

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

Vol. LIV

JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1949



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य बरान्निबोधत ।”

‘Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.’

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LIV

JANUARY 1949

No. 1



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE EMBLEM OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

(*An Unpublished Letter*) *

July 24th 1900
102 E. 58th
New York.

Dear Joe,

The sun=Knowledge. The stormy water=Work. The lotus=Love. The serpent=Yoga. The swan—the Self. The Motto=May the Swan (the Supreme Self) send us that. It is the mind-lake. How do you like it? May the Swan fill you with all these anyway.

I am to start on Thursday next, by the French steamer La Champagne.

The books are in the hands of Waldo and Whitmond (?). They are nearly ready.

I am well, getting better—and all right till I see you next week.

Ever yours in the Lord
Vivekananda

* See next page for Facsimile of this Letter.



July 24th 1901

1029.58th New York

Dear Sir. The Sun = Knowledge
the Shiny water = work. The Lotus = Pure
the Serpent = yoga. The Swan = the Self.
The motto = May the Swan (the Supreme Self) lead
us that. It is the King-Lake. You say
like it - 2. May the Swan fill you with all
these anyway.

I am located in Thompson's Park, by
the Grand Steamer La Champagne.
The books are in the hands of Keshoo & Nathaniel
they are nearly ready.
I am well, getting better - as always
- will I see you next week.

his love in the land
Vivekananda

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELUR MATH, 1 JANUARY 1924.

Today is the first of January when the *Kalpataru* (the wish fulfilling tree) celebration takes place at the Yogodyan at Kankur-gachhi. Arrangements for special worship and offering have also been made at the Math. Devotees are coming since early morning ; the more so because it is a holiday. After visiting the shrine of the Master they have all collected in the room of Mahapurush Maharaj. He is also joyously talking to them on various subjects. A devotee, after saluting Mahapurush Maharaj respectfully, sat down saying, 'Happy New Year.' Mahapurushji smilingly, replied, 'Happy English New Year. Our New Year begins with the 1st of Vaishakh. Today the New Year begins for the English. Just consider what a change has come over our mentality thanks to the influence of English education and culture of a hundred and fifty years. We are about to lose our own distinctiveness and nationality. The predicament is due not simply to our being a subject nation. We have been subjects for a long time. The Mahomedans could not destroy our national character and culture even after holding us in subjection for eight or nine hundred years ; but such is the fascinating power of Western civilization and the skill with which the West has spread their ideas among us that we even fail to understand that their aim is to destroy the roots of our spiritual faith and culture. As a result of this, such a big nation has become so quickly Westernized in all respects. Slowly our mode of thinking also has undergone a radical change. The greatest harm that has been done is that the entire Hindu nation has by degrees lost faith in the vedic tradition. The general attitude has come to be this, namely, that whatever is contained in the *sanatana dharma* is all false and imaginary and whatever is being said by the standard-bearers of

Christianity is absolute truth. Their design was gradually to convert the whole Hindu nation into Christianity ; but it did not come to pass thanks to the Divine will. All spirituality in the world will perish if the perennial vedic tradition is lost ; it is for this reason that the Divine descended in the form of Ramakrishna to save the *sanatana dharma*. And he began his spiritual practices from that image-worship, the worship of God in a concrete form, which the Christians and the Western educated society had been deriding as idolatry. His practice of all kinds of faiths and his success in them have amazed the whole world. As a result, great minds of the West even have reverentially acknowledged the uniqueness and superiority of the vedic tradition in India. As a reaction to this the gaze of even the blind Indian imitators of the West has been turned upon the life of Sri Ramakrishna and along with it upon their own religion. The atmosphere of the country began to change since the appearance of the Master. Indians have begun to recover the self-confidence which they lost. The superhuman *tapasya* of the Master has awakened the *atmashakti*, power of Atman, of India. You will now find that unprecedented progress will be made in all departments in India. Swamiji has said that spirituality is the backbone of India. That backbone broke ; that is why she became weak and fainthearted. The Master has made the backbone once more healthy and strong. Now India will amaze the world, not by her spirituality alone but by achievements in all fields.

The Master has awakened that *brahma-shakti* (the Energy of Brahman) which is governing the manifested universe. Humanity will gradually understand what he has accomplished for the world. Ah ! Blessed are we that we lived with that perfect image of

the Divine, and could see, touch, and serve Him. His touch has made our lives blessed. Those who have not had the good fortune of seeing Him, but who have made Him the ideal of their lives and are shaping their character in accordance with His ideas will also be blessed. The Master's ideas are infinite—He is the Lord of the three worlds, an ocean of uncaused mercy, and the wish-fulfilling tree. He will give one whatever of these four ends of life, *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha* (virtue, wealth, enjoyment, and Liberation or Knowledge) one will sincerely pray to Him for. What more shall I say about Him?

The devotee: On this day he became the *kalpataru* (the wish-fulfilling tree), and bestowed grace on so many devotees.

Mahapurushji: Why today alone, He is the *kalpataru* for ever. His only mission was to bestow grace on people. We have seen before our eyes how many people used to receive His grace always and in how many ways. Of course, He bestowed His grace on many devotees at a time on this day at the Cossipore garden. For that reason this day has a particular significance. The devotees understood from the happenings of that day that he was an ocean of mercy.

The devotee: Maharaj, were you present there that day?

Mahapurushji: No. Why I alone, none among the *sanyasi* disciples of the Master was present there at the time. The Master was then seriously ill, and great *vairagya* (spirit of renunciation) filled our hearts. The Master's body was so sick that we used to nurse Him by turn for twentyfour hours of the day and night. The householder devotees used to come in the day according to their convenience and made arrangement for medicine, diet, and expenses etc. But we took upon ourselves the entire responsibility of nursing Him. Along with this nursing went tremendous spiritual practices. The Master also used to encourage us in that respect. He used to call each one

of us separately to Him and gave instructions as regards *sadhana*, and he would also enquire about the meditation and visions of each. At night Swamiji would light a *dhuni* (a log-fire after the traditional fashion of the *sadhus*), take us with him, and practise meditation and *japa*. Often there would be great singing and *kirtan*. The whole night would be spent in great joy, in nursing the Master by turn and in meditation and spiritual practice. Because we used to keep awake in the night, nearly all of us would sleep for a while in the afternoon after lunch. That day after lunch we were sleeping in a small room adjacent to the hall below. For the first and only time the Master came down on that day to take a little walk in the garden. The Master was slowly going towards the gate of the garden, when Girish Babu fell at his feet; prostrating himself before Him he began to recite a hymn of adoration with folded hands. Listening to the words of Girish Babu, conveying his wonderful love and faith the Master went into *samadhi* even while standing. The devotees, seeing that divine ecstatic mood of the Master, began to shout in joy 'Victory to Ramakrishna,' and saluted him over and over again. Gradually the Master's mind came down to the semi-conscious plane. Then, gazing at the devotees with eyes full of mercy he said, 'What shall I say? May you all be enlightened.' No sooner were these words uttered, a wonderful current of bliss began to flow in the hearts of the devotees. They began to shout 'Victory to Ramakrishna' and saluted Him repeatedly. He also touched nearly all of them, one after another, in that state saying, 'May you be enlightened.' At His divine touch each one of the devotees began to have wonderful experiences within. Some became absorbed in meditation, some began to dance in joy, some began to cry, and some began to shout 'victory' like mad persons. It was an event which can hardly be imagined. And the Master was standing surveying everything with delight. The

noise broke our sleep. We raced to the spot to find that all the devotees were surrounding the Master and behaving like mad men, while He was affectionately gazing at them with His sweet smiling face. When we reached the spot, the Master's mind had returned to the normal plane; but the devotees were still overpowered with the intoxication of that delight. Afterwards we came to know everything by making enquiries of the devotees. All said that they had wonderful spiritual experiences at the touch of the Master, and that the influence of the mood lasted for a long time. His touch could not but have such an effect. He is God Himself. But even on that day he did not touch one or two persons. He said to them, 'Not now, you will have it afterwards.' One can well understand from it that nothing can be achieved before the time is ripe. One must wait for the right time.

The devotee: But, Maharaj, by mere wish He can turn an individual's mind Godward and make the heart pure. Why doesn't He do so? If His mercy depends on devotional practices, how is it that He is called an ocean of unconditional mercy?

