought, but also in the realm of art and architecture—the concrete manifestations of her creative genius. It is really encouraging to find that India, after a period of slumber, is again coming to her own in these departments of her synthetic life.

It cannot be gainsaid that this Indian architectural art once received a world-wide recognition as one of the best tangible expressions of her creative imagination. Originating in a pre-historic period, Indian architecture continued its development and flourished generation after generation as a caste-craft, till the end of the Muhammadan rule in India. But with the advent of the British the native arts and crafts began to decline, and India stood on the verge of being thoroughly Europeanized even in matters of architecture and arts.

In the beginning of the present century a most refreshing renaissance of Indian art manifested itself. The revival of the Indian technique in the art of painting has been effected by the genius of Dr. Abanindranath Tagore and others, and it has been received with acclamation as something of tremendous import for the culture of India. In the domain of architecture we find a galaxy of enthusiastic Indians who have contributed not a little to the revival of architecture in India. Mr. Sris Chandra Chatterjee, *Sthapatya-visarada*, one of these pioneers, has earned the love and gratitude of all for his manifold constructive achievements in this department. By exhibiting some of the works of his school of Indian architectural arts and crafts, by lecturing with the help of lantern slides and writing illuminating articles on Indian art and architecture in India and abroad, he has been able in no small measure to prove the excellence of Indian architecture. And we are glad to find that his works were not only selected for the Exhibition of the Architectural League of New York but were reviewed in the American Press

in highly eulogistic terms by the Chairman of the Architectural Commission of the last World's Fair at Chicago.

But it is really a matter of profound regret that there is no institution now where Indian youths can get proper training, either theoretical or practical, in the complex subject of Indian architecture. We are informed that an institution for imparting education in national architecture is being organized in Calcutta under the Chairmanship of Mr. Shyamaprasad Mookerjee, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. Messages of sympathy and encouragement for the successful inauguration of the proposed school have also been received from Lord Willingdon, Sir John Anderson, as well as from several leading architects and art-academics, University-Chancellors and some distinguished savants of Europe, America, Japan, besides India. The League of Nations has also sent its note of appreciation of the movement. However, it is pleasing to learn that arrangements are being made to introduce a Degree Course in architecture, in which the architecture of India will be given its proper place. It is for the first time in the history of Indian universities that the University of Calcutta organized an All-India Exhibition of Indian architectural arts and crafts with a view to interesting the public in the possibilities of modern Indian architecture, as also to impressing upon them the desirability of founding a school.

It will be for the enrichment of human culture if the Indians and others, who truly love art and culture, could combine to organize the proposed national school of Indian architecture.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ART AND ARCHÆOLOGY ABROAD. BY KALIDAS NAG. *Published by the Calcutta University. Pp. 125 ; xix plates.*

Dr. Kalidas Nag is one of the few scholars of the present generation who have drawn our attention to the pan-Asiatic character of the Indian art and the international trend of the Indian civilization and culture. Indeed the Greater India Society owes its origin to his inspiration and endeavour. In 1930 he undertook a lecture tour through Europe and America at the request of a number of noted societies in order to introduce them to the true character of Indian art and its influence. On his return he submitted to the Calcutta University, which had afforded him the facilities for this long journey, a report on the principal art centres and museums in the different places which he visited. This report has now been published by the Calcutta University for the benefit of the Indian students who desire to proceed to different art centres in Europe and America with the object of specializing in certain branches of art and archæology.

The five chapters of the book give brief informations about the character and scope of the principal centres of art and archæology in France, Near East including Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Italy, U. S. A. and Latin America, and also the facilities for research work afforded by them. The informations will no doubt be found valuable, yet we wish they had been a little more elaborate and detailed. The writer has done well to draw our attention to the tremendous efforts that are being made in those countries towards creating a living interest in the art treasures of the past and towards rejuvenating the art tradition of the peoples by trying to make art a genuine expression of life. This is in sad contrast to the neglect bestowed on the subject in India, although savants of the West feel that an understanding of the Indian art is going to put new life in Western Art in no distant future, in the same way as the discovery of the Greek and Roman lore started the Renaissance in Europe towards the end of the middle ages.

