

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LIV

OCTOBER 1940

No. 10



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BOMBAY, 30 JANUARY 1927

The sixty-fifth birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in the day with great festivities at the local *ashrama*. At night, after the evening worship, the *sanyasis* and *brahmacharis* of the *ashrama* collected in Mahapurush Maharaj's room and expressed a desire to hear from him about Swami Vivekananda. He briefly related the events from the day of his first acquaintance with Swamiji up to the time of nursing the Master at Cossipore Garden House and the establishment of the monastery at Baranagore soon after. When the narration was over a *sannyasi* asked: Maharaj, were you and Swamiji ever together during your *parivrajaka* (the wandering) days?

Mahapurushji: Yes, I was with him sometimes and also we met occasionally at different places during our wanderings. Once *brahmachari* Haran of Kashi and I went out on a pilgrimage to the sacred places in the *Uttarakhanda* (a portion of the Western

Himalayas and the adjacent plains). On our way to Vrindavan we got down at the Railway junction of Hathras, where, we came to know, Swamiji had been staying with a railway officer. He was suffering from fever. On hearing it we went to visit Swamiji. He was very glad to see us so unexpectedly. In spite of the fever he made so much fun, cut so many jokes, and was so full of delight and mirth! Two or three days after we had arrived his fever left, but the body had grown very weak. He asked us to return after visiting Vrindavan. It was decided that on coming back from Vrindavan we should start for Hrishikesh with Swamiji, and we also thought that he would become healthy and strong meanwhile.

H—and I went to Vrindavan. A few days passed there in great joy. Is Vrindavan an ordinary place? It was the stage of a Divine drama. The spiritual atmosphere of the place itself is unique. From Vrindavan we went to Shyamkunda and Radhakunda. At a place on the road Br. H—had left his bundle of things and gone for answering a call of nature.

On return he found the bundle stolen. The little money we two had we used to carry on our person, but H—had kept separately a ten-rupee note inside his bundle. So he felt much grieved when the bundle was stolen and became afterwards very dejected. When next I met Swamiji and told him the story, he laughed loudly and made much fun. On returning to Hathras from Vrindavan I found that Swamiji's fever had relapsed. He was running a high temperature and had become very thin and weak due to repeated attacks from it. I then decided to take him to Calcutta instead of his staying there. He also agreed to that. Accordingly letters were written to Calcutta and the *Math* giving all the news. Now all the railway servants and other important people of Hathras had meanwhile become very much devoted to Swamiji. Wherever he went he would draw to him groups of men. Whoever talked to him once, became completely fascinated by him—such was his personality. They would not allow Swamiji to go. Finally we were able to persuade them to agree, and borrowing some money from a superior officer I started for the *Math* with him. This made H—very much displeased with me. His complaint was, why did I not go with him to Hrishikesh? He began to say to me: 'You have become a monk, why then cherish so much *maya* (attraction) still? Will it not do at all if you don't go with Swamiji? It is not good for a *sadhu* to be so much under *maya*!' and so on. I replied to him, 'Well, brother! we are, of course, *sadhus*, as you know, and should have no particular attraction for anybody—true. Yet we have still some *maya* left for our brother-disciples, and that is going to remain. This is the teaching of our Master. It is he who has forged this bond of mutual affection between us brother-disciples. Particularly, Swamiji is our crest-jewel. We do not hesitate at all to lay down our life for his sake. We shall consider ourselves blessed if we can serve him even with the blood of our heart. How can you know what Swamiji is?'

Listening to my words H—remained mum. I made arrangements for H—'s going to Hrishikesh through the devotees of Hathras. They bought his ticket and saw him off at the station.

I started for Calcutta with Swamiji. Meanwhile Niranjana Swami had left the *Math* for Hathras on hearing of Swamiji's illness. I think our trains crossed each other at Allahabad; none of us saw the other. On reaching the *Math* Swamiji was examined by Dr. Bipin babu. Under his treatment Swamiji recovered completely. . . .

Later on, after many wanderings, Swamiji went to Hrishikesh with a few of his brother-disciples. Days and nights were passed in hard *tapasya*, meditation, repetition of God's name and in discussion of Vedanta. Swamiji used to say that he never had such joy in life. It was the rainy season. Other *sadhus* would not be there generally then. The *satra* (alms-house for *sadhus*) was the only source of food. In those days Hrishikesh was a place truly favourable for *tapasya*. But now it has grown into a small township. After sometime passed in severe *tapasya* and discussion of Vedanta, Swamiji again fell sick of fever. Hari Maharaj, Sarat Maharaj and some other brother-disciples were with Swamiji. The fever began to rise continuously. No doctor or *Kaviraj* were there at that time. So all became very anxious for Swamiji. One day suddenly it so happened that the fever, after it had gone up much, came down gradually till Swamiji's body—the whole of it except the head which remained a little warm—became cold as ice and the pulse stopped. All speech and movement were lost—no hope was left of his reviving. All were at their wits' end and began to pray to the Master yearningly: 'O Master save us from this peril, heal Naren. And if You take him away, do not leave us behind but take us also.' All were in a great difficulty, but there was hardly anything to be done. . . .

One among the brothers went to the Ganges side. A very old *sadhu*, belonging to that



country and a permanent resident of Hrishikesh, was at that time bathing there. He asked that brother-disciple: 'Why do you look so downcast?' The latter related all about Swamiji. Thereupon the *sadhu* came to see Swamiji and after examining him thoroughly said: 'Do not be worried. I am giving you a medicine, grind it with *peepul* and honey and apply the paste on his tongue. You will see that he will quickly recover.' So saying he went back to his cottage and gave a medicine that looked like ash. Immediately the other ingredients were procured and the medicine, after preparation, was applied on Swamiji's tongue as the *sadhu* had directed. And strange to say, soon after the application of the medicine Swamiji's body began to warm up and he felt much better. Thereafter listening to all that had happened Swamiji said, 'Why did you go to give me medicine? I was in great bliss.'

Swamiji gradually came round a little. It was, however, decided that he should go elsewhere since it was by no means proper to stay furthermore in that terrific rainy and malarial season at Hrishikesh. But because Swamiji was still so weak, the problem was how he could move to elsewhere. At that time the king of Tehri Garhwal happened to come to that region on some business. S. J. Raghunath Shastri, a brother of Haraprasad Shastri, was then the private secretary of the Tehri king. On being informed of the whole affair, he arranged for a bullock cart from Hrishikesh to Haridwar. Halting at Haridwar for a few days, Swamiji came to Meerut. His brother-disciples accompanied him to that place also. Meerut is a healthy place. He came round completely after two or three months' stay there. One day during that period he said, 'This time I have learnt a great lesson. Henceforward I shall not be with my brother-disciples but will remain alone. What troubles you had to undergo for my sake! You had all been out to do *tapasya*, but, look, without being able to do that you had to remain occupied in nursing me. Again, should any-

one of you fall sick, I shall have to nurse him more than that. Love for brother-disciples is also a kind of bondage. This bondage too has to be cut.' He carried it out too. Since then till the eve of his departure for America, he travelled all over India alone—nobody got any news of him.

Sannyasin: Were you at the *Math*, when Swamiji passed away?

Mahapurushji: No, I was not there then. Ten or twelve days before that Swamiji had sent me, after a lot of inducement, to Kashi for preaching Vedanta there. I went to Kashi toward the end of June. When Swamiji had been to Kashi for the last time, I was also with him. At that time the Maharaja of Bhinga presented to Swamiji five hundred rupees so that he might start an institution there for the preaching of Vedanta. The said Maharaja had great veneration for Swamiji. He had left his estate in old age and come to live as a *vanaprastha* in a garden-house he had made for the purpose near the Durga Temple; he would not go out of the building compound. On learning that Swamiji had come to Kashi, he sent one day lots of fruits and sweets to Swamiji through one of his officers and humbly invited him to come to his house. He also sent word through the officer that because he had taken the vow never to go out of his compound, he could not go to pay his respects to Swamiji's feet personally.

Pleased with the Maharaja's devotion, Swamiji said, 'We are *sadhus*, why should't we go, when he has invited us? We shall of course go.' He went to the Maharaja's place as invited. I also went with him. The Maharaja received Swamiji with great devotion at the gate and led him into the house. In the course of conversation he said, 'I have been watching your activities for a long time and have felt very much delighted by them. Your aim is very noble. Your presence makes one feel that like Buddha, Shankara, and other incarnations who came down to earth to re-establish Religion, you also have been born



for that purpose. My heart's desire is that your wish may bear practical fruit.'

He gave at that time five hundred rupees to Swamiji with the request that some preaching work might be done with it. Swamiji did not accept the money at the time and said that he would think over it afterwards. But only a few days after that the Maharaja sent the five hundred rupees to Swamiji, requesting him again to start some work in Kashi. Swamiji accepted the money then. . . .

On returning to the *Math*, Swamiji first asked Sarat Maharaj to go to Kashi. Sarat Maharaj did not agree to that, saying 'Kashi won't suit me.' So he urged me repeatedly to go to Kashi. His health was very bad then, for his diabetes had taken a severe turn. I

used to see to his taking medicine etc. and looked after his nursing. So I did not then go leaving his service. Afterwards, when he recovered to a great extent, he sent me to Kashi.

A Sannyasi: Referring to the Kashi *ashrama*, Master Mahashay (M.) used to say: 'See, the Kashi *ashrama* has come to life through Sivananda's meditations.'

Mahapurushji: How can that be? It is all due to His wish, His grace. The Master's ideas will spread more day by day. This is the power of the *Yugadharmā*, the religion of the time. Consider, for instance, Bombay in the beginning; but now so many things are taking place! Still more will come in the future. All is His play.

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## THE WESTERN QUESTION (VIII)

BY THE EDITOR

All that has gone before in the series has made clear the scheme of thought in accordance with which India's past history should be redesigned. Our civilization has developed on and from a broad spiritual basis; a deep spiritual element runs through the entire length of the story. It is this which makes the thread of unity. If it is lost sight of, the story will fall to pieces without connection between them, and will not be constructed as a whole. The spiritual view gives an insight into the nature of the problems India has been facing since vedic times and also the character of the solution she has made. It will give us the right perspective, where many things that still loom big in our eyes will shrink in stature, others which look small and insignificant will expand and come to dominate the landscape. That will naturally alter many of our judgments about India.

Each generation is apt to interpret the past in terms of its own ephemeral scheme of

thought. Such ideas do not yield sound judgments about civilizations. We need something that is fixed and constant and to which events can only approximate. Every age tends to worship its own peculiar achievements, its man-made idols, as something of absolute value. The Greeks passionately clung to the idea of the sovereign city state as of permanent worth, the Roman Empire was an ideal which inspired countless political theorists and actors in the middle ages in Europe. In our time, around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Western achievement as a whole came to represent something absolute, classic, and standard to be imitated by the rest of the world in every plane. The fascination still lingers among some rootless Westernized people to be found everywhere in the world. The catastrophic happenings of this century have however changed West's view about itself and has revealed to its best minds that there is something basically wrong in the concep-



tion of a secular scientific civilization. There are only two roads along which civilizations can travel, one leads to God, the other to Venus and Mammon. No high moral language can long obscure the true character of a godless culture. And Venus and Mammon, like Moloch, devour their victims whole.

The West itself has become critical of many of its conceptions and achievements since the Renaissance when it tore itself away from its Christian past, both good and bad. There is now consequently a change of emphasis from material to spiritual values. It is realized that material achievements can be worthwhile only in a spiritual framework of thought. It is clear that a person can be an efficient mechanic and materially well-off, while remaining a barbarian in all other departments of the soul. For this reason some of the things acclaimed in the last century as the greatest new events in history, like the nation state or political democracy, are not viewed with the same emotion by the educated person of today. A civilization, it is felt, must mean something more and deeper than technical intelligence, diplomatic skill, or even political ability.

Civilization is a process, a constant dynamic movement of society towards a spiritual goal. Its final aim is an attainment of the soul which we find manifest in the lives of saints and prophets. Thus, Vedanta alone can rightly interpret history and save human events from becoming a devastating futility, a purposeless 'hurrying and scurrying' of matter in the empty canvas of space-time. This vedantic Truth is not a conclusion of the human understanding but an experience of the heart open to all.

All civilizations represent in the last analysis certain spiritual truths. If a civilization is able to retain its original spiritual inspiration and can, when necessary, deepen and broaden its conceptions of Truth, it continues to live and survive all challenges; if not, it dies. Such deaths are not the results of blows inflicted from outside, but are suicidal, arising

from a failure of the soul. A culture dies for lack of spiritual vitamins, by transferring its allegiance to false gods from true ones, and not for want of material possession or power. Very often there are material and racial continuities even in the same geographical area while a civilization may be said to have been extinguished. This is gradually made clear by the adoption of new styles of living and thinking and expressions in place of the old ones by the same people.

Many civilizations have broken down because they were lured by material success into the naked worship of Mammon and Venus. Others have gone to pieces because the spiritual ideas they represented, while valuable for a time, proved narrow in the long run in the face of new social forces. In other words they proved inadequate to circumvent the conflicts of groups, races and cultures. Contrariwise, a civilization, in spite of its broad conceptions, may come to grief, if its ideas do not descend from the moral to the active plane. The idea has to be creative. Of course it is too much to expect of a people or a society that it should uniformly and continuously proceed along the line of progress. There is no progress in a straight line. Inside and outside challenges are continuous, for the very solutions of one time become the challenges of another. (An instance in point is the caste-system.) Societies, like individuals, suffer from periodic sicknesses and breakdowns, but in the case of societies the breakdown need not, on the analogy of a society to an organism,—which is false—inevitably deepen into a complete disaster. If, however, the creative spark is not entirely lost, it is enough to ensure the survival of a civilization, for then it can at any moment be kindled into a bright flame.

The basic problem of a civilization is, on this showing, how to lift up the average level of the masses forming the social rear-guard to the height attained by its creative minority. The creative minority is represented by the community's spiritual geniuses who are the spearheads of the spiritual evolution of



humanity—the *pathikrits*, path-makers, to whom social leadership rightly belongs. This idea has been graphically expressed in India by saying that the fundamental social task is that of transforming the natural man (*shudra*), who stands at one end of the social scale, into a spiritual sage (*brahmana*), standing at the other. Such moral perfection cannot be achieved at a bound but only through a gradual and continuous process.

The social problem thus reduces itself to one of effective communication. There are two ways of putting spiritual truths across to the common man. One is the method of direct personal communication from teacher to disciple; this is the most effective way. The *Upanishads* say that one can receive the highest wisdom only from an illumined teacher. Plato repeats the same thing when he says that philosophic truths can be transmitted only through direct communication. Though this is the only true and effective method there are unfortunately insurmountable obstacles in the way of its wide practice. Apart from other things, those who are to be so transformed do not all stand on a level, nor are they ready for the same thing at the same time. Unalloyed truth is too remote from the common understanding and a high degree of self-determination cannot be expected of the vast majority of mankind. One set of rules cannot apply to all and it is futile to adopt a language that is too lofty for the average man. For this reason the general social method has inevitably to be one of graded instruction through myths and institutions of various types. Pure truth has to be mixed with a heavy dose of common prejudices. The social drill consisting of suitable psychic artifacts, ideas and institutions, is an inevitable necessity. It necessarily means some degree of compulsion. It is easy, theoretically, to decry compulsion but not difficult to realize that it cannot be avoided, at least as far as we are able to see into the future.