Mahapurushji: Yes, what you say is right. One says it just because one can't do without saying it. But in truth He is not to be found by means of spiritual practices. Besides, one cannot even say that He is to be found, for He is the true Self of all individuals—He is the Inner Self of all beings. Spiritual practices only remove the obstacles which obstruct an individual's inward vision. Then an individual knows his true Self and becomes one with the *antaratman* (Self within). It is just because He in His mercy is liberating an individual from the pall of ignorance, he feels an urge in the heart to find Him—this is His grace. But everything appears to happen according to law and certain uniformity. Just as to make a child grow into adolescence in a trice is an unnatural and vain attempt to achieve an end by sheer force, so also is the case with it. With the unfold-

ment of its mind and body, a child gradually grows into a boy, a youth, an adult and an old man. In the same way there are levels and sequence of emergence of Divine sentiments in the mind of an individual. What develops easily and naturally is alone right and has good effects. Of course, God can liberate all in a day by mere wish, for He is all-powerful. But He never does it. He is ordering the universe by a uniform law; He does not allow any deviation from it except for rare unusual reasons. There is not the least doubt that He is an ocean of unconditional mercy. If you could but know even a little how great is His grace and mercy for His creatures, the question whether or not He is an ocean of mercy could never find a place in the mind. That He descends on the earth in a gross corporeal form, moved by the misery of His creatures and in order to save them, is the greatest proof of all that He is an ocean of mercy. He is ever Perfect. He has nothing to gain or crave for. Yet moved by mercy He engages Himself in work for the salvation of individuals. There is only one kind of *vritti*, tendency, in His mind, which is Mercy or Love. Can one convey through words how merciful He is? It is a thing to be felt. Man is mad with play; does he ever try to feel His mercy? The Master used to say, 'If an individual tries to approach God by a step, God moves ten steps towards Him.' So great is His mercy. Never doubt His mercy; never even allow a thought of that kind to invade your mind. Go on calling on Him with love; your heart and soul will be filled with His mercy. Can these experiences be had in a day—or of a sudden? Gradually you will feel and have everything. Could we also understand properly how great is God's mercy for His creatures, if we had not seen the Master. He used to become restless and even cry in order to bestow His mercy. Who wants His mercy sincerely? Man is mad with the pleasure from sensate objects. Whoever wants Divine Bliss finds it also.

INDIA AND THE WORLD

BY THE EDITOR

The *Prabuddha Bharata* starts a new year with the present issue. It has been a fairly long existence, fifty-four years to be exact, the longest, in fact, for any English monthly in existence in India. Has it been worthwhile? On an occasion like this the mind inevitably turns to the past, not only to seek inspiration but to draw what lessons it can from it. A good look after is necessary for a good look before, necessary because one who can look back into the past is able to see far into the future. Fifty odd years is a sufficiently long stretch of time to put things in a perspective. But these fifty years have been exceptional. Old landscapes familiar for centuries have disappeared. New tides, strong and swift, sweep across the planet. An epoch has gone by, and the scene is transformed beyond imagination. It will be profitable, therefore, to enquire in the light of the present, whether the cause it was created to serve was worthy and whether it is of value still. The success or its lack it has had in its task is not for us to determine, even if that were possible. But if the idea to which it is dedicated proved right in the past and is still of supreme moment for today, we are sure to take the lesson to heart.

Fifty and odd years ago when Swami Vivekananda founded the magazine to speak the language of an *Awakened India*, India, to all outward appearance, was far from awakened. She lay inert and asleep. Was it not the sleep of death? Many thought it so. The efforts and noise made by the revivalists and reformers looked like pathetic attempts to resurrect the dead into life. They reminded many of the insignificant and convulsive movements of a decapitated torso. Indian culture was apparently in the iron grip of an inevitable death. The West had pushed its way all around the globe and was arrogantly proclaiming its power and supremacy. It had laid us flat and almost turned our life upside down.

It required an exceptionally courageous heart and an almost unbelievable farsight even to dream at the time that a new dawn was near, and that India would not only rise, at no distant date, as a strong, free, and united people, but would stand on a pinnacle of greatness never attained before.

But, still more amazing, the voice of Indian Destiny proclaimed that her revival would not be after the manner of the emergence of the irresponsible sovereign nation-states of Europe, worshipping the idol of a collective human power which reveals itself, not as love, but as organized brute force. 'India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the Spirit; not with the flag of destruction but with the flag of peace and love—the garb of the *sannyasin*; not by the power of wealth, but by the power of the begging bowl. . . .

'I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as light before me—that the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her Throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.'

Do the above words strike us as singularly prophetic and significant today, yes; but at the time they were addressed in 1893 by Swami Vivekananda to his admirers at Madras, and also afterwards till only yesterday, the vast majority of our own people were disposed to regard them as the frothy talk of a wild paranoiac. They were not to blame, for the assertions could hardly be reconciled with the facts as they saw around them then. Yet, the outlines of the picture of India that he saw are getting daily clearer with the passage of time, even to men of common understanding—like mountain shapes suddenly emerging into view from drifting mist. We have begun to talk generally, though vaguely, that India

is a country of Destiny. Are we clear what it means?

Most reformers and nationalists in those days and also in the recent past thought that the only chance of our getting even with the West was to fashion ourselves after its image and to master the Western technique of raising the collective power of man to an hitherto undreamt-of pitch. Japan went right ahead with this godless plan, and when she flattened Russia with her military flail early in this century, all Asia echoed with cries of *sabash*. Was not here an answer, right and adequate, to West's lust for power and brutality? But the Swami, in spite of his admiration for the discipline and patriotism of Japan, warned India to choose her course wisely, for if India succeeded in throwing overboard her broad conception of culture, and only made herself a carbon-copy of the West, she would inevitably come to grief. And if India died, who would live?

'Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct; all moral perfection will be extinct; all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct; all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest; fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies; and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be. The power of suffering is infinitely greater than the power of doing; the power of love is infinitely greater than the power of hatred. Those that think that the present revival of Hinduism is only a manifestation of patriotic impulse are deluded.'

The problem of India, the Swami felt, was also the problem of the world. She was destined by reason of her ancient wisdom to play a capital part in the future civilization of mankind. In the give and take of cultures she has infinitely more to give than she has to receive.

II

The Swami claimed to preach nothing new, but he was far from a conservative or a reviva-

list. He was a radical who gave an upto-date and authoritative interpretation of the broad truth of our culture. He spoke with the accents of authority derived from the experience of Truth. He saw things as a whole, and felt that the first thing necessary for us was to recover the true sense of our tradition in order that we might build up a free and just society on the basis of a spiritual conception of life. This was essential not only for India's resurgence but also for the reconstruction of humanity. Unless we recognize the facts of spiritual life and those transcendent values which give meaning to our struggles and sufferings we shall never be able to set limits to the operations of power politics which today threaten to destroy civilization.

India touched a new low in her decline, because she had lost the broad conception of her culture and became partial. But the ancient fire was not dead; it only slept and burned slow under cover of ashes. It was upto us to stoke it up again into a mighty flame. Two things were necessary to do this. First, the country must be flooded with the noblest truths of the Spirit. This would restore faith and dignity to her people, without which no creation of a just and liberal society is possible. Vedanta must become practical and come to the field, the factory, and the market-place. Vedantic culture in its highest form was in the past limited to a small minority of population; its conceptions had not been realized in widespread practice in society and politics. Yet, the values it had realized and the spiritual tradition it had maintained have persisted into our day. Aided by the new technique of our time these values and this tradition must be reasserted with a greater power and on a wider scale. Every individual must be given opportunity not only to develop to the best whatever gifts nature has endowed him with but to realize the divine truth that is in him or her.

Vedanta, of course, would form the basis of Indian reconstruction, but she must also get even with the West in matters of science,

technique, and intellectual supremacy. The two basic qualities of a true and genuine culture are (1) its ability to understand the facts of life as they exist, and (2) its capacity to transcend these facts by a spiritual conception of life. Unless we recognize the facts as they are we shall always practise escapism of one kind or another, fatal, in the long run, to the society and culture. The West has been practising in the modern era a sort of escapism by refusing to recognize the facts of individual and of political life as they exist, for its secular movements in the nineteenth century proceeded on the assumption that freedom, peace, and happiness of mankind could be permanently secured by a political or economic scheme, whether it is of the Marxist or the liberal democratic variety. But the lust for power and mastery is inherent in man and will find new expressions always, until and unless it can be countered and limited by a spiritual conception of life. Similarly India in her days of decline thought that she could concentrate on spiritual perfection in disregard of the brute facts of life. One cannot jump at perfection any more than one can jump out of one's skin. A good philosophy is aborted by lack of vigorous action and objectivity. The facts of life as they exist cannot be bypassed, but must be squarely faced.