The nineteen plates at the end of the book contain thirty pictures of some of the art objects of the different countries in the past.

SIKHISM—ITS IDEALS AND INSTITUTIONS. BY TEJA SINGH. *Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd. 17, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta. Pp. 146. Price Rs. 2.*

Prof. Teja Singh is well known as an able writer on Sikhism. In this collection of nine short essays, written originally on different occasions, he has presented in a concise and faithful manner the essential features of the religion founded by Guru Nanak and developed by his nine famous successors. Sikhism has been depicted both in its idealistic and practical aspects, and the topics discussed include questions of God and man, the scheme of salvation, the very peculiar institution of Guruship, individual and collective, a short account of the different sects, forms and symbols, rites and ceremonies, with complete texts of some of the most important hymns and prayers used on different occasions.

In his presentation the author has relied on the original teachings of the founders of Sikhism and on the tradition preserved in history and actual practice. The author has tried to keep clear of controversial matters, though opinion will continue to be divided on certain issues, e.g., the precise nature and origin of the sects of Sikhism. Again the writer is hardly fair to Hinduism when he asserts that the Sikh conception of God combines both the Hindu idea of His immanence and the Semetic idea of His transcendence, as if Hinduism is unfamiliar with the latter. Correctly speaking Hindu theology embraces in its broad sweep every possible conception of Godhead that has ever been thought of by the human intellect.

On the whole the book is an admirable compendium of the Sikh doctrine and will be very valuable to those who want to gain within reasonable limits a true idea of Sikhism in theory and practice.

THE PSALM OF PEACE. BY TEJA SINGH. *Oxford University Press, B. I. Building, Nicol Road. Post Box 31, Bombay. Pp. 122. Price Rs. 2.*

Sukhmani, or the Psalm of Peace as the translator calls it, is one of the most important compositions of the Sikh Scripture, the Holy Granth. This soul-stirring hymn is the work of Guru Arjun, the fifth in

succession to Guru Nanak, and a man of rare spiritual attainments, vigour and strength. Its deeply moving sentiments and devotional tone, its directness and sincerity and its hidden pathos and music of words have made a very wide appeal both among the Sikhs and non-Sikhs. Thousands of devout persons, Sikhs or otherwise, living in the Punjab and Sind begin their day's work after repeating it in the morning. The message of love and peace and devotion contained in the hymn is sure to strike many responsive chords through this beautiful rendering into English.

GUIDE TO BASIC ENGLISH. By C. K. OGDEN AND I. A. RICHARDS. *The Times of India Press, Bombay. Pp. 171. Price Re. 1.*

The intimate commercial relations and close cultural contacts among the peoples of different races and nationalities, which have followed upon the rapid development of the improved means of communication have made imperative the need of an international auxiliary language. Keen minds have long been alive to the usefulness of such a medium, and experiments have accordingly been made to evolve a common international medium of thought with varying degrees of success. More than forty years ago Esperanto came to be constructed for this purpose by Zamenhof, and in its wake came its numerous offshoots, Ido, Novial, Occidental, and the rest. All these made an attempt to solve the problem of an international auxiliary language based on the common factors in certain of the main European languages; that is to say they completely ignored the standpoint of the Eastern learner and became just so many more European dialects. For this reason after nearly half a century Esperanto has secured only a few thousand adherents.

Basic English which came to be constructed some ten years back by Mr. C. K. Ogden to solve the same problem has certain advantages over all the preceding attempts. It is neither so artificial nor so revolutionary. It takes advantage of the fact that English is already on the way to becoming a second language of the civilized races of mankind, being at present the natural or governmental language of nearly 500,000,000 persons. Further the object of Basic is not merely to serve as an international auxiliary language but also to provide a rational introduction to normal English, which may profitably be made a basis of normal English teaching

either for children or for adults. It is an English in which 850 words do all the work of the 20,000 which are normally used by English-speaking persons in their everyday life, and it has been formed by taking out everything which is not necessary to the sense. All its vocabulary can be printed on a single sheet of business notepaper (so that the entire vocabulary is conveniently visible at a glance), and it can be learnt in less than 30 hours.