The second graded method of social drill, however, can successfully operate if only there

is a real creative minority in the society and not a fossilized group trying to dominate over the rest and claiming positions and privileges which it has ceased to merit. A creative minority's hold on the people springs from its deep love and understanding of human needs, its spiritual charm and its acts of service; when these are lacking mere compulsion from top fails to hold the society together. Further, new forces are constantly coming into play in society from within and without. These call for fresh adjustments in the social situation from time to time. The time process converts old institutions into flagrant anachronisms, and unless we change our society in consonance with the needs of the time the overdue changes are sure to come catastrophically through revolutions which may sweep away on their tide both what is good and what is bad. These needs of the social dynamics require the constant services of creative individuals and classes. A civilization must be in a state of perpetual renewal.

The role of the creative minority in India has been played throughout her long history, above all, by the men of renunciation. Swami Vivekananda has magnificently summed up the constant social ideals of India in the two words, renunciation and service. In early days the brahmins, devoted to scholarship and spirituality, and rejecting material profit and power, played a substantial part in this respect. But this can hardly be predicated of them as a class in later times, though a handful of them could always be found faithful to all the virtues expected of them. Orderly social progress in India, apart from the inevitable element of human wilfulness, has repeatedly been thwarted by causes proceeding from sources other than national. Even Shankara laments in his *Brahmasutra Bhashya* that the old *varnashrama dharma* has broken down in his time. The old *varnashrama* order represented a complete social ideal. The vital element in the scheme which is valid for all times is that it conceives of life as a pilgrimage of the soul, in stages, to spiritual perfection



and society as a field of cooperative human action in which the different functions, *naturally* divided, maintain a just social balance. The ideal abolishes the dualism between spiritual perfection and social improvement. It provides a practical object of moral activity in the form of social service. True life is an art in the sense it is naturally creative of some value. An ideal social system is one in which each member lives by producing what he really likes to produce. Our lives are fruitful and beautiful in the measure in which we are able to express our true natures in acts of service and in harmony with others. A sense of worthwhileness in whatever we do always goes with true living. The old idea has been generally lost due to repeated shocks over more than a fifteen hundred years, so that only a caricature of it survives today. Unfortunately, in modern times people have gone from one extreme to the other. Promiscuity, which is a sign of loss of natural *elan* and consequently of decadence, has replaced natural differentiation of aptitudes and styles over wide areas. In modern society nothing and nobody seem to be in the right place. A legislator lays down or alters institutions and rules for a society of which he has little understanding and for which he often has only hatred. A man of commerce who fattens himself by taking advantage of the soulless methods made possible by the present economic system assumes the role of a social and moral leader. And so on. New social and economic forces disengaged by democracy and industrialism have brought on top men whose ideas and activities menace the very structure of civilized life. All this can only be remedied by a creative minority working from the bottom up and so making national leadership reflective of society's new needs and eternal values. . . .

The above is meant to be some sort of a preparation for making a right approach to the period of Indian history known as Islamic and extending roughly from the eleventh century down to the late eighteenth. This will be useful since without some conception

of a true frame of reference, the deep undercurrent of Indian civilization, and her peculiar problems and trials, we shall not be in a position to make a correct estimate of the events. The point becomes clear when we turn to the current accounts of the period which are extremely unsatisfying and inadequate, not for lack of materials, but for want of a right perspective and sound judgments. Things are viewed from a wrong angle or conceived in narrow terms, and the emphasis is generally wrong. This, as we have hinted earlier, was due to the uncritical acceptance of Western values. The measuring rods were taken from the West, while the deeper tides and the abiding values of Indian life were lost sight of. Attention was mainly directed to finding ideas and objects which could be easily forced into a Western framework. The vastness and complexities of Indian history were hidden by the convenient fiction—'India'. India was therefore thought as similar to a modern Western country or nation. Further, Indian history came to be patterned after the history of Europe with its three divisions, ancient, medieval, and modern. It can be seen that there is a contradiction between the two foregoing notions, but this was not taken notice of. The 'Hindu' period was equated with the period of antiquity (Graeco-Roman), the so-called Islamic period was held as an equivalent, a long-drawn equivalent, of the middle ages of Europe, and the British connection was regarded as the point at which the modern era began. The conception of a living, continuous Indian civilization going through ups and downs, ever renewing itself and developing consistently, was lost. The ancient past was regarded as 'dead' having only an antiquarian value. It was a sort of classical India conceived in terms of classical Greece and Rome. It was no doubt admirable in many respects, but its ideas were hardly applicable in our time. And admiration was bestowed upon it in the measure its ideals and institutions approximated to those of the modern West. The extraordinary enthusiasm displayed



on the discovery of the Kautilyan *Arthashastra* early in this century can be explained on this basis. India had a Machiavelli nearly two thousand years before the true one in Europe. Why, this brought Indians of the past nearer to the modern heart ! Even books on Indian philosophy written in our time strongly remind us of the tendency to force almost everything into the Western framework of ideas. It will not be untrue to say that a large part of modern Indian studies is a vast apology for Indian culture. The theme can be expanded into a voluminous essay. All this will of course disappear and will be replaced by more objective studies, but that will require deeper understanding and years of patient labour. A whole tradition of Indological research built up on a superficial basis will have to be patiently and slowly replaced by something more fresh and new and adequate. . . .

We shall only make a few most general observations regarding the period in this light ; more than that is not possible here.

First of all a few words about the terms Islamic period and Islamic invasions as applied to Indian history. We often use terms or notice things or aspects of them for convenience of study and analysis, but after a time we begin to think that these are the only realities or things which exist or the only and chief ways in which things can be viewed. The Islamic period and Islamic invasions in connection with India are such terms. To take the latter first : there were many invasions from outside during this period, namely, Arab, Turkish, Afghan, Mongol and Pathan etc. And of each of these racial or tribal categories there were more than one invasion. Except for the fact that these invaders (barring a few Mongols) shared the creed of Islam and came, some of them, with a few elements of civilization, they are not to be distinguished from the 'barbarian' invaders of the earlier epochs—the Huns, Scythians, Parthians and others. The Islamic invasions form part of the story of a long chain of invasions extend-

ing roughly over two thousand years. Of these later invaders, the Arabs, who were the first to appear on the Indian soil and who made the least impression politically speaking, were in possession of some kind of original civilization, the rest were brutal, stupid, and uncouth with the veneer of an adopted culture, but superb in military tactics and fighting qualities. The Arabs learnt a lot, first directly and then indirectly, from India. Later on they transmitted Indian algebra, numerals, alchemy, medicine, fables and other branches of knowledge to the West. In this way the dissemination of Eastern knowledge in the West by the Arabs contributed largely to the development of Western civilization since the Renaissance.

But the main political impression was made upon India by the uncouth Turks (the Mughals were also Turks), whose only strong points were their fighting qualities and abundant vitality. Broadly speaking a very substantial portion of Islamic supremacy in India really forms a chapter of the history of the Turks who, after their conversion to Islam, dominated the stage of world history for over five centuries, roughly speaking. In their heydays their political authority extended from the frontiers of Western Europe to the shores of the Indian ocean. The modern Turks have fallen very low from the old heights, and have even broken away from the main tradition of Islam, of which they for so long formed the armoured spearhead. This is an instructive point to which reference will be made later on in a larger context.

Second, taking India as a whole the rule of Islam was at no point of time universal. Only, on rare and brief occasions, Islam's sovereignty extended over nearly the whole stretch of the land. But this was nominal and over wide tracts of the country very superficial. For one thing, the attitude of the rulers was anti-national most of the time ; for another, they lacked the necessary skill and experience in administrative organization. Indigenous resistance even on the political



plane was never quite extinguished. Even in the very heart of Islamic authority, namely in the Gangetic Doab, there was a constant state of turmoil and the people under petty chieftains repeatedly and in spite of severe periodic chastisements threw off the alien rule. There are other more glaring and substantial facts which will be mentioned later on. In fact it was from indigenous powers that the political sovereignty of the land passed into British hands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for the vast political structure of the Mughals had previously been reduced to rubble by the nationalistic forces which rose like mighty storms from all quarters of the land at the fanaticism of Aurangzeb.

Loss of political freedom is a most serious accident for a civilization and is often a sign of real weakness. But such losses do not necessarily mean its death. Death is inevitable only in cases where a conquered civilization has suffered first an inner breakdown of the soul. It has often been found that the very political conquerors, if their moral and spiritual resources are inferior to those whom they conquer, are themselves swallowed up, flesh and bone, by their political victims. The essential thing is whether or not the conquered community finds itself exhausted spiritually. If it does not, and if its values are really superior and creative, it is able, sooner or later, to shape politics according to

the needs of expression of its soul. In other words, the society is bound to regain its freedom in every sphere. India had never reconciled herself to alien rule.

We can now look at the problem that Islam and Barbarism presented to India. The earlier invaders who had vastly increased the complexity of the Indian problem had by the time Islam appeared on the scene were either absorbed or in process of assimilation into the main traditional body. Buddhism was dying and being devoured body and soul by its parent whom it had repudiated and so come to grief. The process in those days, when propaganda was so difficult because of lack of quick means of reaching the masses, was bound to be slow. Besides, there was also the rigidity of the orthodox party. Further, movements and creative classes tend to ossify in process of time. For all these reasons, broadly speaking, there were vast differences in the social field, which greatly paralyzed national resistance to the new invaders. At this point Islam came as a tremendous challenge to the politically fragmented and socially complex India. The Islamic irruptions not only transferred the paramount political authority to alien hands but introduced a deep dualism into Indian life. It fractured the social and cultural unity of India and we are still engaged in the task of piecing together the broken pieces.

*(To be continued)*

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## GERMANY AND INDIA

BY HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP

Germany got her first information about India during the Middle Ages from the Greek and Latin historians of the wars of Alexander the Great and indirectly through Christian legends like that of Barlaam and Josaphat which relates the life of Buddha in Christian garb. The first Indian work translated into

German was the *Panchatantra*, the famous book of fables. At the instigation of Count Eberhard the Bearded of Wurttemberg, Anton von Pforr rendered it into German (about 1480 A.D.) from a Latin version, which itself depended on a chain of Hebrew, Arabic, and Pahlavi translations. This so-called *Book of*



*Examples of the Old Sages* had a wonderful success and influenced German fiction greatly, in so far as many German tales are derived from it. Of course the geographical knowledge concerning India was in these ancient times rather limited; during the Crusades nothing but stories of marvel elephants and unicorns and the legendary priest-king John reached the North of Europe. Only a few occidentals, like the Italian Marco Polo, had obtained first-hand information about India.

When the great Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama had explored the sea route from Europe to India in 1498, the reports on India increased in number and quality from year to year. Abraham Roger's *Open Door to Hidden Heathendom* published in Dutch in 1651 and translated into German in 1663 gave for the first time an account of Hinduism from the viewpoint of a Catholic Missionary. Some preachers of the Christian Faith like the Father Henry Roth (about 1650) and J. E. Honxleden (died in 1732) did pioneering work in the investigation of the Sanskrit language, and the Protestant Missionary Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (died in 1719) wrote works on Tamil grammar and the religion of Malabar.

The men hitherto mentioned lived at a time before the real scientific study of Indology was inaugurated by Sir Charles Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* (1785), Sir William Jones' English renderings of Kalidasa's *Shakuntalā* (1789) and *The Ordinances of Manu* (1794), and Sir H. T. Colebrooke's famous *Essays*.

The first German scholar who knew Sanskrit and wrote a book on Indian religion and philosophy was Friedrich Schlegel. In 1802, during his stay in Paris for the purpose of studies, he made the acquaintance of an Englishman, Alexander Hamilton, who had learnt the Sanskrit language in India. On his return Hamilton was detained in France, because Napoleon had enforced the isolation of England from the Continent. This circumstance, very unhappy for Hamilton himself, turned out to be a very great boon for German

science, because it enabled a brilliant young German poet to study a language for which it was very difficult at this time to procure a teacher or a grammar. After his return to Germany Friedrich Schlegel published in 1808 a book *Über die Sprache and Weisheit der Indier* (On the language and Wisdom of the Indians) which contributed greatly to direct the attention of men of letters to a hitherto almost entirely hidden domain of knowledge. Friedrich Schlegel later on abandoned his Sanskrit studies but his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel, the famous translator of Shakespeare's plays, made it the study of his life. He published text-editions of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Rāmāyana*. Since 1818 he occupied the first chair of Indology established in Germany at the newly founded University of Bonn.

A contemporary of the Schlegels was Francis Bopp, the celebrated investigator of Comparative Philology. He wrote a work on the *System of Conjugation in the Sanskrit Language* (1816) and published critical editions of the story of Nala and Damayanti and other parts of the *Mahābhārata*.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the interest taken in India was very common with German poets and philosophers. Goethe was a great admirer of *Shakuntalā*, *Meghadūta*, and *Gitagovinda*; the Indian custom of beginning a play with a prelude on the stage, induced him to imitate this in his celebrated *Faust*. The poet Friedrich Rückert, who possessed a stupendous knowledge of many Oriental languages, acquired fame by his skilful imitation in German verse of even the most difficult passages of Sanskrit *kāvya*s like Bharavi's *Kirātārjunīya*. Wilhelm von Humboldt, who for many years held the office of Minister of Instruction in Berlin also knew Sanskrit; we owe to him a brilliant paper on the *Bhagavadgītā*, which he read in the Royal Academy of Sciences in 1825. It stands to reason that the German philosophers of the time were greatly attracted by Indian wisdom. Already Immanuel Kant, though indebted for his



knowledge only to books of travels, had occupied himself with Hinduism and Buddhism<sup>1</sup>; now that good translations of original texts had become available Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer dealt explicitly with Indian metaphysics. It is well known that Schopenhauer considered the *Upanishads* as the 'solace of his life and death' and that he greatly venerated the Buddha, whom he called the greatest philosopher the world has ever seen besides Plato and Kant.

The whole of knowledge on ancient India acquired during the first half of the nineteenth century was in a very able form collected and summarized in the four volumes of Christian Lassen's *Indische Altertumskunde* (Indian Archaeology, 1843-1862). A Norwegian by birth, he was a pupil of Schlegel and succeeded him in the Chair of Indology at Bonn, which being then the capital of Sanskrit learning was called the Benares on the Rhine.

Since the establishment of the first professorship of Indology in 1818 Sanskrit was taught by and by in almost all of the German Universities existing at that time, but so great was the number of scholars who had devoted their life to this study that some of them were called to foreign countries requiring the services of Sanskritists. The most prominent of these was F. Max Müller. Born in 1825 in Dessau as the son of the poet Wilhelm Müller, famous for his enthusiastic intercession for the Greeks in their struggle for liberty, he was a pupil of the great French Savant Burnouf<sup>2</sup>. Still a youth he began his edition of the *Rigveda* with the help of a subsidy by the East India Company, which was published from 1849 to 1875. In 1850 he became a Professor in Oxford where he lived until his death in 1900. Besides his monumental work

he wrote many books on comparative religion, the *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, on the sayings of Ramakrishna etc. Further he edited the fifty volumes of the great collection, *Sacred Books of the East*. Max Müller opened a long line of German scholars in British service employed either in England (namely, Theodore Goldstücker in London, Theodore Aufrecht and Eggeling both successively professors of Sanskrit in Edinburgh) or in India, namely, Kielhorn, Bühler, Hoernle and Thibaut.