India must modernize her laws and institutions, her economy and polity, with the help of science and technology, for without such efficiency she will ever remain a prey to the West's lust for power and domination. Without it, she will not be able to pull herself out of the poverty and stagnation into which she had fallen and will fail to reassert the values of her culture on a wider scale. But science and technology must be pressed into the service of a spiritual idea. The aim of life is not to cultivate the senses and make the best of this world, though comfort and power have definite places in the order of values (*purushartha*) and in a total scheme of life (*varnashrama dharma*). Vedanta and

technology, spiritual aim and intellectual supremacy, will be the two legs on which a spiritual and modernized Indian society would stand. Without any one of these it would be lame and come to grief. It is only a synthesis of this kind that can fulfil the hearts' desire of humanity for peace and happiness and significant living.

The West has solved the problem of material power. Science has touched upon the very foundations of physical reality; this limit cannot be transcended by scientific method. Physics has reached the bottom with the splitting of the atom. Further discoveries will be concerned with filling out the 'white spots' in the map. There are no more continents to discover. For ages India has maintained a spiritual tradition which has touched the very bottom, so far as religious and ethical queries are concerned. This spiritual experience of unity cannot be transcended, it can only be interpreted and understood in new terms and ways as analytic knowledge of objective reality marches forward. This tradition is in perfect agreement with the findings of reason in the objective sphere. The spiritual quest as also the scientific are searches after the same truth, in different planes. They have met today in the sense that science has relinquished the search for absolute truth to metaphysic. The truth of fact is ultimately also the truth of value, for the aim of life is, in the final analysis, knowledge (*jnana*).

India alone, therefore, offers a suitable field for the synthesis of science and religion. It has always recognized two sources (*pramana*) of truth, the temporal and the timeless. Truths of fact are derived from sense-perception (*pratyaksha*), while the truths of value are premises derived ultimately from superconscious perception (*shabda*). The two kinds of premises together provide the basis of rational and intelligent living.

The emergence and failure of humanism in the modern West teach us two lessons. Humanism emerged as a movement to preserve

the moral values of Christianity, apart from its spiritual climate, for the secularized culture of the 'scientific' West. Historical Christianity had failed because of its inadequate world-view, its lack of sound psychology, and its cutting adrift of religion from an empirical basis. Religion became a dogma, and instead of becoming a power for good and a means for the transformation of character, which is the essence of religion, it became fanatical and persecuting, suppressing free thought and conscience, and attempting to make men good by coercion. Official Christianity came into conflict with science and lacked clear knowledge of the essential truth of religion. It was innocent of the psychological facts of human personality.

But humanism has failed in its attempt to preserve moral values by detaching them from their spiritual roots, for it made the opposite mistake of believing that human life can be made peaceful and happy without a discipline or goal in which an individual might transcend himself. This left a vacuum in men's minds, an emptiness and craving, which in the absence of right satisfactions, seized upon false ones, like nationalism, fascism, and communism. Secular humanism was a romantic version of materialism in as much as it believed that if we made the life of men materially well-off, they will find it good enough in itself. But this was a mistake, for physical comfort not only suffocates spirit, but provides very short-lived satisfaction. Apart from it, it believed that by a sheer act of the will on the part of the individual either through reform of society or through education, or through moral exhortation, man can be changed and can be made to abandon the evils of politics and the lust for power out of which all social evils grow. A secular conception of life which aims at making the best of this world offers no real inducement to the will to act morally in all situations and in crises. One can be a villain whenever it suits one.

III

The experiment of secularism in the West has failed—that is how, at least, some of the best minds of America and Europe think. So there is a growing and insistent demand from men who stand on top in so many fields of learning and research to put back the secular superstructure of Western civilization back on to its spiritual foundations. But the question remains whether the West has a spiritual foundation, broad and strong, to bear the weight. Has the West a spiritual tradition requisite for the purpose? Let the West speak through its own spokesmen.

Last year the British Broadcasting Corporation organized a series of remarkable broadcasts on the subject of Western tradition. Europe at present stands divided into two hostile camps roughly along the Stettin-Trieste line, the line of the Iron Curtain. This division, it is assumed, goes deeper than political or economic differences, and is held to rest upon fundamental cultural divergences. This has focussed attention upon those elements of unity in the West which make it possible to speak of a Western civilization as distinct from the Eastern. While Russia and her satellites share science and technology in common with the West, the latter is held to differ from the former in its loyalty to certain basic values. (Spain is an exception, it would appear.) These values are claimed to have formed a consistent Western tradition for centuries.

The distinguished contributors to the series, however, did not come to any agreement about the precise character of the Western tradition, though they spoke with one voice in telling what it is that they valued in a civilization.

The series of talks were summed up by Bertrand Russell and Arnold Toynbee. Their observations are worth noting. Bertrand Russell takes the view that science and tolerance are distinct products of the modern West, which may be said to have begun around 1500 A. D. They distinguish Western Europe

from the rest of the world, and they alone offer the only hope for its survival. Toynbee, on the other hand, maintains that the hope of Western civilization rests with religion, and, further, that there is no Western tradition at all, properly speaking. He, of course, admits that there is a Christian tradition, but finds it hard to reconcile Christopher Dawson's (one of the contributors) equation of Western and Christian tradition with the facts as he sees them. Toynbee says that the West lacks a genuine tradition in the sense that it has definitely decided in favour of a particular way of thinking and valuing and acting, and has adhered to it consistently throughout its history. His observations appear to us to be very revealing.

Toynbee points out that the speakers on the Western tradition agreed on the value of the individual soul, but there was not the same agreement on the part played by individual liberty in it. Some thought that it had been a capital part, while others held that the prevailing current in Western history was not towards individual liberty but towards totalitarianism. The speakers have not agreed further on what the essence of the Western tradition is. Does it stand for individual liberty, or is its tendency towards totalitarianism, or has not the West thrown Christianity overboard in favour of technology?

Toynbee pronounces his opinions on these conflicting views as follows: 'I have to confess that I find myself less in agreement with the majority of the speakers, who seem to be inclined to take it for granted that our Western civilization is the flower of human achievement than I am with Canon Demant and Mr. Taylor, who are both critical of our Western way of life—though this from two very different points of view.'

'Is there such a thing as "the Western tradition"? There is, I am sure, a Christian tradition; but when Mr Christopher Dawson said that the Western tradition was

nothing more or less than the tradition of Christendom, I found myself for the first time that I can remember disagreeing with him. I wish I could agree with him about this, above all things, but I cannot reconcile his equation of "Western" and "Christian" with the facts as I see them. I do not believe there has ever been a Western tradition. I think there has always been a western battlefiled, on which a Christian tradition and an incompatible pagan tradition have been fighting for dominion over Western souls. The story of that battle is Western history as I see it.'

Toynbee, in his analysis, arrives at a remarkable conception of the fundamental dynamic factors of history. While he denies that the West can claim the Christian tradition as its own, he shows profound insight in regarding history as a drama of the fight between the *deva* and the *asura*, the divine aspiration and the demoniac urges in man. This brings him into perfect agreement with the age-old Indian conception of history as a fight between the god and the titan for dominion over men's souls (*dvau bhuta-sargau loke asmin daiva asura eva cha*) These are the two types of civilization. The struggle in the collective human sphere is again no more than a repetition on a wider social scale of the fight between God and Devil in the soul of man, the varying fortunes of which make the warp and woof, the changing pattern and colours of the unfolding fabric of civilization. History is not a story of selfishness (whether of individuals, groups, or classes, or races) as Nazism and Marxism have tried to explain dogmatically with a pretentious jargon; it is the record of the vicissitudes of a Divine Idea trying to impose its pattern on an apparently intractable material.