Since its publicity in 1928 the system has enlisted wide support. After only ten years the central organization has its representatives in more than twenty countries and the interest is everywhere increasing. More than 100 books in and about Basic are now available in print. Last year the 13th All-India Education Conference resolved: "That this Conference desires that the possibilities of more extensive use of Basic English in India should be explored." There cannot be any doubt about its usefulness in Indian schools. Tender boys can be saved a lot of trouble in getting introduced to English.

The present book offers all the relevant informations about Basic and answers the criticisms which are usually levelled against it, mostly without adequate informations. It also provides a guide to the growing literature on Basic and gives a clear idea of the way in which the system differs from other attempts to simplify language. About half the book is written in Basic which quickly shows the advantages or the disadvantages of the new system as compared with the old language. The book is sure to help the cause of Basic.

SPIRITUAL DOSES. BY MAHATMA SHAHANSHAH. *Darbarchand Bros. & Co., Sri Ram Road, Lucknow. Pp. 31. Price As. 4.*

It is an interesting book of 16 short English poems on a number of spiritual subjects.

HINDI

PRĀCHYA AUR PĀSHCHĀTYA. BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Dhantoli, Nagpur, C. P. Pp. 165. Price As. 8.*

Prāchya O Pashchātya by the great Swami Vivekananda is one the famous books in Bengali. Here the Swami lays bare with his characteristic understanding and penetrating insight the genius and character of the civilizations of the East and the West, which he had an opportunity to study at close quarters. The acute analysis, the

robust and vigorous style and the plentiful witty and humorous observations contained in it make the work an extremely fascinating one. The Ramakrishna Ashrama, Dhantoli, Nagpur, has done a great service to the Hindi-speaking public by bringing out this Hindi translation of the work. The original charm and vigour of the style have been retained. The book is sure to prove an acquisition to the Hindi literature of to-day.

HARIPADANJALI. BY LALA MUNSHILALJI VAISHYA. *Published by Radhakrishna Vaishya, Secretary, Central Board of Revenue, New Delhi. Pp. 123. Price As. 8.*

It is a good collection of Hindi Bhajans by the late Lala Munshilalji Vaishya who was a man of great devotion.

1. **BHAJAN KIRTAN.** *Pp. 245. Price Re. 1-4 as.*

2. **CHAURASI CHHEDAN.** *Pp. 34. Price 1 anna.* BY MAHATMA SHAHANSHAH. *Nanak*

Prasad, Librarian, Engineering Library, Kaisarbagh, Lucknow.

1. *Bhajan Kirtan*, as its name shows, contains a fair number of devotional songs in Hindi arranged under seven different heads.

2. *Chaurasi Chhedan* is a hymn of 84 verses addressed to God. Its popularity is shown by the fact that it has already run into 13 editions.

MARATHI

CHICAGO DHARMAPARISHADENTIL VIVEKANANDANCHIN VYAKHYANEN. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Dhantoli, Nagpur, C. P. Pp. 49. Price 4 as.*

The Chicago addresses of Swami Vivekananda hardly need any introduction to the public. The present Marathi translation of them will no doubt be welcome.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

We are requested to announce that Srimat Swami Suddhananda has been appointed President, Srimat Swami Virajananda Vice-President and Swami Madhavananda Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. These changes have been necessitated by the passing away of Srimat Swami Vijnanananda, the late President.

SWAMI NIRMALANANDA

We record with sorrow the passing away of Swami Nirmalananda on Tuesday, the 26th of April last, at Ottapalam in Malabar. He was nearly 73 years of age.

Swami Nirmalananda came of the reputed Dutt family of Bosepara, Baghbazar, Calcutta. He was known in early life as Tulsi Charan Dutt, and his father's name was Devanath Dutt. While quite a boy, Tulsi Charan had the rare good fortune of seeing Sri Ramakrishna at the house of Balaram Bose at Baghbazar. After the Master's passing away he joined the monastery at Baranagore and came to be known under the monastic cognomen of Swami Nirmalananda. He also came to be loved by Swami Vivekananda.