Since the time of Max Müller the study of the *Veda* has always been a chief object of German Indologists. It is therefore not astonishing that all the four vedic *Samhitās* have been critically edited for the first time by Germans: the *Rigveda* by Max Müller and by Th. Aufrecht, the *Sāmaveda* by Th. Benfey (1848), a scholar who later on devoted himself chiefly to the study of the *Panchatantra* and its migrations in world literature, the *Yajurveda* by Albrecht Weber (1852, 1871) and by Leopold von Schroeder (1881, 1900), the *Atharvaveda* by Rudolph Roth (1856). Among the long series of scholars who later on endeavoured to translate vedic hymns and to unravel the mysteries of vedic Mythology only the names of H. Grassmann, A. Ludwig, K. Geldner, H. Oldenberg, A. Hillebrandt, and H. Luders may here be quoted.

During the first decades of Sanskrit studies German Indologists made use of English dictionaries. These being very expensive and not easily procurable the poet Ruckert had copied out for his own use the whole of Wilson's dictionary. Bopp (1850) and Benfey (1865) composed German glossaries for the use of students, and Theodore Goldstücker, an unfinished Sanskrit Dictionary in English (1855). The first comprehensive great German Dictionary of the Sanskrit language in seven volumes was compiled by Otto Bohtlingk and Rudolph Roth, and published in the period 1852-1875 by the Imperial Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. After its completion Bohtlingk wrote another smaller but still

<sup>1</sup> The hitherto almost unknown passages of Indian religions in Kant's books and lectures are collected in my work, *Kant and the Religions of the East (German)*, to be published this year in the *Internationaler Universitätsverlag* in Tübingen.

<sup>2</sup> See Louis Renou's article *India and France* in *Prabuddha Bharata*, February 1940.



more copious dictionary, which also was sponsored by the Russian Academy (1879-89). In these two works Germany possesses an exhaustive thesaurus to which generations of Germans owe the best of their knowledge about Indian language and literature. In the sixty years which have elapsed since the completion of the smaller *Petersburger Wörterbuch* (abbreviated as 'p.w.', in contradistinction to the larger work, generally quoted as 'P.W.') many texts have become known whose words are not yet incorporated in these dictionaries. Supplements have therefore been published by Richard Schmidt in 1924-28. As even these supplements are not sufficient, it is to be hoped that the new exhaustive Sanskrit-English Dictionary being prepared in Poona will fill up this gap. In 1887 Professor Cappeller edited, on the basis of the Petersburg Dictionaries, a very useful small Sanskrit-Wörterbuch of 550 pages for the use of beginners; an enlarged English edition of this was published some years later. It may be mentioned here that the second edition of the Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Sir M. Monier-Williams, originally published in 1872, is to a large extent due also to German indologists, for the new edition of 1899 was written with the collaboration of E. Leumann and C. Cappeller.

It is impossible to enumerate here the names of all German scholars who dealt with Indian classical poetry and drama; suffice it to state that the most prominent *kāvya*s and *nāṭaka*s can be read in German translation; some works have been translated very often. *Shakuntalā* more than ten times, *Vikramorvaśhāya* five times, *Mricchakatika* four times. *Dashakumāracharita* three times. Of Amaru's and Bhartrihari's stanzas there exist a great number of German renderings. That the Indian books of fables have frequently been translated into German (literally in prose, or alternatively in prose and verses, or in children's editions) requires no explanation. Panini's grammar has been translated into German by Otto Bohtlingk (1839, second ed. 1887), and the

late Professor Liebich has made a special study of the classical old Grammarians. Several Indian Law Books have been translated into English by Bühler and Jolly in the *Sacred Books of the East* series; some others also exist in German translation. Of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* there is an excellent German rendering by the American-Swiss scholar Johann Jakob Meyer. Even Vatsyayana's famous *Kāmasutra* has been translated into German.

The above-mentioned late Prof. Jolly in Würzburg was both an authority on Indian Law and on Indian Medicine. He wrote standard works on both the subjects, for which reason he was awarded the Honorary Degrees of Doctor of Law and of Medicine by German Universities.

The interest in philosophy being very keen in Germany at all times there have always been many scholars working in this field. There are several translations of the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. Richard Garbe wrote on Samkhya, Max Müller, E. Roer, A. Winter and E. Hultsch on Nyāya-Vaisheshika. The greatest achievements in this field are due to a man who was no Indologist proper but a philosopher—to Paul Deussen, who from 1889 until his death in 1919 occupied the chair of Philosophy at the University of Kiel. Born in 1845 as the son of a Protestant parson he began by studying theology; deeply influenced by Schopenhauer's teachings he took up the study of Sanskrit and became an enthusiastic follower of Shankara. His spare time as a private tutor in a Russian family he used for the study of Advaita, and he gave the first great exposition of Shankara's system of Vedānta (1883). To his German renderings of the *Sutras of Vedānta with Shankara's Commentary* (1887) he presently added a translation of *Sixty Upanishads* (1897), and in collaboration with his pupil Otto Strausz, of the philosophical texts of the *Mahābhārata* (1906). Of the six volumes of History of Philosophy, the first three deal with Indian philosophy, the remain-



ing ones with the philosophy of Greece, of the Middle Ages and of Modern Times from Descartes to Schopenhauer. Among German philosophers of his time there was no one who so thoroughly understood the importance of Vedānta for the West. A similar position may be assigned to the Protestant theologian Rudolf Otto. He possessed a fair knowledge of Sanskrit and was a great admirer of Rāmanuja. Besides many theological works he has published several translations of Vaiṣṇava texts and has done much to gain for Hinduism the place in Comparative Religion which it deserves.

Besides these scholars almost exclusively interested in Sanskrit and Hindu literature there are others who, though also working in this domain, are best known by their studies of Prakrit and Pali and the two great religions whose writings are written in these languages, viz. Jainism and Buddhism. Besides Albrecht Weber, the first editor of Hala's poems, and Richard Pischel, who wrote a Prakrit Grammar, we may mention Hermann Jacobi and Ernst Loumann, who have done much in elucidating the history and dogmatics of the Jains.

Among the many workers on Pali Buddhism the first place is due to Hermann Oldenberg, the famous editor and translator of the *Vinaya* texts and author of a book on Buddha, which in its twelve German and three French editions has been for a long time the standard authority on Gautama's life and doctrine. Wilhelm Gieger translated into German a part of *Samyutta-Nikāya*, into English from the Ceylonese chronicles. He supervised also the research work for the new *Singhalese Dictionary*.

A vast amount of fresh material on the history of Buddhism and its literature has been brought to light by the Prussian expeditions to the Eastern Turkistan led by Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Lecoq who both have published books on Indian Art and its connection with the West. The most famous of the German scholars who deciphered the

manuscripts found in Turfan was Heinrich Luders collaborating with his wife, who succeeded in editing fragments of manuscripts of lost Buddhist texts. It is a regrettable fact that Mahayana Buddhism has till now found only a limited number of research-workers in Germany (like professor Walleser); it has always been the chief domain of French and Belgian scholars.

The German standard work on the history of Indian Literature are the three volumes of Maurice Winternitz, the late professor of Indology at the German university of Prague. The two first volumes have appeared also in English.

The time from the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the first World War, during which all the above-mentioned scholars lived, is the golden age of German Indology. It was the time in which Sanskrit studies flourished at almost all of the German Universities and conquered for Indian literature a place of honour in the *universitas literarum*. The vicissitudes of two last wars and the time of unrest that followed were not favourable to the development of science in Germany; it is therefore a regrettable fact that a number of Sanskrit Chairs at the German Universities have been curtailed. Nevertheless, the studies are still flourishing, and the number of Professors of Sanskrit is still greater in Germany than in any other country of the Western world, inclusive of the United States.<sup>3</sup> This is the more remark-

<sup>3</sup> An alphabetical list of the German Universities with the names of the professors and lecturers of Indology and their respective special branches of study:

BONN: Prof. Kirfel (Purana, Jainism, Medicine), Dr. Losch (Purana, Dharmashastra), Dr. Hacker (Vedānta); FRANKFURT: Prof. Lommel (Veda); GOTTINGENT: Prof. Waldschmidt (Buddhism, Archaeology), Dr. Steche (Hindi); HALLE: Prof. Thieme (Veda); HAMBURG: Prof. Schubring (Jainism); JENA: Dr. Hauschild (Veda, Hindi); KIEL: Prof. Schrader (Hinduism); LEIPZIG: Prof. Friedrich Weller (Indian, Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism); MARBURG: Prof. Nobel (Indian, Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism); MUNICHEN (MUNICH): Prof. Oertel



able because Germany has never ruled over any part of India as other European nations have done. Her aim has always been a purely scientific and spiritual one, following the well-known sentence of the famous poet Heinrich Heine: 'Portuguese, Dutchmen, and English have brought home on their great ships the wealth of India, we Germans always took a back seat, but we shall not do without the spiritual treasures of India. Our Universities will be our factories for these.'

The interest of the largest number of German Sanskritists being philological and historical, the study of India's past, her language, culture and religion, has always been the chief aim of German Indologists. This explains the fact that the modern Indian languages have not been adequately represented. Besides missionaries who translated some works from the vernaculars there were only a few men who went deeply into the literature and culture of the new Indian Aryan and Dravidian peoples. This has been the work of a few German scholars, whose death a few years ago was much lamented. I mention the former foreign Minister Dr Rosen, a good specialist in Persian, who translated Amanat's *Indarsabha* and wrote a sketch of Urdu Literature, Dr Reinhard Wagner, a well-merited Bengali scholar, Professor H. W. Schomerus and Dr Beythan, to whom we are indebted for a Tamil Grammar and a work on Shaiva Siddhanta respectively. It is to be hoped that India being now independent, the study of modern Indian languages will be fostered also in Germany, an aim which might

(Veda); Prof. Helmuth Hoffmann (Indian and Tibetan Buddhism); MUNSTER: Prof. Alsdorf (Prakrit and Jainism); TUBINGEN: Prof. v. Glasenapp (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism), Prof. Hermann Weller (Drama).

well be realized by an exchange of professors and students between German and Indian Universities.

The number of Germans who learn Indian languages, who read ancient Indian texts in translations, or who follow the scientific works of the Indologists is, of course, small compared to those who take a general interest in Indian literature.. The most widely read Indian author is Rabindranath Tagore, whose visits to Germany are still remembered. Many of his works have been translated into our language, mostly from English, and some of his plays such as *The Post Office* and *The King of the Dark Chamber* appeared on the stage. Dhan Gopal Mukherji and some other Indian writers are also widely read. The death of Mahatma Gandhi made a very deep impression on the German public, and there were many demonstrations of sympathy both in the several German parliaments and in philanthropic societies. In memory of the deceased great Indian the University of Tübingen arranged a special gathering at which the writer of these lines had the privilege of delivering a lecture on Gandhi's life and work.

Although Germany may be separated from India by large stretches of land and water, yet the bonds of sympathy, formed at the beginning of the last century, continue to unite the two countries in mutual appreciation and friendship. To the Spirit distances are naught, as says a Sanskrit poet :

*Durastho'pi na durasthah svajanānām  
suhrijjanah  
Chandrah kumudakhandānām durastho'pi  
prabodhakah*

'Even if he is far away, a friend will not seem remote to a friend; the moon though far away yet awakens the lotus of the night.'

Unselfish and genuine zeal for real scholarship and honest earnest thought must again become dominant in the life of our countrymen, if they are ever to rise to occupy among nations a rank worthy of their own historic past.

—Swami Vivekananda



# 'RAM'S WISH'

OR

## BRAHMACHARI RAM MAHARAJ

BY GERTRUDE EMERSON SEN

Ram Maharaj has left the most unforgettable impression on me. He lived for over thirty-five years in the Ashrama at Almora in the Himalayas and became almost an institution to the local people. Though generally called Ram Maharaj, to his brother-disciples of the Ramakrishna Order he was affectionately known as *Ramer Ichchha*—'Ram's Wish', or the 'Lord's Wish'.

The name was derived from a favourite story of Sri Ramakrishna's. One should live in this world non-attached, Sri Ramakrishna used to say to his followers, surrendering oneself to the Lord's will, like a certain pious weaver. This weaver was loved and trusted by everybody. If anyone asked the price of a piece of cloth, he would reply: 'By the will of Ram, the price of the yarn in one *rupee* and of the labour four *annas*. By the will of Ram, the profit is two *annas*. So the price of the cloth, by the will of Ram, is one *rupee* six *annas*.' One night when he was sitting down as usual after the day's work to meditate on Ram, some robbers came along and forced him to carry their stolen goods on his head. The party was soon intercepted by the police, but the robbers ran away while the unfortunate weaver was left behind with the incriminating load on his head. Next morning, accused of theft, he was dragged before a magistrate.

'Your Honour,' said the weaver, 'by the will of Ram, I finished my meal at night. By the will of Ram, as I was thinking of God and chanting his name and glory, by the will of Ram, a band of robbers passed that way. By the will of Ram, they committed robbery and put a load on my head. Just then, by the will of Ram, the police arrived. By the will of Ram, I was arrested, and by the will of Ram, I have now been brought before Your

Honour.' Convinced that such a pious man could never have committed robbery, the magistrate dismissed the case. Upon reaching home the weaver remarked to his friends, 'By the will of Ram, I have been released.'

So, too, Ram Maharaj found the Lord's hand in every trivial happening, and nothing was too small to escape the net of His direct intervention. When some of the other monks termed this a 'dangerous philosophy,' insisting that if we are to attribute everything to the Lord, then we automatically excuse ourselves from responsibility for our own evil deeds. Ram Maharaj simply smiled. 'It doesn't matter what you say,' was his rejoinder. 'What you say doesn't affect Ram in the least.' The conclusion being, of course, that one who really believes in the Lord with his whole heart and soul, as Ram Maharaj did, will soon become incapable of evil deeds. The simplicity of his living and believing were wonderfully reflected in his face. It was really a joy to look at him. It was more than fifty years since he had renounced the world and become a *sadhu*, but his face was vibrantly alive. Well-defined black brows made an almost straight line over large expressive dark eyes. His colouring was light by Indian standards, and a curly grey beard, white in patches, lent soft finish to a face that was often singularly beautiful. He weighed less than ninety pounds, but he had retained an amazing suppleness. Fingers and toes appeared to have no joints at all. When he made his prostrations in our little meditation room, as he invariably did on entering the house, he simply folded up into nothing at all.

His clothes were the usual apricot-coloured garments of the Indian monk—a cap and a shawl, with a shirt underneath, and a lower cloth of cotton wrapped round like a skirt.



In winter the cap and an extra coat he then put on were of grey woollen material, supplied by our local weaving industry. Never, by choice, would he wear or use any thing of mill manufacture. He always maintained that coarse home-spun and hand-woven cloth felt infinitely pleasanter next to the skin than any mill produce however fine.