The observations that Toynbee has made are worthy to be taken to heart. The laws and the free institutions of Europe developed in the moral climate formed by Christianity.

But the West has tried since the beginning of the sixteenth century to cut its culture adrift from its spiritual soil. The shock of the two world wars and the present sky darkening with the clouds of a third, have however made it clear that technical progress in a secular climate becomes destructive of liberty and civilization.

IV

Seen in this light, there does not appear to be any fundamental divergence between the Eastern and the Western civilizations of Europe, for both are godless and secular. The active barbarism of communism is matched by the passive, unrecognized barbarism of capitalism, nationalism, and racialism, which go on grinding masses of men as pitilessly as any openly godless scheme. The West has loved liberty at home, but has not thought it a right commodity for export. Its brutal face and clubs and claws are well known all over the globe. The lip-service which the West pays to God (*namayajna*) is calculated to hide its brutal activities at home and abroad. The Russian system is essentially a product of the West, secularized by faith in the divine right of sensation. The communist threat is a boomerang on its return course, shot earlier by Western thought. The West seems powerless to resist by arms and dollars the mighty strides of the Russian colossus, for the people behind the Iron Curtain are not only impelled by hunger but also inspired by an ideology that fills their heads with a straight-cut, understandable philosophy, however defective and false that may be. The West has nothing to offer similar in kind and effectiveness; it is not only divided at home by mounting class antagonisms, but is inwardly crushed for lack of a faith that can stand its ground against the challenge of secularism without intellectual evasions of any kind.

This vacuum in the hearts of men, to fill which they turn to desperate means, can only be fulfilled by a liberal faith resting upon a rational and verifiable basis. This, as we see it, India alone can contribute, provided she

remains loyal to her thousands of years of consistent tradition, which is, perhaps, the most remarkable episode in the annals of any race, or people, or civilization. The value which we attach to the individual and which is for us the true test of a civilization will remain a sentiment, as likely as not to be respected, if it is not grounded upon a truth with which we can make contact as an object, though in this case the 'object' forms also the subject. Christian tradition has proved narrow historically and can survive if only it is liberalized to become acceptable to a rational mind.

It has become a fashion to say that religion lies outside reason. This is generally misunderstood to mean that religious experience belongs to a realm in which the writ of reason does not run. This makes way for fantastic notions and claims, which have justly been suspected by the scientific mind. The essence of rationalism is objectivity. When it is said that religion is outside reason it is meant that religion is a matter of concrete experience, though of an order other than what our senses make us aware of.

Indian tradition of spirituality has maintained a perfect balance between reason and religion. It recognizes the facts of life as they exist and it also gives a spiritual interpretation of life capable of transcending these facts. It takes life as a whole, and so its conception of existence is integral. It is this tradition that supplied the power with which India has achieved her political freedom. Mahatma Gandhi's great contribution was that he accepted politics as a fact and transcended it by a spiritual conception. The artistry of his life has been commented upon. It was so in fact, for a transcendental spiritual aim imposes a pattern of harmony on life and gives it the beauty of a supreme object of art.

The eyes of the world are on India, we say. Surely the West does not seek to draw inspiration from a carbon copy of its civilization. It has sensed something different and of an abiding value in Indian culture. What it is we

have hinted at above. It is this idea which lies at the back of the *Prabuddha Bharata* and which it has tried to bring all these years to the fore. It might have been ridiculed in the past, for then our eyes were dazzled by the fierce

light from the West. Today the tide is turned, and it will be well with us and the world if we take the lesson to heart and work out the destiny reserved for us. *Vande Mataram*.

THE PLACE OF SANSKRIT IN THE NEW CURRICULUM

BY DR ROMA CHAUDHURI

Education being the very back-bone of a nation, it is in the fitness of things that immediately after the attainment of the long-cherished goal of independence, Indian educationists have in right earnest taken up the problem of adult education and the reorientation of our entire educational outlook and policy. In West Bengal, an experts' committee has been set up by the Government to recommend a new curriculum of studies for primary and secondary education. One of the main problems that confronts the committee is to work out a happy compromise between the conflicting claims of different subjects, like languages, on the one hand, and science and economics, on the other. As it is, an Indian child is committed to the study of at least four languages : lingua franca, mother tongue, English, and a classical language. We do not know as yet what would be the final decision of the Government in this respect. But we are alarmed to find that some responsible non-official bodies (like the All-Bengal Teachers' Association) have voiced the opinion that the curtailment of the classical language, Sanskrit (or Arabic), is the only means of relieving the over-burdened students of an unweildily lengthy language course, and thereby letting them free to devote more time and energy to the study of practically useful subjects, like science and economics. Such deplorable attempts to reduce Sanskrit to the level of a mere optional subject, even in the Matriculation course, have been made many a time

before. But what strikes us as specially strange is that even to-day, even in Free India, a single voice should be raised against the inclusion of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject in the Matriculation curriculum—however great the difficulties be. The over-lengthiness of the language-course should be rectified by other means, such as, depth rather than length of syllabus, more attractive methods of teaching and the like. But the unceremonial exclusion of Sanskrit will undoubtedly make the cure worse than the disease. It is really regrettable that even some prominent educationists have taken it into their heads that Sanskrit being altogether useless in the modern practical world of ours, it would be foolish to insist on the compulsory study of a 'dead' language from a false sense of nationalism. But apart from nationalism—which, after all, is not something to be deprecated—the practical utilities of the study of Sanskrit are so very obvious that it seems unnecessary to dwell on them at length. But it is a strange paradox that what is obvious often escapes our notice.

However, here we propose to point out very briefly just a few of those great utilities of the study of Sanskrit. First, Sanskrit is the basis, the very life-blood of nearly all the Indian languages, like Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Kanarese, and so on. If we take the case of Bengali specially, it will not be an exaggeration to say that it is the eldest grand-daughter of Sanskrit. Chaste Bengali

is practically but a simplified form of Sanskrit with the verbs changed. Most Bengali words are nothing but Sanskrit ones, original or derivative. Bengali spellings, too, are so. The rules of Sanskrit grammar regarding conjunction of words, compounds, gender, case-endings etc. are still today followed in Bengali grammar in many cases. Hence, any one wishing to learn Bengali well and scientifically must of necessity have at least some knowledge of Sanskrit, too. Further, at present, with the introduction of Bengali as the medium of instruction, a determined effort is being made by specialists in different branches of study to replace the commonly used English terminology with a Bengali one. Most of these newly introduced technical Bengali terms have been borrowed from Sanskrit, or derived from original Sanskrit words. The first part of '*Bengali Technical Words*' published by the West Bengal Government illustrates this. Thus since both, a student desiring to know his mother-tongue well as well as a specialist striving to frame a suitable terminology in Bengali for making it a world-language, must have some knowledge of Sanskrit, how can one characterize the study of Sanskrit as useless?

Further, from the point of view of our every-day life, too, the study of Sanskrit is absolutely necessary. Even today, all our religious rites and rituals, like worshipping the Deity, offering oblations, marriage, obsequies etc. are conducted through the repetition of Sanskrit *mantras* and hymns, from the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Grihya-sutras* etc. But if we do not possess at least that much knowledge of Sanskrit as to understand clearly the meaning of those *mantras* etc., what is the use of merely repeating them parrot-like after the priests or from books? According to the *Grihya-sutras* and *Smritis*, it is a grave sin to utter *mantras* without understanding their meaning. But are we not committing this very great sin day after day? In our daily (*nitya*) religious ceremonies, like repeating

the *Gayatri mantra* early in the morning, performing the *sandhya* ceremonies etc., as well as in occasional (*naimittika*) religious ceremonies, like marriage etc. we are equally guilty—e.g. what a pity and what a great shame that during the wedding ceremony, the holy vedic *mantras* that unite the hearts of the couple appear to them, in most cases, to be but a string of meaningless words! Hence, every one who professes himself to be a Hindu must possess at least that much knowledge of Sanskrit as would enable him to understand Sanskrit *mantras* etc. Some may hold that it is not at all necessary for us to take the trouble of learning Sanskrit in order that we may understand the meaning of our *mantras* etc. for, these may be easily translated into Bengali. But, in that case, in order that the *Vedas* etc. may be correctly translated, the study of Sanskrit should be encouraged. Also translation, however accurate or literal, can never replace the original, either in sense or in sound. Further, the Hindus take the *Vedas* to be eternal, but if they are willing to take a mere temporal translation as the authoritative basis of their religion, then the *Vedas* become non-eternal. Hence, it is strange that a Hindu, claiming the *Vedas* to be eternal and ever-true and the very foundation of his religion should yet be averse to the study of Sanskrit. Hence, the study of Sanskrit, the very vehicle of Hindu religion, is essential for all Hindus.