In 1903 he was sent to the U. S. A. to help Swami Abhedananda in his work there. He returned in 1906 and spent a few years in North India in religious practices and in making pilgrimages to various holy places. In 1909 he was sent to Bangalore from the Belur Math to assist in the running of the Ashrama there, which had been founded by Swami Ramakrishnananda. For twenty years he was the head of this Ashrama, and during this period he spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in various parts of South India and started several Ashramas in Malabar. He had an impressive personality, and he was gifted with a rare power of eloquence. He leaves behind numerous devotees and admirers and disciples.

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA'S TOUR IN NORTH AND WEST INDIA

In the early summer of this year Swami Pavitrananda, President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, made a fairly extensive and valuable propaganda tour through some parts of northern and western India. During this period of itinerancy he was successful everywhere in creating among the public he came into contact with, a deep interest in the message of Sri Ramakrishna and the aims

and ideals of the Mission founded after his name.

The Swami left Calcutta on the 12th of March last at the invitation of His Highness, the Maharaja of Morvi to meet him there. On his way to that place, the Swami halted at Delhi for a few days and delivered two lectures at the local Ashrama on the 19th and the 20th of March on the occasion of the 103rd birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. He spoke one day in Bengali and another day in English on the life and teachings of the Master at two large meetings presided over by Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and Swami Viswananda and created a deep impression on the audience.

From Delhi the Swami went straight to Morvi, reaching the place on the 23rd of March. The private secretary to His Highness was present at the station to greet him. During his brief sojourn there he was very cordially received and hospitably treated by the Maharaja. His Highness is a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda and the Mission founded by him, and he takes almost a personal interest in the work of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. In the course of his personal contact with Swami Pavitrananda, His Highness evinced a very keen interest in, and great sympathy for, the service rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission to humanity at large. The Maharaja is greatly attracted by the ideal of service, and the Swami was much impressed by the measures taken in this direction in His Highness's State. The Swami also met a number of high officials at Morvi, who showed great eagerness to be enlightened about the Ramakrishna Mission.

Leaving Morvi on the 26th of March the Swami proceeded next to Rajkot, where he delivered a public lecture in English on the 3rd of April on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna at a meeting organized to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. The lecture was highly appreciated by the audience. At Rajkot a large number of persons came to meet him and became interested in the Mission from intimate talks with him.

From Rajkot he went on a pilgrimage to Dwarka and Prabhas, in the course of which he had occasion to come in contact with a number of influential persons. At Dwarka he met an Indian merchant of East Africa, who had a long talk with the Swami about the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and expressed the great need

of starting a few centres of the Mission in that country. The cordiality, sympathy and eagerness of all whom he met bespoke the high esteem in which the Ramakrishna Mission is held by many.

Leaving Rajkot he next came to Baroda on the 7th of April and stayed there up to the 10th. At this place he met a large number of high-placed and influential persons and enlightened them about the Mission through informal talks. He had also had occasion once during this period to give a sort of short, informal discourse to a select group of persons who came to meet him. He had further to grant interviews to numerous callers who felt interested in the work of the Mission. Through all these the Swami helped to create a very favourable ground there for the rapid spread of the ideas and ideals of the Mission in the near future.

He left Baroda on the 10th and reached Bombay on that day. At Bombay he stayed up to the 24th of April. During this period the Swami went to Poona and, on the personal invitation of Prof. Karve, the great pioneer of women's education in India, he visited the Women's University and attended the meeting organized to celebrate Prof. Karve's 81st birthday anniversary. At Poona he met the Secretary of the Servants of India Society who had invited him to tea. The Secretary who had been to Africa referred to the missionary activities of some of the Indian organizations there and stressed the great need of sending a few workers of the Ramakrishna Mission to that country as well as to other colonies for the purpose of preaching the true aims and ideals of Hindu culture and civilization. He felt that the Mission would thereby be doing a great service not only to that country but to India as well.