His habits were so regulated and co-ordinated that he was really an institution by himself. Summer and winter he arose at that exact moment when the thin streak of the single telegraph wire linking our town with the outside world first became visible in the grey half-light of dawn across the window-patch. He needed no mirror to dress by, and he had never even thought of acquiring one. It was only after he had intently studied many snapshots of himself, taken by us, that he announced one day, 'Now I know what I look like.' Each hour of his day had its little specific duty or pleasure. He sat on the floor of his room for his main meal at precisely one o'clock and again for his supper at nine p.m. But at different intervals between rising and going to bed, he would consult the large nickel watch kept in its original red cardboard box, and pour out a cup of hot water or hot milk, or munch the two daily almonds or the four daily raisins he allowed himself, or eat a bit of apple, half an orange, or a piece of sugar candy. Apart from these small extras which he ate with relish, his regular food, year in and year out, was a monotonous diet of rice and dal or unleavened bread with a handful of vegetables.

On Sundays, his normal routine had of necessity to be slightly varied, since this was the official 'invitation day' when he lunched with us. If Sunday happened to coincide with either of his two monthly fast-days, however, he would come on Saturday or Monday instead. In any case, he had made his position clear at the very outset : 'Fifty-two times a year I must take my food in your house.'

Until eleven every morning, the door of his room over the Ashram kitchen remained tightly closed, and nobody was allowed to dis-

turb him until he himself opened it. This was the time inviolably set apart for his religious meditations. When those were over, he was ready for his morning walk, along the road leading past the Leper Asylum and out around Granite Hill and Pine Forest. As he walked, he vigorously plied his Indian tooth-stick. In the afternoon, he attended to his letters and accounts, and joined the Ashram study class for two hours. Then came the evening walk in our direction. On his return, he would regularly stop at our house to rest and chat and to sip his last-but-one of four cups of warm milk.

We might have visitors, but Ram Maharaj's ritual remained unbroken. As a matter of fact, he enjoyed meeting and talking to people—in his own brand of simple English if they were foreigners, otherwise in his native Bengali or Hindi. Many of our friends—Louise, Angela, Beatrice, Elsie and Walter—learned to love and admire him. When they went home again to England or the USA., from time to time they would write to him or send him picture post-cards, and these he would bring over and slowly read aloud to us, with the help of a magnifying-lens fished from his pocket. I received a letter from Louise only this morning. After inquiring about Ram Maharaj, 'that pure and enlightened soul,' she pays him this tribute : 'I have not been able to show him much in the last years how deeply I owe what understanding I have to him, but if he still remembers me, give him my humblest and most devoted greetings.'

If Ram Maharaj did not appear according to schedule, we were fairly certain that something was the matter with him, a cold or a slight touch of fever. Then we would go to see him at the little Ashram, perched precariously on the side of a steep slope, where he lived with two or three other monks. We would find him in the twelve-foot square room, built over the Ashram kitchen, which had been his dwelling place ever since he had been sent to the mountains years ago to recover from tuberculosis. In this room were all his worldly pos-



sessions—a wooden cot, a table one foot high, a single chair (for the use of visitors), a stand for dishes and such an article of luxury as a thermos-flask, one or two small tin trunks and inside a padlocked wall-cupboard his stores and the old biscuit-tin in which he kept his stamps and cash. On different walls hung a few pictures of the Indian saints he loved, and opposite his bed a large calendar. His surplus garments were folded over a rope stretched across a corner of the room. At one end of the mantel-piece, above a fireplace which was never lighted, stood an old lantern. It had served him for more than a quarter of a century, and the original chimney was still unbroken. After putting the lantern on 'half-pension', as he said, he had at last relegated it to 'full-pension.' There it stood in shabby dignity, enjoying its well-earned rest.

On one well-remembered afternoon, it was not illness which prevented Ram Maharaj from taking his usual walk and putting in his punctual appearance at our house. He arrived fully one hour late, and he came solemnly bearing in front of him a piece of stiff cardboard, upon which a jig-saw puzzle was correctly assembled. 'You see,' he said in a tired voice, 'it does not take beautiful dancers from Indra's Heaven to distract one from thinking about the Lord. This puzzle has upset my whole day. Kindly do not give me any more jig-saw puzzles!' We laughed heartily at the outcome of my aunt's long-range attempt from New York to supply Ram Maharaj with a mild form of amusement. I had often written about him, and the puzzle had arrived unexpectedly a week before, with a letter expressing the hope that it might afford a pleasant relaxation for Ram Maharaj when he was not meditating. He had looked incredulously at all the little bits of wood jumbled together, quite certain that neither he nor anyone else could make any picture out of them. Now, behold, he had accomplished the impossible—but at the cost of a totally disrupted day, not to be repeated.

With the passing of time, Ram Maharaj

became an integral part of our lives, and we took him for granted almost as we took the mountains and the recurring seasons for granted. Slowly I came to realize that he never gave out what he had to give by formal teaching or instruction. He was not an 'intellectual', nor a scholar, and his education was rudimentary. He taught by simple stories which sprang into his mind in connection with some ordinary topics of conversation, by some unforgettable sentence revealing a profound truth, or most of all, by simply being himself. His teaching was as unconscious as the fragrance of a rose or lotus. Yet because his Ram was a complete and adequate explanation of everything, he had an all-comprehensive answer for every problem or question, no matter how complex. Nothing ever surprised him, and he was at ease in all circumstances, and among all kinds of people.

When human plans went awry, that was the precise moment, according to Ram Maharaj, to open one's eyes and see the Lord's Plan working. 'Remember the *Jacardandas*', he would tell us with a chuckle. The phrase soon became a synonym in our household for cheerful resignation to the inevitable, if nothing higher. The sight of my first *Jacaranda* tree, with masses of vivid deep blue flowers set off against a pale blue May sky, literally took my breath away. I could not rest until we had ordered two from a nursery. When they came, we selected the stronger of the two and carefully supervised the planting in a well-dug hole at the end of the front lawn. Then we handed the second tree over to the gardener and told him to plant it anywhere he thought best out near the back gate. In the course of a few years, the *Jacaranda* by the back gate which we could not even see from the house—though it was in full view of everybody walking along the road—burst into an incredible glory of violet-blue. As for the tree which was to have been our private possession of beauty, it has never yet produced more than one or two insignificant sprigs.

As long as one has desires, so he believed,



one must go on living, or be born again, since desires inevitably bind one to life. We were to be away on one occasion for three days only. Since he did not come to see us, we went over to say good-bye to him. It worried us to find him in bed with fever, but we were more worried when he said, 'You may not find me here when you come back.' His reason was, 'The Lord is wiping away all my desires.' He could think of three recently removed. All his life he had found the sharpening of a pencil rather troublesome and had wished there were some means of avoiding it. Had I not, only the other day, handed him the broken half of a Woolworth pencil made of solid lead coated with red paint and requiring no sharpening? Then, I had also given him a small barrel lock with combination numbers (again from Woolworth's, costing five cents!). He had seen a similar lock as a boy, and for a long time had cherished a secret ambition to own one. Finally, he had wished to visit his birth-place once more before he died, and last winter this visit to Calcutta had been accomplished. Since he could think of no other wishes, perhaps his time had now come. Fortunately, when we returned, the fever had gone, and we heard no further reference to Ram Maharaj's impending departure.

Rather foolishly, I once imagined I had caught him wishing and planning something on his own initiative. My husband happened to be in Delhi at the moment. Mentioning that he himself had never yet been to Delhi, though he had seen both Calcutta and Bombay, Ram Maharaj speculated on the possibility that now, while my husband was there, Ram might like him to visit Delhi. I passed on his remark, and by return mail came an invitation from my husband for Ram Maharaj to come down to Delhi with our nephew, just on the point of leaving.

'You see,' said Ram Maharaj, 'Ram does want me to go to Delhi!'

'But don't you think it is you who really want to go there?' I could not help asking.

'Of course,' he replied with perfect equani-

mity. 'How will Ram take me there, unless he first gives me the desire to go?'

When World War II came along, he found no difficulty in fitting it into the Divine Plan as understood by him. Not so, the rest of us.

'If only somebody would kill Hitler and Mussolini, the war would end tomorrow!' I burst forth one day.

'Oh,' said Ram Maharaj, 'you think that would solve everything? Don't you know the Lord, if He likes, can pull a worse Hitler out of one pocket and a worse Mussolini out of the other?' According to him, the Lord was using Hitler to bring home to humanity the bitter lessons of greed, violence, and lust of power. At the same time, no one must ever expect wars to be done away with. There must always be the rich man, the thief to steal his possessions, the policeman to catch him, the lawyer to defend him, the judge to try him, the jailer to keep watch over him. How else would the Play go on?

Before the war, we had gone abroad for a year and incidentally had attended an international physiological congress in Russia. From Moscow, my husband wrote to Ram Maharaj: 'You would like many things the Russians are doing, especially their care of children and poor people, but one thing you would not like. They do not believe in God.'

'Tell your Russian friends,' Ram Maharaj wrote back, 'there is nothing new in the way they feel. From the beginning of time the Lord has always created people who do not believe in Him.'

He was never impatient, as the rest of us so often are. When we first went to live in our remote Himalayan town, it was Ram Maharaj who actually found us our house—a stone bungalow of six rooms with separate kitchen and servants' quarters, an acre of ground and a view stretching fifty miles to the snow-covered peaks. Believe it or not, the monthly rent was only ten dollars. This was because the house had long been vacant on account of the local people's insistence that



it was haunted by a horse-ghost with the unpleasant habit of galloping over the roof-slates by night! Many repairs were necessary, and it was some time before we were ready for the house-warming. This, we decided, should take the form of feeding the poor, including our own servants and all those who had worked long and hard to make things comfortable for us.

I had not been long in India at the time, but I knew very well that a mixed party of Hindus would be a complicated affair, and I scrupulously left arrangements to others. The cook was to act as host and to serve the food. On the day of the feast I watched from the garden as our guests sat down in two long rows on the front veranda, before each a round shining brass tray. Suddenly I noticed the 'untouchable' sweeper, lowliest of household servants in India, sitting quite apart at the far end of the veranda, half hidden by a pillar. In front of him, as if he were a dog, was nothing but a piece of torn newspaper. Perhaps the brass trays had run out. Perhaps nobody thought it mattered. My husband, as shocked as I, went off to bring one of our own table plates for the sweeper, and I fled round a corner to shed uncontrollable tears. There I almost bumped into Ram Maharaj on his way to join us. 'Who has wounded you?' he asked tenderly, at sight of my tears. 'India's caste system,' I told him. He remained silent for a moment. 'Things are changing,' he then said, 'what was good yesterday is not always good today. But reforms cannot come all at once. Forty years from now there will be no more untouchability.'

It is just over fifteen years since he made that prophecy. But the *Bill of Rights* to be included in the new Constitution of free India has already proclaimed that all citizens will be considered equal in the eyes of law. Within a few weeks untouchability will have been officially and legally abolished in India.

Though strenuous philanthropic work is carried on in many of the Ramakrishna Centres in India, the Ashram in our hills was

intended primarily as a place of rest and meditation. The monks did no special or regular work, and they have either to beg their food or live on such charitable gifts as friends or relatives choose to give them. To Ram Maharaj, who received his support from an elder brother, a retired lawyer—almost a saint in his own right—waste of food or money was almost a crime. Besides, all should take the best possible care of what the Lord has bestowed upon them in trust. The economies he had practised in consequence throughout his whole life, were proverbial. They dated way back to the time just after he had entered the Order, when he had been placed in charge of buying supplies for the monastic headquarters in Bengal. He had come back from the bazar one day with leaf-plates of a very inferior quality. Asked why he had brought such a thirdrate article, he replied simply, 'because no leaf-plates of fourth quality were available.'

He wore old darned socks and a faded coat he himself had turned. His umbrella, as antique as his lantern, had been many times recovered, on the last occasion during the war, when black cloth was difficult to obtain. So Ram Maharaj had it recovered in bright blue. The material was strong and water-repellant, and what more was needed? Perhaps the limit was reached on the day he entered our living room and announced abruptly, 'I have lost my needle.' 'What sort of needle was it?' I enquired, ready to offer him another. 'It isn't that,' he said, 'I have other needles. It is that particular needle. I have had it for seventeen years, and I feel that I have lost a friend.'

There was another day I remember, on which we happened to be discussing budgets. I asked him casually how much it cost him to live. 'Twelve rupees a month,' he replied. Before I could even think 'four dollars'—prices had not then risen three or four hundred per cent, as now—he added: 'Of course that is with second class rice. First class rice would cost only a few *annas* extra.'



But why should one always demand first class things unless one can truthfully say, "I am a first class person".'

Our own carelessness about a bewildering number of possessions at first troubled him a great deal. In the crucible into which all his perplexities were poured, this one, too, gradually melted away. 'The Lord wants them to be like that', he concluded, and never again pressed us to keep accounts or to number or list our things.

Through secret intimacy of prayer and meditation and constant remembering, it seemed to us that Ram Maharaj had drawn very close to the Lord, and that he often spoke 'as one with authority'. A Christian missionary with other ideas called at the Ashram one day and left a little tract on the life of Jesus Christ. He said he would return a week later to discuss it. When he did so, he was surprised and pleased to find that Ram Maharaj had not only read the book but had unqualified praise for it. He was encouraged to inquire earnestly whether Ram Maharaj would not consider becoming a Christian.

'You think the Lord wants everybody to become a Christian?' asked Ram Maharaj.

'Surely. That would please Him very much.'

'No,' said Ram Maharaj shortly. 'The Lord doesn't want. *You* want. If the Lord wants, in one wink of His eye we all must be Christians. His devotees approach Him by many paths, and all are good in His sight.'

Perhaps his visitor would have been a little consoled had he known that Ram Maharaj, like other members of the Order, observed Christmas Eve each year by a special ceremony. He read, or had read to him, the Nativity Story of one of the world's great *Avatars*, followed by reading of the Sermon on the Mount. And in the shrine-room of the Ashram, a plaster Madonna received a garland of flowers—just as Hindu images in the same room were garlanded on ordinary days of the year.

Speaking of flowers naturally reminds me

of the garden, and of how Ram Maharaj's interest in it grew, in a very human way, in spite of himself. At first he quietly watched our struggle to bring order and beauty out of chaos. Paths were dug, beds made. We spent hours poring over seed catalogues, and we begged cuttings and roots and bulbs from all our friends. The garden prospered, but every year in April and May even the bath water, carefully saved, was not enough to prevent some things from dying, and in the ground lived a detestable species of fat white worm, which deliberately set out to destroy our best roses and irises.

'I enjoy Ram's garden,' was all that Ram Maharaj had to say. 'It means no trouble to me, and I do not have to worry about water. Ram has no favourites in His garden. When He gets tired of one flower, He makes others to please Himself. He also makes the bright leaves of the soap-berry tree close to my room.'

Nevertheless, as years went by, could it be that Ram Maharaj was actually taking more interest in our garden than in Ram's? He memorized the names of many strange flowers. He listed varieties and colours and noted down the seasons of flowering. He also brought wild violets gathered on his morning walks to compare with our cultivated ones. Once when we were going down to the plains in November, he was greatly worried lest some young plants brought up the year before might not survive their first mountain winter. After seeing us off at our blue gate, he himself went about the garden, as he afterwards wrote to us, tying newspapers around the trees and shrubs. To my husband's comment 'Don't you think your 'daughter-in-law' ought to be ashamed to give you so much trouble over her garden?' He merely replied, 'We all have so much work to do before this life is finished. It is better to work for love than money.'