Sanskrit is the vehicle, not only of Hindu religion, but of the entire Indian culture and civilization. The great truths discovered by our forefathers in all the different branches of knowledge, like religion, philosophy, ethics, economics, and politics, science, arts etc., have, from time immemorial, been expressed and preserved through the medium of Sanskrit. It is no exaggeration to say that Sanskrit literature is by far the richest literature in the whole world. Its great wealth—both in number and variety—really staggers imagination. First, take the case of number. In the British Museum and India Office Libraries

in London alone there are thousands of Sanskrit printed books. Throughout the continents, too, numerous Sanskrit books have so far been collected. The number of Sanskrit books printed in our country is not less than several lacs. Besides these, there are manuscripts, the exact number of which it is impossible to determine. Thousands of such manuscripts have been collected in India and abroad. But many more thousands have been destroyed through the ravages of time, through the vandalism of foreign rulers, through the carelessness of people. Many lie hidden even today in temples and underground shelters, and in the houses of private individuals. If we add all these up, the total will make any one dumb with wonder. It is indeed a great pity that neither the authorities nor the public are making any serious attempt to unearth and collect this great national wealth, or publish these invaluable treatises containing the lofty thoughts of those master minds of old.

Just as in number, so in variety of topic, too, Sanskrit literature easily surpasses any other known literature in the world. Even a bare description of this requires a separate volume. We here mention only the bare names of ten main divisions of Sanskrit literature: philosophy and religion, *Smṛiti*, *Purana*, epics etc; belle literature, rhetorics and prosody, grammar and philology, lexicons, economics, politics and sociology, sexology, sciences, fine and practical arts. Under each of these, there are branches and sub-branches, far too numerous to be mentioned here by name even. Thus, in both numerousness and all-pervasiveness of contents, Sanskrit literature stands unrivalled indeed. It is sheer foolishness to urge that we have no need of this unimaginably vast treasure that we have so very fortunately inherited from our ancestors, simply because it is old. We are eager to spend much time and energy for learning many European languages in order that we may know at first-hand their cultures and civilizations. But we do not think it

worth-while to learn Sanskrit and know something about our own glorious culture and civilization. Again, the Western nations themselves are encouraging the propagation of Sanskrit learning, but we still seem to be quite indifferent to it. It is by no means false nationalism to insist on the study and propagation of Sanskrit. For, the first necessity for a slave nation on gaining freedom is to regain self-confidence and national pride—confidence that does not stultify but exhilarate nation-building activities, pride that does not retard but accelerate national progress. Towards this end, also the study of Sanskrit is an invaluable help.

The above is a very brief account of only a few of the outstanding merits and essential utilities of the study of Sanskrit from the standpoints of learning, religion, and culture. Considering all things, the demand that Sanskrit should be made compulsory for every Hindu child for only five years (classes V to X) is, we think, a very modest one. If we had our way, we should have recommended it to be made compulsory upto the Degree course. In any case, even within five years, students may acquire a good working knowledge of, and also a real taste for, Sanskrit, if the curriculum be chosen wisely, and—what is more important—improved methods of teaching adopted. The most necessary thing here is to bring about a complete change in the outlook of the student community regarding the study of Sanskrit. It is still to-day regarded as a matter of good joke—as something that is practically and economically useless, and so not to be taken at all seriously. Even a few years ago, Bengali was also in the very same sorry predicament. But through the efforts and co-operation of the authorities and the public, the picture has changed completely in course of a very short period. We earnestly appeal to the authorities—Governments and Universities—to take similar steps immediately to restore Sanskrit,—the life-blood of our culture and civilization, no less of world civilization—to restore

it to its pristine glory, to its place of honour in education and society, so that every citizen of free India, whatever be his creed or community, thinks himself duty bound to learn

well this great language, 'this language of Gods,' that has ever served as the only connecting link between province and province of this vast sub-continent of ours.

NIVEDITA'S PERSONALITY*

BY DAYAMOY MITRA

'Of all persons who truly loved India, Sister Nivedita was the foremost;' writes Abanindranath Tagore, India's most famous artist and founder of the new school of Indian art, 'she lived in a small house at Baghbazar where we used occasionally to visit her. It was she who sent Nandalal (the famous artist) to Ajanta. I met her first at the residence of the American consul where a reception was held in honour of Okakura. Nivedita was one of the invited. She came draped all over in a white robe and with a necklace of *rudraksha* beads round her throat, everything about her suggestive of a sculptured figure in white marble. ... How superb she looked at the time I have no language to describe.' And on another occasion, I saw her towards evening in a party at Justice Holmwood's, in the midst of a huge gathering of the fashionable aristocrats of the city, where wives of rajas, maharajas, big white officials and their *memsahibs* were present, clad in all their finery, many of them celebrated beauties, with their novel coiffure, gay rich costumes, the whole making a gorgeous display of riches and fashion and physical charm. She had the same white dress of a nun, the same *rudraksha* beads, her hair not altogether gold, but mixed gold and silver, tied up in a knot, she stood there among them, the most beautiful of all. It seemed as if the light of the stars had paled all at once before the moon—the fairest of

memsahibs lost her charm of beauty beside her. At once the whisper went round: "Who is she? Who is she?" You all talk of beauty. You know I have an ideal pattern of beauty before my mind's eye—that beauty which I saw in Nivedita. For me, the beauty of Mahashveta in *Kadambari*, the beauty carved in 'moonstone' had taken shape in Nivedita. She had an indefinable divine halo round her. How can I give you fittingly the impression of that beauty? I don't see any one like her; there is no parallel to set beside her. After her death, I secured a photo of her from Gonen Maharaj, which I always kept on my table. One day Lord Carmichael asked: "Who is this?" "This is Sister Nivedita," I answered. "Oh, is she Nivedita?" was his surprised exclamation and the next moment, without even asking my permission for it, he snatched it up, held it secure under his arm and was gone. If I had that photo in my possession, still, I could make you understand what perfect beauty is. Like moonlight on marble, she looked so charming, so quiet, so self-possessed. To talk with her was to be inspired with the courage of self-confidence.¹

This is how Nivedita appeared to the enraptured vision of our greatest artist and painter, Abanindranath. Everyone who has seen Nivedita will, of course, know that her beauty was more beauty of the soul than of

* Miss Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita), born 1867, died 1911.

¹ From the Bengali of Abanindranath's *Jorashankor Dhare*.

physical appearance. In fact, it was the soul within her that illumined the body, for earthliness in any form, mere physical beauty, can never emit the radiant glow that she shed around her. It required an artist of Abanindranath's spiritual vision truly to discern and appreciate this fact. But his picture is complete only when we read it in the light of the exquisitely-worded character-sketch of Nivedita written in Bengali by the poet Tagore himself. He wrote: 'Surely I feel that one who has seen her and known her has seen with one's own eyes the glory of man's soul in a living human body, the glory that declared its presence in all its indomitable energy by entirely shattering to pieces the gross integument in which it is wrapped. To see this with one's own eyes is surely the greatest good fortune that can ever befall a human being. We consider ourselves blessed because in Sister Nivedita we saw with our eyes the invincible soul of man manifest before us in a human body.'²

The poet then goes on, in his powerful way, recounting to us her many qualities of head and heart and concludes by comparing her life of exemplary self-sacrifice to the *tapasya*, the austerities performed by Sati herself for her Lord Shiva. "The Sati in Nivedita gave her life as a sacrifice to Shiva that resides in the heart of men. One day, the great Lord himself, came in disguise to Sati when she was undergoing the severest *tapasya* and tried to dissuade her: "Pious Lady," he said, "I pity you. You are so lovely and beautiful yourself, but he, for whom you are practising such austerities, is poor and old, ugly, and deformed—his ways and manners, too, are queer and eccentric." To this the ascetic Sati gave the answer: "Whatever you say, may be true, but still my mind is steadfast in single-minded devotion to him and to him alone."² Like Sati's love for her Lord, Nivedita's love for India was 'steadfast

² From the Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore's *Parichaya*.

in single-minded devotion.' She loved us in spite of our poverty and miseries, our failings and short-comings. And because of this great devotion, Tagore points out, she never suffered from the inevitable reaction of certain other types of men and women of the West who come to live amongst us, carried away perhaps either by their admiration for a great Indian or the greatness of our philosophy. They come expecting a great deal; they cannot love us as we are. 'There admiration for India is conceived in the darkness of their brain only—it cannot stand the broad light of day.' This is perfectly true, but we should not also forget how much of hard preliminary training was at the back of Nivedita's firm attitude of devotion to India. It came to her not only through her respect for a great Indian, her readiness for absolute self-sacrifice, but also through a touch of the kind which our ordinary consciousness does not make a reckoning of.³ She was singularly fortunate in this.