Leaving Bombay on the 24th of April he came next to Mount Abu on the 25th at the invitation of His Highness the Thakore Saheb of Limbdi. The Swami had been invited earlier to the State, but due to certain unforeseen reasons the meeting had to be arranged at Abu. During the three day's stay there the Thakore Saheb took special and personal interest for the Swami's comfort. A man of deeply religious disposition, the present Thakore Saheb is, like his father, a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Pavitrananda met His Highness daily and had very intimate talks with him on various religious matters and was

impressed by his friendly sympathy for the Mission.

At Abu the Swami received the news of the passing away of Swami Vijnananandaji and left the place immediately though he had intended to stay there for some time more. He reached Calcutta on the 29th of April and returned to Mayavati after a short stay there on the 16th of May. It is really pleasing to note that everywhere he was successful in his attempt at creating among the public he met, an interest in the aims and ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

29TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING PROGRESS OF WORK IN 1937

The 29th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held on Good Friday at the premises of the Belur Math, the Headquarters of the Mission, with Swami Madhavananda in the chair. A large number of monastic and lay members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and passed. Srimat Swami Virajananda, the Secretary, then presented the report for the year 1937. The following extracts from it clearly indicate the progress of the work done by the Mission exclusive of the work done by the Ramakrishna Math and its branches in India and the centres in N. & S. America, England and Europe.

CENTRES: There are at present 100 centres of the Math and Mission in India and abroad. At the end of 1937, the total number of centres of the Mission in India, Burma, Ceylon and Straits Settlements was 48.

ACTIVITIES: The Mission conducted both Temporary Relief and Permanent Work. Temporary Relief Work was done in times of distress caused by flood, fire and small-pox in Puri and Bankura District.

PHILANTHROPIC: 29 out of the 48 centres conducted one or more of three kinds of work, *viz.*, Indoor Hospital work, Outdoor Dispensary work and Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds.

In all there are 7 Indoor Hospitals including the Maternity Hospital and Child Welfare Centre at Bhowanipore, Calcutta, and there are 30 Dispensaries including the Tuberculosis Dispensary at New Delhi. The philanthropic centres are flung in different parts of India, and some of them are situated in Benares, Hardwar, Brindaban,

Allahabad and other places of pilgrimage, and in cosmopolitan cities and towns such as Rangoon, Bombay, Cawnpore and Lucknow. The Sevashrama at Benares is the most prominent. The Rangoon centre treated 2,39,369 cases in 1937.

Philanthropic work was done also by rural centres such as Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Jayrambati in Bankura and Sargachhi in Murshidabad.

The Indoor Hospitals treated 9007 patients in 1937, as against 7707 in 1936. The Outdoor Dispensaries at the Headquarters and Branch Centres treated 11,37,794 cases as against 10,29,349 in 1936, the new and the repeated cases being in the proportion of 2 to 3 nearly.

Regular and Occasional Service of various kinds was done by 30 centres.

EDUCATIONAL: The Educational Work of the Mission falls mainly into two divisions, *viz.* (1) Boys' Schools, Girls' Schools and Mixed Schools, the classes ranging from the Matriculation standard to the Primary, as well as Night Schools, Adult Schools and Industrial Schools; (2) Students' Homes, Hostels and Orphanages.

Mass education for adults and juveniles through Day and Night Schools formed a feature as usual.

Out of the 48 centres 34 conducted some type of educational work or another. In all the centres together there were 19 Students' Homes, 4 Orphanages, 3 Residential High Schools, 6 High Schools, 4 M. E. Schools, 46 Vernacular Schools, 2 Sanskrit *Chatushpatis* or *Tols*, 9 Night Schools and 3 Industrial Schools. The total strength of these 96 Institutions in India, Ceylon and Straits Settlements was 8,250 in 1937.

Rural educational work was done by such centres as Sarisha near Diamond Harbour, Contai in Midnapore, Habiganj and Sylhet in Assam. The centre at Sarisha has nearly 500 boys and girls in its Schools.