In that letter, too, he said something else we shall not forget. With the departure of summer visitors, our end of the ridge always



becomes quite solitary and deserted. 'You will be lonely when we have gone,' we said to Ram Maharaj. 'No,' he answered, 'I am used to loneliness. I just shake myself a little, and then I am all right.' But in his first letter he confessed, 'You were right. The Lord has washed away my pride. I do miss you.'

And now, it is we who miss him!

In October, when the leaves began to fall and sharp wind once again swept from over the snow ranges, Ram Maharaj could no longer take his customary walks. His heart was weak, and his face had grown thin and shadowy. He broke off in the middle of a sentence, forgetting what he had wanted to say. Though he wrapped himself in many shawls and blankets, felt cold all the time. His brother arrived, and a young monk was

especially sent to look after him, but each day he grew weaker. At last everybody agreed that Ram Maharaj must go down to the warmer climate of Benares, where there is a big Ramakrishna Centre and a good hospital run by the monks. My husband lifted him in his arms as if he had been a baby and gently placed him on the blankets and quilts spread on the seat of the bus, so that he might be as comfortable as possible on the long journey of eighty-two miles to the railway station at the foot of the mountains.

'If Ram wishes, I will return in March,' he said.

But Ram wished otherwise. After a few weeks, word came that he had quietly given up his old frail body, a worn-out garment of no more use to him.

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## THE MARCH OF HISTORY (III)

BY P. S. NAIDU

*(Continued from the September issue)*

### XII. RESUME

We have seen how at the present moment contradictory views, pessimistic and optimistic—are being held in regard to the future of mankind. Just now pessimism appears to have a seductive influence over the minds of thoughtful men and women. And the pressing need of the hour, therefore, is a correct and cheering orientation of thought in the confused mass of the facts of world history. Is it possible to secure that orientation in the light of the logical determinism and dialecticalism of Hegel, or of the biological evolutionisms of Darwin, Spencer, and Lloyd Morgan? No, it is not. We have seen how and why the existing philosophies of history fail us at a time of great need. Our hope, then, lies in the possibilities hidden in the unexplored

psycho-philosophical regions of historical interpretation. And into this untrodden region I propose to take you in the next lecture and show there the one increasing purpose running through the ages, conferring meaning, point, and purpose on the dangerous and apparently pointless life that we seem to be leading today.

### XIII. OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL FORMULA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The critical times in which we are living today inspire us alternately with hope and dread, with expectation of a rosy dawn and fear of an impending gloom and darkness. This uncertainty of outlook is due, in a large measure, to the utter lack of competent leadership among men, and to the utter lack of spiritual faith in those who happen to be at



the helm of world affairs. The supreme dread of every one of us who cares for the good of our nation, and of the human race as a whole is, that these leaders without spiritual vision may wreck the future of the human race by their godlessness and agnosticism. With pain and fear, we see that a band of men and women who might and should be the wisest guides of human progress are alienated for ever from the kind of faith which sufficed for all rational beings in an earlier age. No one has presented to them, and they cannot obtain for themselves, any ground of conviction as firm and clear as that which sufficed for our forefathers in their day. The moral dangers of such lack of faith are fearful in the extreme. It is here that the philosopher should step in and by a well-defined philosophy of history provide these leaders with the anchorage which they sorely need. He should inspire faith in man's high destinies and make of our leaders so many agents cooperating with God in His endeavour to raise humanity to the level of divinity. Philosophers having failed in the past, we have now to set out on the task of tracing the maze-like path of history from an entirely fresh starting-point. Our contention is that thinkers have failed to find the correct clue to the solution of the mystery of the historic process, because they totally neglected the psychological forces guiding man's progress. We shall not repeat that blunder; we shall make the psychology of individual development the ground-plan for building up our philosophy of history.

Towards the end of the first lecture (sections I to XI) I indicated how man progresses from elemental impulses to concrete sentiments, and from concrete to abstract sentiments, and from these again to a higher stage wherein the various sentiments are arranged in a hierarchical order. As with the individual, so with the nation or race. Nations too start from the level of instinctual impulses and emotions and rise to the higher level of sentiments. Many have risen up to the level of concrete sentiments, but have stayed there per-

manently or have regressed to the primitive level again; only a few have got beyond to the plane of abstract sentiments. Now, these sentiments often come into conflict with one another, and until this conflict is resolved there will be no peace. Practically no nation has got beyond the stage of conflict. But sooner or later the plane of peace will have to be reached by all. In the meantime let me raise a very important question. What is the supreme sentiment in terms of which the various concrete and abstract sentiments have to be arranged in a descending order? What is that master-sentiment which presides over all others and confers meaning and value on them? These questions were faced squarely and answered with penetrating insight only by one psychologist, the late William McDougall, the founder and leader of the Hormic School. This gifted student of human nature demonstrated that for the Western peoples, and for those who have borrowed Western modes of life and thought, self-regard is the undisputed sovereign, presiding over and guiding the destinies of the other sentiments in the European scale of values. And McDougall significantly points out that even the moral sentiments pale into insignificance as against this master-sentiment of self-regard. This observation is profoundly true of the culture of Western peoples. One has only to turn over the pages of European history to feel convinced of the supreme power which self-regard wields over the nations of the West. I have only to direct your attention to the field of power politics in the West to make you see how each nation is jockeying for the front place in order to maintain its own national self-regard. Yet, what is this self-regard worth after all? Well, I feel that an answer to the question is to be found in the implications of that great tragic piece of literature depicting Western life in its essence, Goethe's *Faust*. Notice carefully the sinister person standing by the side of Faust. He is the very embodiment of self-regard. Frivolous, cynical, materialistic and above all clever; the proud



possessor of pure, cold, barren intelligence, Mephistopheles is the most complete and fullest representative of Western self-regard. This self-regard is the destructive daemon in modern man fostering intellectualism, sensualism, materialism, and nihilism in his mind. The acute scholar Faust has to confess, in his sober moments, that he has been sadly deceived by this self-regarding intellect engendered by godless realism. He keenly longs for something he knows not what—and that something was the proud possession of the mediaeval man. The mediaeval man, whose idea of the world was narrow and in many ways distorted, was however inspired by divine vision. For him the world was to be grasped by the heart as well as by the head; but since the close of the Middle ages this vision has been lost. The West has failed to lay hold of and enlarge the vision of divinity it once had. Instead, its feet have been set on the path of self-regard leading to self-destruction. Now, then, if self-regard is unfit to reign as the sovereign and is to be dethroned, what other sentiment should we enthrone in its place? It is here that the Asiatic people in general and our nation, in particular, which have been reviled in uncultured language by Hegel, come in to teach the world a most valuable lesson. The only sentiment fit to rule as a master-sentiment over the minds of human beings is the Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment. It is that divine sentiment *par excellence* which is the crown and culmination of the historic process, and which will finally gather up the peoples of the world into the bosom of God. While the self-regarding sentiment preserves the individuality of the lower-sentiments and thus sows the seeds of strife and conflict, of discord and disunity, Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment dissolves all the lower psychological stages and prepares the way for the final unity of mankind in the Godhead. All nations must begin their career in their infancy at the level of primitive impulses and pass through, in their pre-adolescent stage, the level of concrete senti-

ments, and at the period of adolescence they must reach the higher stage of abstract sentiments and face the conflict between them. Now they stand at the parting of ways. If they choose the self-regarding sentiment as their goal, then, in spite of some temporary worldly progress, they will have a sorry downfall in the end, and their civilization will be wiped out: if, on the other hand, they choose Para-Brahman-regard, as conceived by the highest type of Vedanta, then in spite of what may strike the worldly-minded as stagnation, they will make steady progress towards that supreme goal of finding 'Him who, having made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, if haply they might feel after and find Him.'

The process, then, of world history may be summed up thus: Each human group or tribe in remote pre-historic times commenced its upward career by organizing its group-life round some primitive instinctual impulse. There was little cooperation outside the group, but inside, the life lived on the crude instinctual plane bound the individuals together. And if we read aright the expressions of primitive culture we may discover even at this barbaric stage some groping after the Para-Brahman, however crude, superstitious, and dread-inspiring it might be. Then at the dawn of history we find racial groups organizing their common life round concrete sentiments, and as we reach the period conventionally known as the Ancient Period in history, we find these sentiments growing richer, fuller, more expansive and more numerous. This stage has persisted right down to our times. At this psychological level each advanced nation or group attains a mature stage of culture and tries to impose its sentiment-patterns on other groups not so highly advanced. It is rather disappointing to notice here that the Divine vision, the urge to attain Para-Brahman, which is dimly visible in the pre-historic stages, is not



developed, but on the other hand is allowed to flicker out and perish in the life of many nations. These groups seem to be revelling in their newly discovered strength and success in worldly matters assured by the vigorous functioning of their concrete sentiment-patterns. But among the racial units at this level some may be found looking steadily up, and not down for their goal. As against this striving to rise higher, there is also a falling off to the lower level in the case of some nations. This regression to the lowest level of culture may finally end in the complete annihilation of civilization. Among the groups striving to rise higher, only those succeed in reaching the level of abstract sentiments who have become fully inspired by the Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment. Meanwhile, there occurs the struggle, which orthodox history glorifies, between nations on the concrete sentiment level, and between these and others on the higher abstract sentiment level. Wars, oppressions, colonizations, and forcible cultural subjugations occur in the struggle for world domination. In this struggle there is, of course, the ever-shifting groupings and re-groupings of nations for mutual benefit, and it may appear that there is cooperation, mutual understanding, and progress towards unity in such negative combinations. But these appearances are deceptive, for these combinations against a common enemy are soon found to disintegrate leading to fierce separative individualisms in the case of the self-regarding nations. In the midst of all this tribulation and turmoil that nation which has hitched its wagon to the star of Para-Brahman-regard steadily progresses, though it may lie inactive for a while like a mighty giant in deep sleep. It is this nation that will finally gather up the whole world within its fold and lead on the entire human race to its Divine Creator. It will conserve the elements of value in the concrete and abstract sentiments which each nation has striven to organize, and liquidate the anti-spiritual elements in them and finally achieve

that cultural synthesis which the Divine Will has planned for mankind. Such is the process which a correct and penetrating reading of world history reveals to us.

Now, there are certain peculiar features of this cultural process of development in world history that merit our attention at this stage. The first notable peculiarity of the subjective psychological process which we have been discussing is its irrepressible urge to express itself in some outward form. Poetry and fiction; dance and drama; music and painting; sculpture and architecture; folklore and mythology; commercial, social, and governmental institutions; science and philosophy—these are some of the expressions of the cultures of human groups. And so too are the wars and conquests, acts of deceit euphemistically called diplomacy and statesmanship, and others of their type which alone, according to orthodox history, have a claim to be recorded in the pages of human history. It is through a correct psychological analysis of these cultural products that we may hope to perceive the one increasing purpose running through the temporal process. It is through a careful study of these cultural expressions that we may understand how much each nation has contributed to the final unity and solidarity of the human race as a whole.

A second notable feature of this subjective cultural process, operating in the individual and the race as well, is the sympathetic sharing of emotional experiences. Our minds are made of the same stuff. It is no wonder that among like-minded men and women who have formed similar scales of sentiment-values, there should operate powerfully that sympathetic induction of emotions and sentiments leading to a fuller and richer life. Mutual sympathy has served to uplift and ennoble the lives of individuals who would otherwise have stagnated at a lower cultural level. In the case of nations and groups, too, we find that through the sympathetic induction of emotions, sentiments, and scales of senti-



ment-values, one nation has helped another to rise to a higher level. But the danger lurking here of one nation debasing another should not be overlooked. Sympathetic induction, then, is a powerful force for good as well as for evil, and it has left its indelible marks on the pages of human history.

Armed with this psycho-philosophical formula for the interpretation of the cultural history of mankind, let us see how much each nation has contributed towards the creation of that perfect unity which 'nature has so long foreshadowed and in which there will be a complete communion of its members, unobstructed by egoism or hatred, by harshness or arrogance, or the wolfish lust for blood.' The endeavour of mankind to reach this goal has invariably been hindered by the inordinate strength of the self-regarding sentiment, which is a segregating force keeping nations apart and sowing seeds of mistrust, suspicion, and hatred in their minds. What is urgently needed is a supreme unifying principle able to dominate and transform this 'fundamental disharmony' making for disunity among human beings. Such a principle is to be found not in that which belongs to history and is, therefore, phenomenal, but in that which transcends it, namely, in the spiritual element in human nature. And that principle is none other than the Para-Brahman-regarding sentiment whose nature and importance in the evolution of the human race has already been stressed by us.

#### XIV. PRIMITIVE MAN AND HIS CULTURE

Let us now set our hand to the main task. In estimating the contribution made to cultural unity by pre-historic tribes and groups as well as by historic peoples and nations, we have perforce to commence with an estimate of the life of primitive man. This life has been graphically described for us by scholars who have delved into the abyss of pre-history. The cave man's fierce passions, his hunting expeditions, his precarious existence in an

unfriendly environment, and above all his awe-inspiring rites and dreaded magic ceremonies have been painted in garish colours by many a field anthropologist of note. It should, however, be remembered that the correct scientific study of pre-historic archaeology scarcely goes back further than 1840. And it is only during the last two or three decades that fresh light has been thrown on the mysterious culture of primitive man. I am referring in particular to the astounding subterranean explorations conducted by Norbert Casteret in southern France and northern Spain. The discoveries made by this daring underground explorer give the lie direct to the widespread notion that cave men drew or moulded figures of animals for pastime or for the mere pleasure of drawing and moulding. These figures have an occult significance. They are meant to function as spells, destructive or protective, for warding off danger to the tribe, or for maintaining and increasing the fecundity of the animals which serve as food. In the higher stages these figures form part of an elaborate mystic rite for propitiating the tutelary deities of the tribe. *Fear and food-seeking* are the two elementary propensities which ruled over the lives of these pre-historic men. Their groups were organized at the lowest instinctual level. Anxiety for the morrow in regard to food and anxiety for personal safety and security—these are the motive forces in the life of the cave man. It is significant that these crude motives are just the ruling forces in the minds of the civilized races when the severities of a world war or great natural catastrophies force them back to a primitive level of helplessness and despair.

A noble band of field workers in anthropology have toiled hard to bring to light the hidden springs of primitive life. But the palm of victory in the struggle to wring out of the cultural products unearthed by these workers their secret should go to Freud and Jung and their collaborators. Freud, in particular, has thrown a flood of brilliant light on the hidden psychological springs of primitive



man's group-activities. In his well-known work, *Totem and Taboo*, Freud draws a significant distinction between primitive magic and primitive sorcery. With the aid of the former the savage attempted to reach out into the physical and the social environment he lived in, while with the aid of the latter he sought to reach up to the level of the beings of the spirit. Magic, of course, occupies the major part of the primitive man's life. It is here that we see the play of those powerful instinctual impulses which function at the lowest level of our cultural evolution. But in the midst of it all there is that vague longing to reach out to that which is beckoning mankind from on high. It is a well-known fact that the contact of the noble savage with *Modern Civilization* has resulted in his undoing and degradation. The reason is not far to seek. The West is hidebound in its thick covering of concrete sentiments. It has not enough spiritual vitality to break through this crust. And when its material civilization acts upon the mind of the savage it serves but to over-emphasize and overdevelop the materialistic at the cost of the spiritualistic elements in primitive culture. We need not pursue this subject of primitive culture far, because it is clear that in the organization of his group-life primitive man is only attempting a monotonous repetition of the same theme. At one time and place it is the fear impulse that rules, at another it is the food, at another still it is acquisitiveness, and at a fourth it is the lust for blood. Everywhere and at all times it is some one or two or three of the fundamental impulses that serve as centres of organization, and in their midst is dimly discernible, as I have already pointed out, that dynamic force which has immense potentialities for progress. Primitive man's culture, therefore, moves on the really primitive level of instinctual impulses and emotions, and its contribution to the sum total of human culture is more or less negative. It is important in that it stresses the need for the annihilation of those brutal elements in human nature which bind man down to this

earth, and in so binding make each man the bitter enemy of his brother man.