³ Of this she writes: 'My relation to our Master at this time can only be described as one of clash and conflict. I can see now how much there was to learn, and how short was the time for learning to be, and the first of lessons doubtless is the destroying of self-sufficiency in the mind of the taught. . . . And then a time came when one of the older ladies of our party, thinking perhaps that such intensity of pain inflicted might easily go too far, interceded kindly and gravely with the Swami. He listened silently and went away. At evening, however, he returned, and finding us together in the verandah, he turned to her and said, with the simplicity of a child, "You were right. There must be a change. I am going away into the forests to be alone, and when I come back I shall bring peace." Then he turned and saw that above us the moon was new, and a sudden exaltation came into his voice as he said, "See! the Mohammedans think much of the new moon. Let us also with the new moon begin a new life!" As the words ended, he lifted his hands and blessed, with silent depths of blessing, his most rebellious disciple, by this time kneeling before him. . . . It was assuredly a moment of wonderful sweetness of reconciliation. But such a moment may heal a wound. It cannot restore an illusion that has been broken into fragments. And I have told its story, only that I may touch upon its sequel. Long, long ago, Sri Ramakrishna had told his disciples that that

Born of Irish parentage and thoroughly English in her education and upbringing, Miss Margaret Noble was equipped with the best of Western culture of her day, before she entered upon her career of teaching in London. She became very soon the guiding spirit of an enthusiastic band of bold experimenters in education, who were also earnest seekers of religious and philosophic truth. She had passed through several phases already in her attitude towards orthodox Christianity when she came into contact with Swami Vivekananda in London. Miss Noble disputed and argued long with the Swami before she got over her doubts and decided finally to devote her life to his work for Indian womanhood. Her brother, Mr Richmond Noble, wrote after she passed away: "That my sister should have obeyed Swamiji's call was nothing wonderful, for I myself saw Swamiji and I know his power. One had only to see and hear Swamiji and to say to oneself "Behold the man." One knew he spoke truth for he spoke with authority and not merely as a scholar or as a priest. Swamiji brought certainty with him, he gave assurance and confidence to the enquirer. ...It was certainty which led her to obey the call fearlessly, and once having obeyed without hesitation she never had cause to regret."

Miss Margaret Noble was thus transformed into Nivedita, the 'Dedicated,' which was the name chosen for her by Swamiji. 'Noble' was her family name, which Swamiji's spiritual genius converted into Nivedita, and nobly

day would come when his beloved "Noren" would manifest his own great gift of bestowing knowledge with a touch. That evening at Almora, I proved the truth of his prophecy. For alone, in meditation, I found myself gazing deep into an Infinite Good, to the recognition of which no egoistic reasoning had led me. I learnt, too, on the physical plane, the simple everyday reality of the experience related in the Hindu books on religious psychology. And I understood, for the first time, that the greatest teachers may destroy in us a personal relation only in order to bestow the Impersonal Vision in its place.' *The Master As I Saw Him*—ch. The Awakener of Souls.

and devotedly did she live up to the significance of both these names.

Swamiji passed away in 1902, and everything seemed dark for a while. She had started her work in a tentative way in 1898, and as yet she could hardly make much headway, for the work was none too easy. She did not come to India like a Christian missionary seeking for converts. She was herself to live the life of a strict Hindu *brahmacharini* realizing the ideal in her own life and helping others to realize it. Anyone who knows orthodox India will at once understand the tremendously difficult task she had set before her. She had to steer her path carefully through old prejudices and superstitions and even perversities that misinterpreted her motives. It was a task which would have broken the spirit of many a reformer, less ideal-minded than she was. But she lived to triumph over all odds. Her school was a very tiny affair but the magnitude of its influence was great. Nature employs all her vast resources in hiding the growth of the tiniest of seeds that later grow into huge kings of the forest. Her work for the school was only the first step in the stupendous work of nation-building which she was gradually to confront. As it happened, there was a quick change of situation by the year 1905, and Nivedita felt an urgent call to serve the nation in as many ways as she could, apart from the work she was already doing for her school.

One might almost fancy that India, towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, was a vast power-house, an experimental laboratory where unseen forces were at work trying to find out the outcome of the meeting of the East and the West on its sacred soil. On the one hand we had the power-intoxicated, arrogant, self-conscious white element which considered India to be a land of benighted heathens, to be drilled and shaped into the pattern of the West, and on the other hand, we had another element, not very vocal then, which contained in it the potency of untold ages, the Indian *dharma* of true

synthesis, once more in the matrix, waiting to assert itself when the time was ripe. One cannot but point out that the East, for her own good, certainly needed the challenging stimulus of the West for bringing into birth all its potency of absorption and assimilation. It was necessary for this experiment that the West should come into intimate contact with the East to help the work of close approximation and identification of types, what scientists call a process of osmosis. An interpenetration of ideals in the best type of men and women was the objective goal of this experiment, and the successful type emerged in one corner of the country, producing personalities who accepted the West, but remained thoroughly Indian in outlook. Bengal was the diffusing centre of this new life-giving synthesis to the rest of India at this time, just as Bengal was the first province in India to go over the brink almost, in accepting Western culture. And it was here again that one first saw the singular phenomenon of a woman of the West, a typical Western of Westerners in the best sense, exchanging her personality for the personality of the East on grounds of pure idealism. Since Nivedita, the type has persisted and there have been, and still are, amongst us, some notable workers of the West who represent a harmonized blend of both the cultures. It was she, Miss Noble of the West, however, who first evoked the wonder and admiration of all by her complete absorption of the ideals of this country as 'Sister Nivedita of the East. She happened to be the most consummate of nature's type in this respect to show humanity the way it should go for the furtherance of the internationalization of the future, in which strict boundaries between the East and the West will cease to exist. The path is one of frank assimilation of ideals and not destruction of the best elements of one's inherited individuality; but it demands the highest qualities of manhood when it involves the foregoing of social privileges and political caste-consciousness. Sister Nivedita

was spotlessly free from all such racial or political bias.

In the early days of struggle against the British, before the dawn arrived, it was so easy for even the bravest patriots to lose heart and hope. Some of the foremost of our political leaders now, were then either in their cradle or lads in their teens, while the elders of their family were still stupefied under the miasmatic thralldom spread by the rulers from the West. As in almost every instance of Indian history, the power for regeneration was at work through spirituality, before the strength of it could also be felt fully in other spheres of life

Swami Vivekananda wanted to complement the spiritual strength that was his Master's by making it practical on every plane of life. He was heir not only to the spiritual vision of the *rishis*, but he had felt within him the stirrings of a mighty national impulse that was to sweep away everything unmanly and degrading from the Indian nation that was to be. And it was Swamiji's burning patriotism that fed Nivedita's zeal for political activities. But Swamiji was sometimes misunderstood. He had nothing of the proverbial Western conception of the 'meek Hindu' about him, and that is why it is so easy even now for superficial observers from the West to couple his name with Nietzsche's,⁴ the first person in their part of the world, whose ideas seem to offer a fanciful parallel to his vedantic idea of the divinity of man. In the days of terrorism and revolutionary propaganda the British Government, too, was in a quandary as to what to make of the personality of Swamiji. High-pressure politics came to the foreground of Indian consciousness after 1905, three years after his passing away, and, there-

⁴ A recent illustration of this is furnished by Mr George Catlin's *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi*. Mr Catlin, who suffers from an overwhelming burden of self-consciousness, writes: 'If there was something of a Kempis in Vivekananda, there was also no little of Nietzsche,—"a self-indulgent man", a "Spectacular populariser", etc.'

fore, his holding any positive opinion on such aspects of the matter was entirely out of question, though there can be no doubt that the *mantra* for the new national consciousness, in its broader aspect only, in which politics is not divorced from religion, was certainly provided by him before he finished his earthly career. Certain political opinions which Nivedita came to hold at this time were, therefore, her own personal reactions to the burning questions of the day.