The Industrial Schools taught one or more of the arts, crafts and industries which may be grouped under the following heads; (1) Mechanical and Automobile Engineering, (2) Spinning, weaving, dyeing, calicoprinting and tailoring, (3) Cane-work, (4) Carpentry, cabinet-making, (5) Shoe-making. In the Industrial School at Madras the Mechanical and Automobile Engineering course covers a period of five years and is recognised by the Government. The centre at Habiganj conducts two shoe-factories to provide better

training to the cobbler boys of the locality, and runs two Co-operative Credit Societies for the benefit of the cobblers.

The Sister Nivedita Girls' High School at Calcutta had 529 girls in 1937. The educational centre at Madras is the largest. It had 1,784 pupils in 1937, in all its institutions. The Mission Residential High Schools at Deoghar and Parianaickenpalayam (Coimbatore), and the Students' Home at Dum Dum near Calcutta also did valuable work.

LIBRARIES & READING ROOMS: There were more than 55 Libraries and as many Reading Rooms in the Mission centres. The Mission Society at Rangoon did excellent library work and had an attendance of over 34,000 in its reading rooms in 1937. The Students' Home at Madras had more than 21,000 volumes in all its libraries. The total number of books in the Mission centres may be roughly computed to be over 65,000 in the year under review.

MISSIONARY: The monastic members went on propaganda tours in India and abroad. A Swami was deputed on invitation to Fiji, and another to Paris, where they did successful preaching work. The teachings of the Vedanta as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were disseminated chiefly through the English periodicals the *Prabuddha Bharata* (Mayavati), the *Vedanta Kesari* (Madras), the *Message of the East* (Boston), the *Vedanta* (Switzerland) and the *Voice of India* (Hollywood) and through the *Udbodhan* in Bengali and *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil, as well as through translations of the Sanskrit scriptures, and the publications of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature in English and some Continental languages.

More than 2,500 classes were held and more than 250 meetings convened during the year under review.

There are colonies for the Harijans and other backward classes conducted in Trichur (Cochin), Shella (Khassia Hills) and other places by the monks of the Mission.

EXPENDITURE: The total expenditure for the Mission work in 1937 was Rs. 5,74,963-3-5.

THE IDEAL OF SERVICE: Swami Vivekananda, the Founder of the Mission, sounded the clarion call for self-dedication and service of humanity, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. Such a noble ideal alone is capable of giving peace and light in the world today with its clash and conflict,

darkness and despair. Will not the young men of India respond to the call?

VIRAJANANDA,

Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission.

Belur Math,
15-4-38.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA, PERIYANAICKENPALAYAM, COIMBATORE