## XV. GREECE AND MATERIAL BEAUTY

From the primitive savage to the Greeks and the Romans it is a long hop from the historical point of view. But, psychologically speaking, it is a very short step indeed from the instinctual level of the savage to the concrete sentiment level of the Greek and Roman cultures. The Greek is but the noble savage with his primitive impulses rendered non-repellent by the fabric of external beauty with which he has draped them. If we have to choose one word for expressing the soul of Greek culture our choice will readily fall on Beauty. The ancient Greek was impelled powerfully to perceive and cultivate beauty in the human body, beauty in external nature and, above all, beauty in art; and many will be inclined to add beauty in the inner organization of the human mind. This last feature, however, is of doubtful significance. Beauty, harmony, balance, proportion, and equipoise, then, are the outstanding characteristics of Greek culture. On the psychological side we find that the Greek mind is engaged in forging concrete sentiments out of the raw impulses of Gregariousness, Constructivity, Acquisitiveness, Curiosity and Appeal. The Greek city-state is the outcome of gregariousness, the Greek colonies of acquisitiveness, Greek science and philosophy of primitive curiosity, and Greek art of a combination of all these with primitive sympathetic appeal. In Greek art nature is adapted to purposes of utility and ornament. The cultivation of the human body through games and sports has no higher aim than that of physical strength and attraction. On the objective side, there is a desperate struggle in Greek art to rise from the sensuous to the spiritual level; but the struggle ends in failure because the proper motive-force is not there. The Greek divinities, like the cultured Greek citizens, revel in concrete sentiments which bind them down to this earth. They are attractive because they are



so human in all their frailties, faults, and failings. But they are in no sense competent to raise man to the higher spiritual levels.

What then, it may be asked, of Greek democracy in which many have seen the elements of freedom and spirituality? The term democracy as applied to Greek constitutions is a misnomer. It is Montesquieu who pointed out that higher morality in the form of subjective conviction and intention does not manifest itself in Greek democracy. Morality here is of the customary type. Hegel asserts that political Greece holds the middle ground of Beauty and has not attained to the higher standpoint of Truth. From our psycho-philosophical point of view Greece occupies the lower rung of concrete sentiments in the ladder of cultural evolution and has not climbed up to the higher level of abstract sentiments. The consideration of the state in the abstract was alien to Greek nature. What appealed to the Greeks was their country in its living, real, concrete aspect; this actual Athens, this Sparta, these temples, these altars, this form of social life, this union of fellow-citizens, these manners and customs—in fact this of everything which comes out of the concrete and serves to satisfy the concrete sentiments ruling over the minds of the men and women of Ancient Greece. Historians are aware of the extraordinary hold which hero-worship had over the minds of the ordinary Greek citizens. This extreme submissiveness of human individuals, this tendency to raise human beings to the level of demi-gods, is antagonistic to the growth of free democracy in which every one is presumed to exercise unfettered judgment of his own. This anti-democratic element taken along with the existence of slavery and of the Greek oracle demonstrates that the group-mind of the ancient Greeks never rose above the concrete level. In fact there was a tendency for the noble savage to sink down to the level of the barbaric savage. It is not without significance that the Freudian complexes which are the prime movers in debasing man to the level of

the beast are named after, and have their most striking illustrations in, the famous Greek heroes and heroines. Is there, then, one may ask, no evidence at all of any attempt on the part of the Greeks to rise above the mere concrete level? I am afraid there is none. If there be any, we should expect to find it in the great philosophic systems of Plato and Aristotle. It is highly disappointing to find that the grand idealisms of Plato and Aristotle are at bottom nothing but realisms of the concrete sentiment variety. Consider for instance the doubt that still lingers over the exact nature of the supreme idea that presides over the pyramidal hierarchy of Platonic ideas. Is it God or the Good? One can never tell. Is it spiritual idealism or merely ethical realism that is at the foundation of Platonic metaphysics? And in the same manner we may wonder whether the concept of Pure or matterless form of Aristotle is not inspired by motives tainted with earthly considerations? I often wonder whether Plato and Aristotle were compromising with public opinion against the dictates of their better nature? Or was it that they were frightened by the fate that overtook Socrates? Anyway, they seem to be the true exponents of what was best and highest in the culture of their age, and that was no better than the nobler types of concrete sentiments in our scale of values.

## XVI. ROME AND MATERIAL ORGANIZATION

From the noble savage with his naked body of crude impulses clothed in garments of beauty spun out of concrete sentiments to the nobler savage who doffed this drapery and covered himself with the scintillating but gossamer-like fabric of the intellect, it is like walking from one apartment to another in the same flat. We are still in the region of concrete sentiments, though Roman civilization presents to us the illusory appearance of an ascent to a higher level. As material beauty is the highest expression of Greek culture, so material organization, law and order are the



most exalted expressions of Roman culture. Rome attempted to destroy all the concrete life of individuals and states, the greatest legacy of Greece, and impose on its citizens an abstract legal right, the outcome of its genius for juristic creation. Hegel characterizes the Roman spirit which created positive law as 'constrained, non-spiritual and unfeeling intelligence.' He further points out that Roman consciousness 'has given itself no spiritual objectivity—has not elevated itself to the theoretical contemplation of the eternally divine.' Roman religion is, therefore, entirely prosaic. It is moved by narrow aspirations, expediency, and profit. The divinities peculiar to the Roman cult are entirely commonplace. They are objectified conditions of the mind, and of human sensations, or the embodiments of the useful arts. The most attractive elements in Roman religion are the festivals. In these as in everything else we find that the group-mind is

engaged in organizing the fundamental emotions and impulses round human and divine personages and natural objects to generate only concrete sentiments. Witness the way in which the Romans worshipped Pax and Vacuna, and dedicated altars to Hunger and Mildew. The Roman, like the Greek, failed to lift himself above the concrete sentiment level.

The deadening influence of Greece and Rome has resisted the liberalizing spirit of Christ and has kept all but the democratic countries in Europe at its own concrete level. It is no matter for wonder that scholars love to trace all that is permanent in European civilization to Greece and Rome, but it is not seen readily by these enthusiasts that this proud ancestry is also the sole cause for the downfall with which civilization is being threatened at the present moment.

(To be continued)

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## THE LIFE OF TULSIDAS (I)

BY MRS C. K. HANDOO

Tulsidas, who sang his *Ramayana* in the seventeenth century, needs no introduction to the Indian public. Controversies are baffling to the layman and present-day scholars are not in agreement in regard to the construction of his life, but he comes surprisingly close to those who lay aside their critical intellect and approach him through his books and writings. Amongst the lovers of Ram he is indeed a king, and one of the best amongst those who ever aspired to serve Him. We deplore the scanty references to his personal life in his works but are happy to find that he has laid bare his saintly sensitive heart to us as no biographer or historian could have done. To those who read his *Ramcharitmanas* with the love and reverence that it deserves he proves

himself to be a valuable friend, philosopher, and guide. His deep understanding of the human heart endears him to the young and the old, and he becomes almost a living presence, removing many a cobweb of doubts and ignorance from the dark corners of our minds and ever encouraging us onward in our feeble search for the Divine. His own heart is so full of Ram 'on Whom he depends, Who is his source of strength and his one and only hope and faith'—*ek bharoso ek bal, ek ās visvās.—Dohavali, 277*—that he would care not to be known by the cold and calculating measure of dates and sequence of events in his outward life, but through his beloved master Ram. He himself says,

*Nāto nāte Rām ke, Rām sanaha sanehu,*



*Tulasi māngat jori kar, janam janam  
Siva dehu..*

'May I claim relationship through Ram,  
may I love through love of Ram.

Life after life, O Siva, with folded hands  
Tulsi asks this boon of thee.'

*Dohavali, 89*

Indians in the past have at all times been so overwhelmed by thoughts of the Infinite, and consciously and deliberately they have been so intent on breaking the bonds of the ego which imprisoned their own souls, that they have been singularly reticent about themselves and have never cared to narrate anecdotes or incidents about their own individual lives. Tulsidas in particular had vowed that his voice would never sing in praise of any human being; but in modern times we have developed a curiosity about and a value of human personality, and we wish greatly to reconstruct the lives of our great ones, specially the saints whose blessed feet have sanctified the very dust of this land and have captured the heart and imagination of the Indian people. Besides, we know fully well that in spite of the sophistication of our age and the distractions of the scientific inventions which it brings to us, humanity will ever hanker for that spark of Divine fire that lies hidden in every human heart. The study of the lives of saints also repays us a hundred-fold, for not only is it a means to a higher way of living and thinking, but it is also an end in itself.

*Tulasi Rāmahu te adhik Rām bhakt jiya jān*

'Know the devotee of Ram to be greater than  
Ram Himself'. *Dohavali, III*

This line, besides stating Tulsi's own opinion, is in perfect agreement with the tradition which identifies the devotee with God and looks upon him as a pure temple of Truth. 'His words are sweet as honey and in his silence he shines most resplendent, radiating the world with life-giving thoughts. To hear of him is a blessing and to think of him is peace.' ('The Life Supernal,' *The Journal of the Mahabodhi Society*, August 1938).

Knowing Tulsidas to be such a devotee of the Lord we consider it a privilege to write a short life-sketch from the material available to us. Though this sketch claims to be neither exhaustive nor final, it is a tribute to the holy feet of Tulsidas from one who owes much to him; if it can also help to kindle a spark of faith, understanding, or devotion in the heart of some lonely traveller on the path of spiritual life this labour of love will be more than repaid.

A detailed life of Tulsi called *Gosain Charitra*, which is now unfortunately lost, was written by Beni Madho Das, a constant companion of his *sadhu* life. An abridged edition of the same called *Mūl Gosain Charitra* is, however, still available, and we have based this short article chiefly on this book. It is possible that Beni Madho Das, being a staunch disciple, friend, and admirer of Tulsi, exaggerated in some places. It is also not to be expected that he was a witness to all the incidents described by him, but we agree with the introductory life of Tulsi in the *Manas* number of the Hindi *Kalyān* 1939 that in the absence of any other data we should have no hesitation in accepting the broad outlines of this book. We must keep in mind also that Beni Madho Das was a contemporary of Tulsidas; he has supplied us with the dates of the main events in his life, and there is no contradiction in what he says to the few and far between references that the poet gives about himself in his own works.

Tulsidas was born in the village Rajapur in the Banda district of the United Provinces. His date of birth is stated by Beni Madho Das in the following verse:

*Pandrah sau chauvan vishai, Kālindi ke tār,  
Sāvan shuklā saptami, Tulasi dhareu sarīr*

'In the Samvat year 1554 (1497 A.D.) on the banks of the Jamuna, on the 7th day of the bright fortnight in the month of Sravana Tulsi was born.'

Modern scholars are inclined to disagree with this view and put his date of birth about 35 years later, round about 1534 A.D. The



reason for this is chiefly that, according to Beni Madho Das, he lived to the ripe old age of 127 years, which sceptics now consider to be an improbability. Tulsi's father was a Brahmin named Atmaram and his mother's name was Hulsi. *Ramcharitmanas* contains a reference to the mother's name in the following line :

*Rāmhi prīya pāvan Tulasi sī, Tulasidāsa  
hita hīya Hulasi sī*

Ram *katha*... 'is dear to Ram as the pure Tulsi plant and has the welfare of Tulsidas at heart like (his mother) Hulsi.'

Great were the rejoicings at the birth of a son. But when the alarming news was conveyed to the father that instead of crying in baby-like fashion the child had uttered the word Ram, that he looked like a grown-up boy of five, and was born with the full adult complement of thirty-two teeth, an anxious foreboding of evil filled his heart. The old villagers shook their heads in great doubt, astrologers and kinsmen were consulted, and all decided to wait and see if the baby lived for three days, after which they would make up their minds about his future. On the fourth day the mother took a turn for the worse, and fearing that in case she died the little one would be looked upon as bringing ill-luck to the family, she called her maid-servant Muniya, gave her all her jewellery and ornaments and begged her to take the child away to her village in Haripur and look after him as her own son. Muniya agreed and left quietly at dead of night with the precious little bundle in her arms. Knowing that the baby was in safe hands Hulsi's motherly heart was comforted and she was able to breath her last in peace early the next morning.

Because the baby had uttered the word Ram at birth he was given the name of Ram Bola. This name is confirmed by Tulsidas in the following line of the *Vinaya Patrika* where he says :

*Rām ko gulām nām Rām Bolā rākhyo Rām*

'I am the servant of Ram and was named Ram Bola by Him.'

Muniya brought Ram Bola safely to her village, gave the baby to her mother-in-law Chuniya, who acted as a foster-mother to Ram Bola for five years and five months. She then suddenly died of snake-bite. The villagers sent a message to Atmaram but he refused to take his son back, saying that he could not give shelter to such an unfortunate child, two of whose guardians had died already, and who seems to be fated to lose those who loved and protected him. Thus the shadow cast at birth on Ram Bola's life by the suspicion of his relatives and the death of his loving mother deepened into gloom while he was still a little toddler, lisping in sweet baby language and innocent of the misfortune that followed in his footsteps. Henceforth he wandered about like a destitute begging for food and receiving only harsh and unkind treatment from the world. This was probably the darkest period in the life of Ram Bola, and he refers to it again and again in his writings. His sorrowful words move our hearts, and we cannot help feeling that he was never able to efface the memory of the slights and insults he suffered at this tender and impressionable age. We will quote some of the relevant passages, even at the risk of repetition, to enable the sympathetic reader to get an idea of the suffering of this brilliant poet and saintly son of India, imposed by the cruel hands of society, which even to this day is utterly indifferent to the upbringing of its poor and orphaned young. Seeing the miserable condition of the children begging in the streets of this poor land one wonders how many talents have been nipped in the bud, how many deft and useful hands wasted in holding the beggars' bowl, and how many little hearts broken for want of human love and affection. Tulsi speaks not only for himself but for all those whose plight today is similar to what his was four centuries ago. similar to what his was four centuries ago.