But the goal she was working for was far above current politics. She was a visionary of visionaries in the inmost of her being. If she felt that it was necessary to oppose the evil effects of a foreign political system through extreme revolutionary methods she did it only as a part of the more elaborate programme that she had set before herself of teaching the Indian nation lessons of manly self-respect. The fire she wanted to set ablaze was not the fire of political incendiarism but a purificatory sacrificial fire that would burn out all the accumulated dross of slavery in thought and word and deed.

Nivedita was singularly possessed of those characteristics that could make her an ideal worker for our nation. To her great intellectual gifts, as a sociological thinker, for which she had a recognized place among scholars of repute, she added a fine quality of soul and character that is difficult to be met with in any part of the world. Above everything else, she had spiritual strength, which was the gift of her *guru*, and that helped her in understanding India aright. She studied sympathetically, with the eye of a visionary and a poet, and yet with a scientist's zeal, our truths, our arts, our architecture, our mythology, our philosophy, our customs, rituals, ethnology, history, folk-lore, plant-lore, star-lore, our great men, our small men, our worship of the One-in-all of the highest vedantic sage as well as our villagers' worship of serpents and stones and trees. North and South, East and West, she travelled everywhere, up and down the country, studying every nook and corner of it from rich

man's palaces to the cottages of the poorest of the poor. Nothing Indian was alien to her, and to everyone she was a loving sister, or as Tagore has put it, a loving mother, who loves even the errant ways of her children. She had the mother's own way of teaching us right from wrong but she would not tolerate the slightest of criticism from those who assumed a condescending or superior attitude to us. Those of our countrymen who echoed in a servile manner the adverse sentiments of foreigners regarding Indian unity and Indian culture, received a stern rebuff from her. Even the queerest small countryside custom, like worshipping the crossroads, had a meaning for her both as primitive custom as well as for its immense sociological significance, its civic possibilities of the future. For her the Indian past was not a dead past. She taught us to feel that it was still alive and her prophetic insight told us how to harness this strength of the past into the service of the future. On the Le Play-Geddes theory and what she herself brought to it, the depth of her spiritual vision, she could read the present in a flash and determine the process of all future development in the country. And what power and what light she imported into everything she wrote and uttered! Her very talk was literature. It was inspiration. It may be, here and there, she has made a mistake in matters of detail or read a custom wrongly, but such mistakes are never mistakes from an absolute point of view. To quote Tagore's words: 'Facts can be easily arranged and heaped up into loads of contradiction, yet men having faith in the reality of ideals hold firmly that the vision of truth does not depend upon its dimension, but upon its vitality. And Sister Nivedita has uttered the vital truths about Indian life.'⁵

She understood that there must be change in accordance with the changed circumstances of life in the modern age, but she was against

⁵ From Tagore's introduction to Nivedita's *Web of Indian Life*.

all 'thoughtless, wilful, aimless, wrongly purposed change.' When talking of Indian womanhood of the future, she pointed out a truth, which all progressively inclined women of our country would do well to ponder: 'Shall there be new developments here? And in what direction? Change there must be. Shall India alone in the streaming destinies of *jagat*, refuse to flow on from form to form? But what changes we make shall be made freely, deliberately, of our own will and judgment, deliberately designed towards an end, chosen by ourselves. Shall we, after centuries of an Indian womanhood, fashioned on the pattern of Sita, of Savitri, of Rani Ahalya Bai, descend to the creation of coquettes and divorcees? Change there must be, or India goes down in the shipwreck of her past achievements. But new learning shall add to the old gravity and wisdom, without taking from the ancient holiness. Wider responsibilities shall make the pure more pure. Deeper knowledge shall be the source of a new and grander tenderness. This generation may well cherish the hope that they shall yet see the hand of the Great Mother shaping a womanhood of the future so fair and noble that the candle-light of the ancient dreams shall grow dim in the dawn of that modern realization.'⁶

In all her writings she persistently emphasized the idea, so necessary for the nation, that this great land of ours is the common home of all communities—Hindu, Mohammedan, Sikh, Parsi, Christian; for every one she is the *Mata Bharata*. She placed before us the ideal of a great synthesis, of which India was the living symbol in the past, and insisted that we act in the spirit of that ideal in the present, wedding history to geography, bringing the spiritual to the aid of the secular. And with this end in view she pioneered the cause of a synthetic study of every form of culture, in all its stages, from the most primitive to the most developed, so that nothing might escape our observation.

⁶ Civic and National Ideals.

The key to her emphasis on this kind of synthesis of knowledge was directly derived from her study of the life of Sri Ramakrishna, who was a living synthesis of all religions, and, indirectly, of all true culture. But she had no patience with the idle *laudator temporis acti*. She hated all kinds of bungling compromise. For her, ancient wisdom has its application in the present, only when we understand both the present and the past with a scientist's knowledge of facts.

Similarly, her ideal of scholarship was a highly synthetic one. She wanted that heart, brain, and hand should all work together in the task of gathering knowledge. Emerson defined for all time the ideal of the American scholar in a famous address. Nivedita, too, has done the same task for us through her highly inspired writings, particularly in her two books, *Religion and Dharma* and *Civic and National Ideals*, though, unfortunately, her writings continue to be a sealed book to the youth of this generation. Years ago, she wrote in a letter to one who is now one of the foremost historical scholars of our country: 'Never be contented with the ideas and wisdom which are gathered in the study. We have other senses and other faculties besides those of language. We have limbs as well as brains. Use the body, use all the senses, use even the limbs in the pursuit of truth. If you want to understand India, visit first the great historic centres of each age. Turn over the earth and stroke the chiselled stones with your own hands. Stand in the spot where an event happened, even if no trace of its occurrence is still visible, ... to understand the Buddhist *bhikkhus* go out and beg. To understand Aurangzeb, sit in the mosque of Delhi and pray there the prayers of the Mohammedans. Whatever you seek, bend every faculty on its achievement. What you believe—make yourselves to it as dough kneaded by the baker, as clay worked by the potter, as the channel to the water of the river. Make thought into sensation, sensation into experience, experience into knowledge and let

knowledge become character.' This is one of the noblest of intellectual ideals as it is spiritual in essence, for, though the expression may be modern, do we not catch in it echoes from Dakshineswar, where lived one with whom religion was nothing short of realization, with whom sense and symbol, knowledge and character, theory and life were all merged in one complete whole?

In the mingling of stern scholarship with spiritual warmth Nivedita has no equal in modern times. We have many research workers now in history and other allied subjects but hardly any one who can seize great ideas behind masses of scattered details and present them before us in thoughts that burn and words that glow. Her writings which we are now forgetting should be placed in the hands of all Indian students of our universities, for without the inspiration that she gave, student life in India will fail to reach its ideal fulfilment. A life like hers can never have been lived in vain, and it would be the height of ingratitude on our part to make the new generation in India live in ignorance about her. She detested our political subjection and fought against it; but she fought against something which was even more insidious than political tyranny—our intellectual and cultural thralldom to the West. This constitutes her real glory.

It has to be admitted with regret that great injustice was done to her memory by certain remarks of Mahatmaji himself, when recording his only interview with her, many years ago. Anyone who reads that account now will at once realize the palpable absurdity of that hastily formed notion. The place where he met her was not her own residence, which used to be a dark lane and a dilapidated house, far from the splendours of the heart of Calcutta; and the life she lived was of a Hindu *brahmacharini*, no less rigorous than Mahatmaji's own. We are told that he corrected his impression later, but we do not know exactly in what terms he did so, or if he ever did it at all. We do not accuse him.