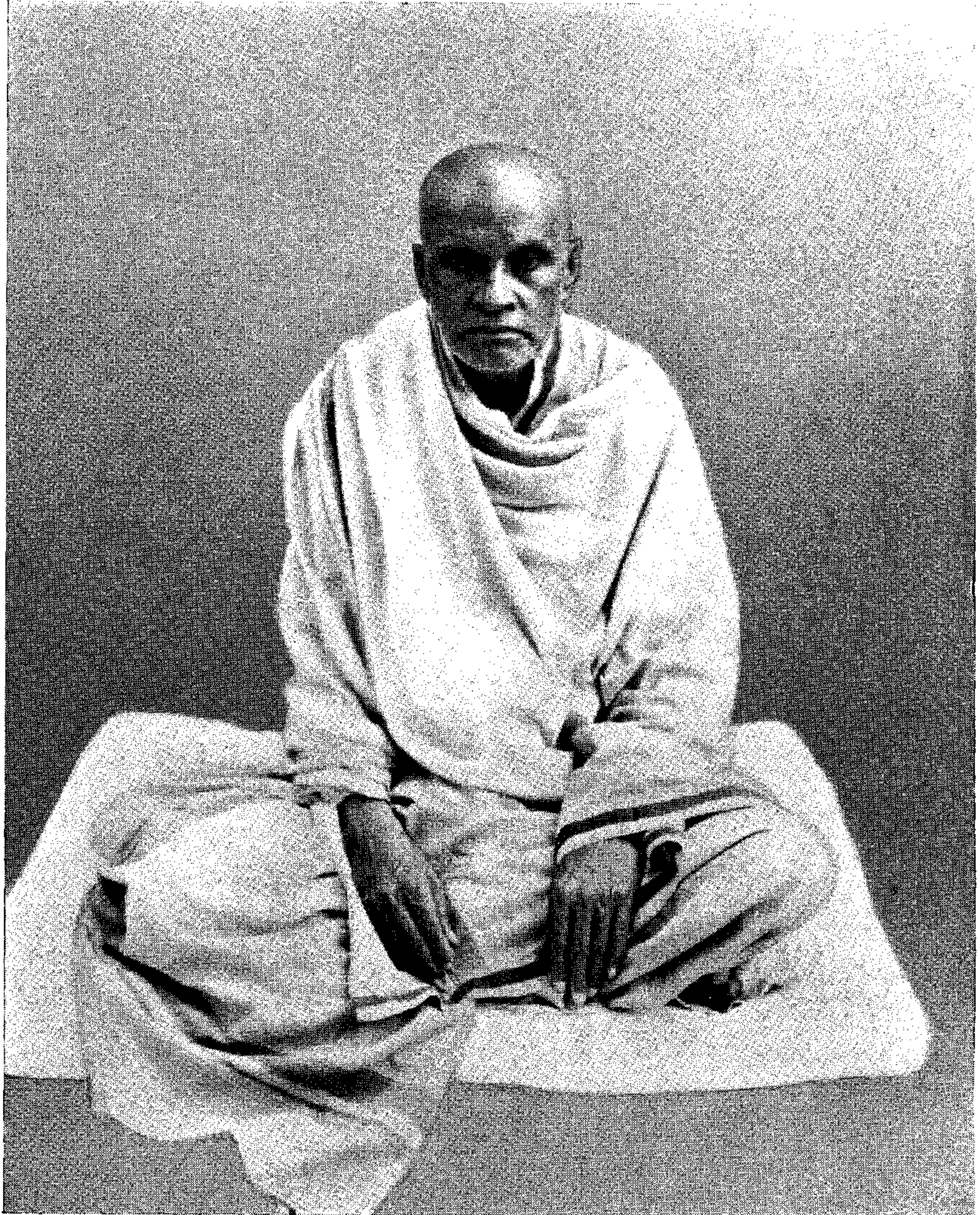
REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1937

The report of the R. K. Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore, for 1937, shows a marked progress in the different branches of its activity. With a modest beginning as a boarding home with only 3 children in 1930, this institution has now grown into a Residential High School with 92 boys, and a 'Rural Service Section' extending to the surrounding villages. The authorities of the Vidyalaya are also trying to work out the Wardha Educational Scheme in their own humble way and time-table has been reorganized to give more time to manual training. Everyday two periods of 40 minutes are allotted for this purpose, and the result hitherto shown has been very encouraging.

As before, the Vidyalaya continues to be managed in a great measure by the children themselves. The *Bala Bharati* (manuscript magazine) has vastly improved, and the Bala Bharathi Day was celebrated with due enthusiasm in the year under review. Besides, the birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji, the Vidyalaya Day and the Navaratri were celebrated, and a small rural exhibition was organized on the last occasion.

Two study-circles, one at Vellakinar and the other at Idigarai were run under the auspices of this institution and the attendance at these study circles was fairly satisfactory. A residential summer school for training rural workers was also opened in the month of May and the total strength of the school was 38. The workers of the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya took magic lantern and projector with their educational films to the villages for the education of the adult.

Various sports, social service during the Karamadai festival, and medical aid in times of the outbreak of epidemics were also organized under the auspices of the Vidyalaya. This useful institution deserves substantial help from the generous public.



SWAMI SUDDHANANDA MAHARAJ

THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

**Direct Disciple of Swami Vivekananda. Age 66 years. Joined
the Order in 1897. Secretary 1927-1934. Vice-President 1937-1938.**