He says—

*Mātu pitā jaga jāi tajyo, vidhi hun na likhi  
kachhu bhāla bhalāi.*

*Neecha nirādara bhājana kādar, kūkar-  
tukana lagi lalāi.*

‘Father and mother, after giving birth to me in the world, cast me off, and even Brahma did not give me a good destiny. Thus, lowly and cowardly, spurned by all, I longed even for the piece of bread in the mouth of the dog,

*Kavitāvali*

*Pataka-peena kudārīda-deena malina  
dharen kathari karawa hai*

‘Nurtured in sin and suffering humiliation through extreme poverty, my possessions were a dirty and patched quilt and an earthenware waterpot’

*Kavitāvali*

*Janani-janaka tajyo janāmi, karamabina  
vidhihu srijyo avadero*

*Phirayo lalata binu nāma udara lagi, dukhau  
dukhita mohi hero*

‘Mother and father abandoned me at my birth, without the merits of good deeds in the past, the Creator also made my path tortuous; Without Ram I wandered about, greedy to fill my stomach and even Sorrow suffered to see my miserable condition. *Vinaya Patrika*

*Dvāra dvāra deenata kahi, kādhi rada pari  
pāhu,*

*Hain dayālu, duni das disā, dukh-dosh-  
dalan-chhama kiyo na sambhashana  
kāhu.*

*Tanu janateu kutila kīta jyon, tajyo mātu-  
pitahu-kahe ko rosh, dosh kahi  
dhaun, mere hi abhāg mōson sakuchat  
chhui saba chhanhu*

‘From door to door I went, baring my teeth (in an attempt to smile) and falling at the feet (of those from whom I begged) to express my poverty. There are kind people who are powerful enough to destroy the short-comings and miseries of the world in all its directions, but none of them spoke to me.

Parents abandoned me as the snake who gives up the offspring born from its own body.

Why should I be angry and whom should

I blame? It is all my own misfortune, people even fear to contact my shadow.’

*Vinaya Patrika*

*Āsa bibasa khāsa dāsa hai neecha prabhuni  
janāyo.*

*Hā hā kari deenata kahi dvāra-dvāra  
bāra-bāra, pari na chara manha bāyo  
Asana basana binu bāvaro jahān-tahān  
uthi dhāyo,*

*Mahimā māna priya prānate taji kholi  
khalani āge, khinu-khinu peta khalāyo*

*Nāth! hāth kachhu nahin lagyo, lālach  
lalachāyo*

*Sānch kahaun nāth kaun so, jo na mohi  
lobh ladhu haun niralajj nachāyo*

‘Though I was your personal servant, yet led by hope I offered my services to those of impure hearts, bewailing my lot, dwelling on my poverty, from door to door I wandered, but not even ashes were thrown at my open mouth.

Without food and clothing I ran hither and thither like a madman,

Giving up self-respect which is dearer than life,

I showed my empty stomach at all moments to the wicked ones.

O Lord! dragged on by avarice I received nothing.

I tell you truly there was no depth to which I did not sink unashamed, lured on by lowly greed.’

*Vinaya Patrika*

*Ghar ghar mānge tuk puni, bhupati puje  
pāy*

*Je Tulasi tab Rām binu, te ab Ram sahāy*

‘He who begged for a piece (of bread) from house to house, his feet were later worshipped by kings. That Tulsi who was first without Ram, has now Ram for his helpmate.’

*Dohavali, 109,*

From the above lines it would seem that Ram Bola remained in this miserable condition for some length of time, but Beni Madho Das says that after two years, at the age of seven, a *sadhu* called Narharidas or Narhari-ananda took him under his protection.

Narharidas himself was a disciple of the



great Ramananda, who lived in the fourteenth century, and gave an impetus to that branch of Vaishnava-Bhakti that worshipped the ideal of Ram. Ramananda was fifth in apostolic succession to Sri Ramanuja, the founder of the Vishishtadvaita philosophy. He preached in the language of the people and shook off the narrow fetters imposed by Sri Ramanuja and his followers. Tulsi was in every way a worthy successor of this liberal and large-hearted saint. Narharidas, we are told, received a command in a dream of divine origin that he was to look after this boy and was to instruct him in the life-history of Ram. So with the consent of the villagers he took Ram Bola with him to Ayodhya, where he performed his sacred thread ceremony, gave him the Ram-mantra, and started his education in right earnest. After ten months he left Ayodhya for Sukar Khet—a place of pilgrimage on the banks of the Sarayu river in the district of Gonda. Here master and disciple lived in close association for five years, and it was in this place that Ram Bola first heard the fascinating story of his *Ishta Deva*, Ram, whose divinely human life he was destined to relate and interpret to the world in later life. The following lines of *Ramcharitmanas* seem to support this view :

*Main puni niḥa Guru san suni, kathā so  
Sukarkhet samujhi nāhin tasi bāla  
pana, tab ati raheun achet.*

‘I heard this story from my Guru in Sukar Khet. Being a child and without understanding, I could not grasp it then.’

Incidentally he gives us the pre-requisites to a proper appreciation of an Incarnation of God in lines that follow the above verse :

*Shrotā vaktā gyānanidhi, kathā Ram kai  
goodha  
Kimi samujhaun main jiv jada, kalimala  
grasita vimudha*

‘Teacher and taught should be the treasure-house of wisdom, for the story of Ram is deep. How shall I understand it, who am a deluded creature dulled by the impurities of Kaliyuga ?’

*Tadapi kahi guru bārahin bāra  
Samujhi pari kachhu mati anusāra.*

‘Still my Guru repeated it over and over again, and I grasped a little of it according to my understanding.’

The last line gives us some idea of the patience and perseverance that must have led Narharidas to take in hand the task of educating this little beggar boy picked up from the streets of an out-of-the-way village, during his *parivrājaka* wanderings. In exchanging the freedom of his monastic life for the self-imposed responsibility of bringing up Ram Bola we feel that he must also have had a deep insight into the mind of his little protégé, and an equally strong faith in human nature as well. Psychologically, it is also true that noble ideas and ideals are accepted and propagated through the impact of human personality. Therefore the Hindu scriptures say that ‘being is greater than doing,’ and only life can inspire another life. And so when we try to study the forces that moulded the life of Ram Bola, our heart goes out in loving thanks to the memory of that unknown saint, who without hope of any selfish gain, gave to us, out of his overflowing love of humanity, the gift of our dearly beloved Tulsi. And now we perhaps dimly understand why ardent homage has been paid to his holy feet, at the beginning of the *Ramcharitmanas*, in beautiful lines that apparently come from the heart of the poet. We shall follow him only in the opening of this passage—

*Bandau guru pada kanja, kripā sindhu  
nararupa hari*

*Jasu vachan ravikara nikara, mahā mohā  
tama punja...*

‘I salute the lotus feet of my Guru, the Ocean of Compassion and God in the form of man, whose words, like the rays of the sun, dispel the heavy darkness of over-powering delusion.’

A certain amount of importance is attached to these lines, as in the phrase *nara-rupa-hari* Tulsidas seems to refer to his guru both generally and specifically, and we can there-



fore safely conclude that he was in fact the disciple of a holy man called Narhari.

Ram Bola remained with his guru for six years in all. He proved himself to be an exceptionally intelligent pupil with a very good memory. During this period he had a good grounding in the grammar of Panini, and as he himself says, the history of Ram's life and its significance and lesson to humanity was taught to him over and over again.. Tears filled the eyes of Narharidas when Ram Bola told him about his early childhood days. So we can assume that a bond of deep affection existed between the teacher and disciple. Another *sadhu* called Sesa Sanatana was greatly attracted by the bright and winning ways of Ram Bola and he asked Narharidas to leave the boy with him for further education. Narharidas agreed and Ram Bola stayed with Sesa Sanatana and studied *Veda*, *Vedanta*, and other scriptures for fifteen years.

By this time Ram Bola had grown up to manhood and was almost twenty-eight years old. Having completed his education the desire to visit his paternal home and village arose in his heart. He came to Rajapur and found his family house in ruins, his father dead and no surviving relation left to welcome him, after his long absence from home. The villagers, however, constructed a new dwelling-place for Ram Bola, where he lived and recited the Ram Katha in the traditional way of the scholarly and devoted Brahman priest. A hut of Tulsidas and a temple dedicated to him are still to be found in Rajapur.

A book called the *Tulsi Charit* consisting of 1,033,962 verses was written by his disciple called Mahatma Raghuvanananda. It has not been published but a reference to it has been found in a magazine called *Maryada*, and Babu Shyam Sundar Das has quoted certain portions from this magazine in his book *Goswami Tulsidas*. It also seems to contradict some well-established facts of his life. *Tulsi Charit*, for instance, says that

Tulsi married three times but traditionally and also according to Beni Madho Das he married only once.

Beni Madho Das relates that across the Jamuna in a village named Tarpita there lived a brahman whose beautiful daughter Ratnavali was of marriageable age. Once when this brahman was on a visit to Rajapur, he heard Ram Bola's recitation of the *Ramayana*, and was so impressed by his learning, intelligence and handsome bearing that he at once decided to approach him with a proposal of marriage. Ram Bola was at first unwilling but agreed only after a great deal of persuasion. The wedding was then celebrated in the *Samvat* year 1583 (1526 A.D.) on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Jetha* (May-June). Ram Bola was devoted to his wife and the short period of his married life lasting for four years was marred by but one event, and that was the death of his only son in infancy.

Once, during his absence from the house, Ratnavali's brother came to visit her, and she left with him for her parental home without the permission of her husband. Ram Bola, who could not bear to be separated from his wife even for a single day, was very upset on his return. Whenever similar occasions had arisen for Ratnavali to visit her parental home Ram Bola had not allowed her to go. The restriction was naturally very irksome to her, and so she made the best of this opportunity. So when Ram Bola followed her to her father's house, it is likely that Ratnavali felt somewhat irritated. The good old Indian custom of married daughters frequently visiting their own family, though allowing husbands to accompany them as an escort to and fro, disapproves of their spending the same length of time as the wives in the house of the father-in-law. Unhampered by the many social conventions of her married life, and irrespective of her age, the woman once again enjoys the freedom of her childhood days, and this brief respite from the heavy and monotonous duties of her own home is



welcomed by all Indian women. Thus not dreaming of the response it would evoke, and maybe without any thought, Ratnavali was led to speak her famous words which suddenly brought into activity that latent spirituality which we must assume was unconsciously seeking an outlet in his mind. And so Fate, which had a greater destiny in store for him, wove its most intricate design from these most ordinary circumstances and formed a setting for the renunciation of the poet Tulsi, whose inspiring words were to illumine the hearts of all seekers of God for generations to come. Ratnavali said :

*Lājana lāgata āpko, daure āyehu sāth,  
Dhika dhika aise prem ko, kahā kahun  
main nāth ;  
Asthi-charama-maya deha mama, tā men-  
jaisi prīti  
Taisi jon Sri Rām manh, hota na tau bhava  
bhīti.*

'You do not feel ashamed to run after me, what shall I say, my Lord, but fie on such love ! If your devotion to Ram could equal your love for this body, composed of skin and bones, then you could surely overcome the fear of *samsāra*—the cycle of birth and death !'

Ram Bola took these words to heart and at once retraced his steps from his father-in-law's house. Ratnavali begged him to stay ; her mother followed him a long distance, but he could not be turned back.

And since then for centuries the popular mind has dwelt in turns just on the burning *vairāgya* that lit up the heart of Tulsi at this moment, and then on the despair that seized Ratnavali at this unexpected loss of husband and home ; and the heart of the people has so swayed in sympathetic and conflicting emotion from one to another that this incident has found a permanent place in the great mass of the devotional consciousness of the nation. And we cannot help feeling that whether scholars and historians endorse or refute this

incident, it will nevertheless remain as part of a beautiful folk-lore handed by word of mouth from father to son.

Beni Madho Das says that Ratnavali was broken-hearted and died two years later. But tradition fondly keeps her alive to an old age when she once again meets Tulsi who is supposed to come unknowingly to her father's house for rest and food. Whatever the facts may be she disappears from his life at this stage and remains perhaps like the soft memory of a springtime between the wintry hard life of the orphan Ram Bola and the burning mid-summer-like renunciation of the recluse Tulsi.

Incidentally, in this connection, we must point out the noble path that the history of this country has forced upon its women. Throughout the Rajput history we know how many times women sent husband, brothers, and sons to the battlefield, sometimes hoping for the best, but when the odds were great, knowing for certain that death at the hands of the enemy awaited their menfolk. Tulsi's own Ram is a case in point. Were it not for mother Kausalya's sacrifice, could he have gone so light-heartedly into fourteen years exile, and were it not for Sita's close co-operation and understanding, could he have fulfilled the ideal of kingship which decreed that sovereigns do not reign for their own pleasure but for the welfare and happiness of the people ? Thus, it seems but right and proper that Ratnavali should burn for a short sweet moment as a beacon-light in the life of Tulsi. We would gladly, if we could, give to the reader a fuller account of this episode—whether the words were unconsciously spoken or whether they were the expression of her own mode of life and thought, but unfortunately the dark curtain of the past closes down on our attempt, and we are left with no option but of following Ram Bola in his life of wanderings.

(To be continued)



# IN MEMORIAM

BY SISTER AMIYA

It is with a feeling of great loss and sadness that we announce the death of Mrs Carrie Mead Wyckoff on July 23, 1949 in Hollywood.

Sister Lalita, as she was more familiarly known, was one of the 'Mead Sisters' who entertained Swami Vivekananda for six weeks in their home, seven years after his triumphant appearance at the Chicago Parliament of Religions. Thousands of American men and women met this brilliant young Swami from India, and listened to the ancient-yet strangely new-philosophy he preached, and each understood and accepted him according to his own development. Of Christ, Tennyson said: 'Thou seemest human and divine'; of Vivekananda Sister Lalita said: 'It was as if Christ himself had come in our midst.' She recognized in him the human and the divine, and that flaming spirit of divinity she worshipped for the rest of her life.

Later she met Swami Turiyananda, another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and he became her *guru*. It was he who foretold the 'quiet work' she was destined later to do to help establish the Vedanta movement already started by Swami Vivekananda.

For almost thirty years after her personal contact with holiness, this widowed mother followed the even course of her life, rearing her only son to maturity, and, by her own example, instilling in him the living truths she had learned from the wise. 'Be pure; be true; be strong!' How many times during those years he must have heard this golden precept, until it became a very part of both their lives.

When, however, the time came that her work should begin, she could see no connection between the sudden loss of her son in 1925 and her meeting with Swami Prabhavananda in 1928. Yet later she understood that it could not have been otherwise. For, although she did not know it, she had a great

service to render, and for that all personal ties had to be loosened. Therefore, when she met this young monk of the Ramakrishna Mission, arrived from India, her still grief-stricken heart went out to him, and immediately there sprang up between them a friendship which time only strengthened and which death cannot end.

Swami Prabhavananda had come from Portland to Los Angeles on a lecture tour, and when he was ready to return, he, half-jestingly, invited Sister Lalita to come to Portland with him. Shortly after his return she followed him, and lived with him there until, after more than a year, she herself suggested that he go with her to Los Angeles and open a Vedanta Centre in her home.

Thus it was that, in 1926, she offered her home and everything she owned to Swami Prabhavananda for the continuance of the work he had come to do. And she never looked back. She emptied her box of spikenard and then retired with such complete self-effacement and humility that very few casual visitors to the 'Vivekananda Home' ever knew of her presence.

When Swami Prabhavananda started his work in Hollywood, the household consisted of just the two of them, and together they cooked, kept house, and worked in the garden. Now, today, after twenty years, the household of the Vedanta Society of Southern California consists of more than 20 young men and women, divided between the Convent near Santa Barbara, the Monastery near Laguna, and the Centre in Hollywood.

Although Sister Lalita took no active part in the public work of the Vedanta Society, its growth had not been possible without her utter selflessness and quiet encouragement. Yet, in this self-retirement there was no stagnation. She grew with the



work, and every spiritual counsel she ever heard the Swami give to another, even to the latest comer, she applied to herself. The Swami gave her no personal spiritual instruction; she gleaned with the others and so attained the fulfilment of her life's purpose.

'Her eyes were homes of silent prayer,' and shone with the lustre of the Spirit. But she never preached, and only unwittingly spoke out of her own wisdom. Invariably she would preface her answers to questions by saying, 'Well, Swamiji used to say...' or, 'I read in one of the books....' But her answers were always right and always helpful. Her two most oft-quoted precepts were: 'Quit trying to rub out spots; keep your eye on the Goal,' and, 'Success is not in never falling, but in getting up each time.' And certainly her life was a living example of these precepts. She never gave up the struggle. Often she would say, 'No one is too old if one is really sincere.' As long as she was able, she went to the shrine room every morning and evening for meditation. Sometimes, before seating herself, she would remain prostrate before the shrine for a long time. One day the Swami questioned her about this practice; her explanation was

that at times she had to wait longer for the Light which always came whenever she bowed down before the Lord. In her humility she attributed every delay to her own unworthiness.

Thus her life became daily more exalted, and her eyes grew brighter by their contact with that Light. It is not possible for one to remain long in the consciousness of God and still live, and soon it became evident to those who knew her well that the sands were running low and that the time had come when the eyes must lose their brightness. With her last conscious breath she called aloud the names of her beloved Swamiji and Swami Turiyananda, and then, in still more ringing tones, the name of Ramakrishna. Many a time in later years she had stressed the power of that Name to one who, hearing it from her dying lips, could not doubt its truth.

Truthfulness, selflessness, and humility belonged to her. Loyalty, obedience, and unquestioning faith she cultivated, more for the benefit of those she left behind, than for her own need. And the memory of these things in her is our heritage.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Prof. Dr Helmuth von Glasenapp is the most distinguished German Indologist living. In *Germany and India* he gives a very interesting account of German Indology from its early beginnings up to now. Previously, in this year, we were able to publish two other accounts of Indology, one French and the other Soviet, from two outstanding French and Soviet Indologists of our time. Together these three articles cover a very large and important area of Indological researches in the West. For this reason they will be of in-

estimable value to all interested in the subject. We also hope that they will act as a great spur to Sanskritic studies in India. . . .

'*Ram's Wish*' by Gertrude Emerson Sen, author of *Voicelless India* and *The Pageant of India's History I*, is an inspiring and intimate picture of Sri Ram Maharaj whose consistent life of simple spirituality and reliance on God has left an abiding impression on so many who had met him. She knew him closely for many years, and the story told here so simply and well will be found greatly edifying. . . .

Mrs C. K. Handoo who is already known



to our readers has made a special study of the life and works of Tulsidas. *Tulsidas I* is the first part of her article on the saint's life; the second part will appear next month. The account of his works will be published serially in three articles from January 1950. The writer's approach is through the heart, which is the right one in such cases, for a mere intellectual discussion which fails to penetrate beneath the husk of things gives us little that is significant to life. . . .

### SHOULD SCIENCE TAKE A HOLIDAY ?

The question would have seemed ridiculous to a nineteenth century man, especially of the West. Today the thought seems to be entertained not among a few. There are evidences of a very critical attitude towards science; one can almost say there is some sort of revulsion against it and scientists among many. Some months ago Bertrand Russell, in a broadcast from the BBC, predicted the rise of a strong anti-scientific temper among the peoples of the world, unless the prostitution of science for destructive purposes was quickly put an end to. This is very true. The present critical attitude is in sharp contrast to the nineteenth century worship of science, when it seemed to stand for all that makes for freedom and happiness.

As usual the worship went to unreasonable lengths; there was a lot of confused thinking. Somehow or other men came to believe that free thought and enquiry and moral virtues were inseparably connected with the pots and tubes and mathematical tables in a laboratory. The twentieth century has, however, made the fact widely clear that science is ethically neutral. Science does not say which things are good and which bad. Taking some values for granted science can, of course, say a good deal about the way they are to be realized. There is something which is prior to science; and the value or its lack, of science depends on what ends it is made to serve. The ends of life are not 'scientifically' obtained—but known through other sources—which

of course does not mean that such knowledge is purely subjective.

The nineteenth century blind emotional attitude towards science arose when men in many parts of the West transferred their allegiance from the true God of Heaven to false idols of the earth. For this the Church which held the mind in sectarian bondage and in other ways stood against human happiness and freedom was largely responsible.

Today man is playing with the atom bomb as the ape in the *Hitopadesha* played with the carpenter's wedge and lost both tail and life. We can escape from such a catastrophic conclusion of science not by returning to early superstitions but by balancing science with a superior knowledge. The remedy lies in a large conception of science. We must stretch the term to include researches in fields which are other than the sensible. There is a prejudice that all knowledge of data which cannot be sensibly observed, weighed, or measured is in some sense subjective. But facts are not confined to the sensible realm alone. Our moral feelings do have an objective basis, which has been discovered by spiritual 'observers' (*rishis*). It is in this sense that *Shruti* or Scripture in India, is called *apaurusheya* which literally means of non-human origin. Stated in a modernized form this means that Spiritual Truth is not the subjective experience of a particular person but is an objective Reality. Those who have had experience of It were just observers.

We cannot do away with the rational approach to the problems of life. To do so would be suicidal and moving from the frying pan into the fire. When we emphasize moral values as prior to scientific knowledge we do not mean that moral values lack an objective, rational basis.. Unless we see the scientific character—in a broad sense—of a genuine spiritual quest, we shall be keeping alive a dualism which cannot but lead to destructive action. If you say morality lies beyond science, you mean it lies beyond truth, and when you say this you cannot have the same



respect for it as you have for what you know to be grounded in an objective reality. We must therefore have a conception of science that is wide enough to embrace all approaches to Truth. Not only that; the spiritual approach should be recognized as of the first

importance, since it alone gives us a knowledge of the end which science should serve. A spiritual view of science will give us the balance that is so badly needed today in a world torn by power politics and irrationality.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**SRIMAD-BHAGAVADGITA. TEXT, TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT AND OF THE GLOSS OF SRIDHARASWAMI. BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 536. Price Rs. 7.**

This is one of the many welcome latest additions to editions of the *Bhagavadgita*, which, when properly accomplished, imply an intensification of attempts at propagating the essence of the spirit of Indian culture. The majority of these editions take as their basis the standard text of the *Gita* as known to Shankara, and their rendering, when it has been carefully done, generally follows the exposition of the Acharya. Scholars have established it beyond doubt that, in spite of its *shrouta* affinity and inspiration, the *Bhagavadgita* was primarily and professedly a treatise of the school of the *Ekantins* (known in the *Mahabharata* itself as well as in the *Puranas*, the *Vishnu* and *Bhagavat* particularly), who like their cognates, the *Bhagavatas*, the *Pancharatras* and the *Sattvatas*, had peculiar leanings towards Bhakti as the dominant guiding principle in life. This indeed is the cardinal tenet running through the work *a lā sraksutranāyā*, like the thread of a garland. While it is a pity that glosses by thorough adherents of this school have not come down to us, it is a fact that an influential section of commentators belonging to the Shankara school and claiming traditional affiliation, have recognized this element and emphasized its importance. Sridhara reiterates this position towards the close of his gloss (*bhagavadbhakter-moksham prati sādhatamatva shravanāt*, xviii, 78) and in the genuine Vaishnava manner expresses his indebtedness to the tradition, particularly to his guru Paramananda. With a *double-entendre* on his name (in the last but one verse of his gloss as also in the first verse of the Introduction), which is sadly missed in the present rendering, he dilates on the significance of his own name (*shri-dhara*) betokening the 'putting on the glory' that has been 'bestowed by the dust of the lotus-feet' of the blessed teacher. The gloss of Sridhara who was one of the earliest of this class of commentators and who was followed by Nilakantha, Madhusudhana Sarasvati and Viswanatha Chakravartin, earned immense popularity all over India, though up till now no English rendering of this commentary was available. We are thankful to the learned Swamiji as

well as to the publishers for undertaking this job and for making the work available to the English-reading public.

The translation of the text, which generally, almost scrupulously, follows Sridhara's exposition, as well as the rendering of the *Subodhini*, the gloss by that author, are both dependable, readable, and lucid like the original, and will be of immense benefit to the general reader. The printing is neat and correct—printing mistakes are rather rare (e.g. p. 42 1.4, p. 364, 1.6 where "attained" is a misprint for "attended"). The rendering into a foreign tongue of a Sanskrit gloss, even when it is written in an easy style, and does not bristle with abstruse technicalities, as here, is by no means an easy task. The manner in which controversial issues, obscure passages (*kutās*) and incidental discussions, discourses, and digressions—of which there are plenty—have been tackled reflects much credit on the translator. We have no hesitation in saying that it will prove to be a boon to beginners in Indian scriptural studies, and we hope that it will soon pass through several editions and be highly popular.

SIVAPROSAD BHATTACHARYYA.

**MODERN THOUGHTS AND ZOROASTER. BY E. J. DIVECHA. Published by the author, 120, Perry Road, Bandra, Bombay. Pp. 142.**

This is an apologetical sketch of the ancient religion of Persia. The author has sought for his arguments a backing in modern science, which sometimes appears very queer. On the whole, the style of the book is sharp and aggressive; there is no trace of tolerance in it, let alone an attempt to understand other creeds in their own light.

Mr Divecha contends that Zoroastrianism is the only natural religion on this globe. We hold, however, that being natural—when this word is used in its usual sense—is not the criterion of the value of a religion. A teaching which is entirely based on the proof of the senses and the mind cannot be called a religious one. In this context, the author maintains that his faith considers such ideals as poverty and celibacy as against the laws of nature and as impracticable and objectionable. He goes so far as to charge persons who lived and preached these ideals throughout their lives with insincerity and fraud. We wonder whether all the well-known



saints and prophets come within this fold. The writer reveals some lack of psychological knowledge; it is vain to argue against the fact, well established by science, that continence is the main source of physical and mental energy. This is corroborated by the history of so many great persons of non-religious pursuits. Although renunciation is thus rejected, doing good to others is nevertheless claimed to be the highest virtue—we do not quite see how one can be got without the other.

The dogmatic contention that everything is predestined, along with a considerable number of other theological *a priori* claims, does not stand the test of reason, being full of inconsistencies. Surmising, however, that the author does not care particularly much for the judgment of philosophy, all that he states in defiance most of its incontrovertible conclusions must be excused; His book is certainly a good catechism of his conception of Zoroastrianism.

Mr Divecha holds that God can be known through a rationalistic approach; we should very much like to learn it from him, as it would simplify the strivings of many God-seekers enormously.

The author says that Zoroaster was the only sage who understood Nature thoroughly; he thus puts himself on a level with the Christian missionaries, who are claiming the same superiority and prerogative for their Master.

Chapter VII contains a very true verdict on priestcraft. 'Born of a priest is no certificate of the priest. Parrots sitting on the tree of knowledge singing sacred songs do not make priests.' (P. 25).

His observations on celibacy are statements of common prejudices, arising partly from a possible misunderstanding that it is meant for all.

The quotations from the *Gatha* given copiously are excellent and well arranged; their commentary, however, is subject to the above criticism. The reader will find a very clear and instructive exposition of the *Gatha*-teachings on Karma and rebirth. The author's repudiation of the Islamic and Christian ideas of heaven and hell reveal a sense of humour.

The chapters on the influence wielded by Zoroastrianism on other faiths reveal an eagerness on the part of the author to trace everything good, as he understands it, to Zoroastrian sources.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### TEMPLE AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHPLACE

#### AN APPEAL

The village of Kamarpukur in the Hooghly District, West Bengal, is hallowed by the birth of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of the modern age. It draws numerous pilgrims not only from all over India but also from abroad. In this village at the exact spot where Sri Ramakrishna was born a very modest memorial temple is being constructed. Sri Nandalal Bose, the eminent artist of India, drew up the plan of this temple in keeping with the rural environment and the parental cottages of the Prophet which are being preserved as they were. The temple in chunar stone has come up to the lintel level and already a sum of rupees forty-thousand has been spent. The work has now been suspended due to rains, but will be resumed from December. In order to complete the work a further sum of rupees forty-thousand is immediately needed.

Moreover to give a practical moral expression to the Prophet's message a dispensary and a school for the local benefit and a guest house for pilgrims from all countries have to be constructed. The execution of a modest plan for these will cost at least rupees thirty thousand.

Thus a sum of rupees seventy-thousand is required immediately to work out the entire scheme. Considering its importance and urgency we earnestly appeal to the general public and especially the admirers and followers of Sri Ramakrishna to come forward and donate liberally so that these works can be successfully carried out.

Contributions will be thankfully accepted by the General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission and Math, P.O. Belurmah, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA  
*General Secretary,*  
 Ramakrishna Mission and Math



# MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

## REPORT FOR 1948

*Origin and Growth* : The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati was started by Swami Vivekananda—far away in the interior of the Himalayas in the Almora district, U.P.—to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the Highest Truth in life. In addition to its religious and cultural work through publication of books and the magazine *Prabuddha Bharata*, and a Library consisting of about 6,000 select books on various subjects, the Ashrama also runs a hospital to serve the suffering humanity as embodied divinity, without any distinction of caste or creed, and high or low.

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being in response to most pressing local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that even the stoniest of hearts will be moved to do something for them. The regular dispensary was opened in 1903. Since then it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from a distance of even 50 to 60 miles taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

In the hospital there are 13 regular beds. But sometimes arrangements have to be made for a much larger number of indoor patients—there is so great a rush for admission. People come from such great distances and in such helpless conditions that they have to be accommodated anyhow.

The operation room is fitted with most up-to-date equipments and as such various kinds of major operations can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area. There is also a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Now almost all kinds of medical help that one can normally expect in a small town in the plains are available here.

The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor Department was 262 of which 204 were cured and discharged, 26 were relieved, 26 were discharged otherwise or left, and 6 died. In the Outdoor Department the total number of patients treated was 9,546 of which 7,977 were new and 1,569 repeated cases. Altogether 51 different kinds of diseases were treated and 58 operations were conducted.

The visitors' remarks show a great admiration for the tidiness, equipment, efficiency, and usefulness of the Hospital. Sri R. Choksi, Director, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Bombay, writes, 'I saw the work of the Hospital and was greatly impressed. A hospital, well-designed and well-equipped in this isolated mountain region, is a notable achievement and gives splendid expression to the Ramakrishna Mission's spirit of service in the cause of the poor and the neglected . . . I should like here to record my admiration for the work of the hospital.'

The hospital has to depend for the most part on the generous public for donations and subscriptions. The Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1948 shows Rs. 6,419-15-0 as the net expendable receipts, and Rs. 4,994-15-3 as expenditure during the year. The hospital needs funds for its improvement and expansion. Contributions for endowment of beds, one or more, may be in memory of near and dear ones.

The management expresses its grateful thanks for the donations by the generous public and hopes they will extend the same co-operation on which the work of the hospital depends and thus help to serve the sick and the diseased in this far-away mountain region.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned :

SWAMI YOGESHWARANANDA  
President, Advaita Ashrama,  
P. O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.