Such mistakes are human. This, at any rate, is true, whenever and wherever idealism is appreciated men and women all over the world will prize her memory, for, 'to know Nivedita', as our poet has said it, 'is to know the meaning of self-sacrifice, to have seen her was to have seen the god-life in human flesh and blood;' and Tagore surely knew what he was saying, for he knew her intimately, collaborated with her in works of mercy and love and was a keen judge of personalities himself. To forsake home and make a stranger's woes one's own, is a sight which may not be rare, but so absolutely to be one-d as Sister Nivedita was with the country of her adoption as to consider even the very dust of it to be sacred, is a phenomenon rare in human experience. One remembers how she always kept a bit of potsherd (not old) picked up from the site of Nalanda and some sand-plaster from Sarnath on her table to help her to visualize the past greatness of India while she wrote.

Neither did she want any authority or position in our country for what she did, or herself to be taken as an example of the Hinduism she stood for. She was absolutely free from any taint of patronizing or 'bossing' Indian culture, a trait which has been found flamboyantly present in certain Western workers for the cause of India. She came to India as a humble learner at the feet of Swamiji and, though a woman of towering personality herself both in intellect and will power, to the last moment of her life she was still a little girl learning her lessons from the open book of Mother India. One can never forget the simple, unsophisticated look on her face whenever she visited Holy Mother or sat before Jogin-Ma, or other holy women of the Ramakrishna Order. And yet no one would ever understand from her talk or behaviour that she belonged to an order or a 'group,' however catholic that order may be. Glad only to lay down her life as sacrifice at the feet of her *guru*, who symbolized all that was best in Indian culture for her, she had no other thought but service to his people.

Always she was 'sister'—a sister for whom only India existed and no difference of caste, community, or religious or denominational differences mattered. She paid homage everywhere to sincerity and devotion to the cause of India, nothing else was of consequence to her.

Foreigners, English, French, Americans have noticed the importance of her contribution to our cause, and the life she led has been compared to one steady burning flame of intellectual and personal austerity. The late Mr H. W. Nevinson wrote: 'It is as vain to describe Nivedita as to reduce fire to a formula and call it knowledge. There was indeed something flame-like about her and not only her language but her whole vital personality often reminded me of it.' She had no time for luxury of sentiment or spinning cobwebs of intellectual theories. It is not true that she was ignorant of the so-called 'un-idealistic' elements in Indian culture, but her sense of the relative importance of different elements in an active dynamic civilization was much more judicious than that of mere grubbers on the surface of past history. She was never given to confusing values like them.

Like Ezekiel in the valley of bones it was her part to utter the word of life over the bare-living skeletons and hear them stir. She put the issues before them very clearly: 'Find out from your study of Indian history what made India great in the past and why she is still alive, in spite of some debasing factors which ruined other old civilizations of the past? Be men. Get your facts straight. Read your history aright.' She had herself caught the heart-beat of real India, but felt that it would not be possible to make us fully alive without first creating tremendous *shraddha* within us for our great national heritage. Her foremost work of importance, therefore, was instilling this *shraddha* into the Indian mind, bringing off a fiery renewal of that faith without which we are lost. Strong in her own convictions, she fell like a thunderbolt—which was her chosen symbol for our

national flag⁷—on all weakness, all mean calculations of self, all surrender to low aims, all thoughtless servile echoes of foreign theorists on India.

It is no exaggeration to say that the finest men of our country of her time, especially of Bengal, whether a poet, or a politician, a statesman, a publicist, a painter, a scholar, a scientist, a historian, a social worker, whose names shine today in the beadroll of Indian history and will so shine for ever, are all more or less indebted to this spiritual daughter of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, and freely and gratefully have they acknowledged their debt to her. To have meant much, as she did, to men like Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, or Jagadish Bose does not imply an ordinary person whom we meet everyday of our life. It was the golden touch of that great dream she dreamt of a resurgent India that made every sincere Indian heart acclaim her a true sister. Of the present leaders in the political field there are several who saw her and felt the charm of her magnetic personality. Netaji Subhas Chandra was a boy in his teens when she died, but we have it on record that her books, especially the splendid account she wrote of her Master, was a source of fruitful inspiration to him.

Following the footsteps of Swamiji she tried to make Hindustan 'strong', masculine, 'aggressive',⁸ and when we read her books we

⁷ The thunderbolt-marked seat of Buddha at Bodh-Gaya first inspired her to think of the *Vajra* as the fit emblem for the Indian national flag. She remarked: 'He who sacrifices himself for truth becomes as powerful as the thunderbolt.' The *Prabuddha Bharata* carries this symbol now on its cover. Sir Jagadish Bose adopted this, after her, as an emblem for his research laboratory in Calcutta. Both Hindu and Buddhist traditions of great moral strength lie implicit in the *Vajra*. The *Vajra* was made of Dadhichi's bones in Hindu mythology.

⁸ The word 'aggressive' first used by Swamiji in this context need not cause compunction in our minds. Swamiji's forceful Carlylean use of that word is still misleading some persons to paint it 'in the colour of blood', which was not intended.

find how eminently she has succeeded in this endeavour. Her books will be regarded as classics as we begin anew to recognize in her the apostle of a gospel which is bound to be the *dharma* of Indian nationhood in the future. The time is now ripe when a life such as hers can burst forth in all its effulgence on our national consciousness, filling us with new

stimulus and energy to make India as great as she was in the past, or perhaps, greater still, for did she not say: 'Again must India bestir herself! Again must she give rise to world-ideas and world-power. Other periods, must come, equal to, if not greater than those of Chandra Gupta, Ashoka, and Akbar.?'

SANSKRIT HISTORICAL KAVYAS

BY DR J. B. CHAUDHURI

Europeans generally accuse ancient Indian writers of lacking historical sense and acumen. Of course, it has to be admitted that, whatever be the reason, ancient Sanskrit writers have generally neglected history as a subject, and that, as compared with the other immensely rich branches of Sanskrit literature, such as philosophy, *kavya*, rhetoric and prosody, etc. there are only a few authentic historical works of Sanskrit. Still, it would be wrong to say that no records of value have been left by our ancient historians and that for getting a glimpse of our glorious past, we have to depend wholly on the accounts of visiting foreigners. Apart from the numerous rock-edicts, copper-plates, etc. which enable us to have a direct first-hand knowledge of a large number of ancient Indian Kings, there are also some actual Sanskrit historical works, like the famous *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, which are of no less value. There are also a large number of historical *kavyas*, like the *Vikram-ankadevacharita* of Bilhana, which ingeniously combine history with poetry. Our *Puranas* also contain a large element of history. Specially during the middle ages both the Hindu and Muslim historians composed a large number of historical works in Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. These works are invaluable and indispensable to us, if we want

to reconstruct an authentic history of medieval India. In this short article, I propose to give a brief outline of a few Sanskrit historical *kavyas* composed during the middle ages. The tendency, often found in Indians, to write history in the form of *kavyas*, to mix fact with fancy, is perhaps due to the desire to present the dry facts in a more attractive form to the readers. But still the historical value of these *kavyas* should not be minimized, for the solid facts have not been ignored, or distorted by their writers, as is evidenced by their corroboration in many cases by other proofs.

As examples, we may take the following :
(1) The *Abdullahcharita* of Lakshmiapati. It is doubly interesting, being the history of a Muslim King-maker written by a Hindu poet. The only manuscript of this work has recently been edited by the present writer in the *Prachyavani*, the Journal of the Institute of Oriental Learning, Calcutta, Vol. III, No. 4 and Vol. IV.

The historical incidents dealt with in the present work mostly took place between 1707 A. D., when Alamgir died, and 1721, the second year of the reign of Muhammad Shah. The historical events culminating in the murder of Hussain Ali and the removal of Abdullah from the position of minister and his

final reinstatement have been graphically described in this work. The casual references in it to Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jahan, Sikander Shah, Aurangzeb, etc. much enhance the importance of the work.

The *Abdullahcharita* was composed during the lifetime of the great Sayyid Minister Abdullah the King-maker and, therefore, the whole atmosphere as depicted in the work is surcharged with intense action. A better classical source of the history of later Mughals than the present work is not known, and the *Abdullahcharita* is bound to be acclaimed as a valuable document by all lovers of Indian history and culture throughout the succeeding ages.

(2) The *Nripatinitigarbhita Vritta* by Lakshmipati. This work has not as yet seen the light of the day. It also covers the same field as that of the previous work, and is only an abbreviated version of the former.

The most important feature of both the above-mentioned works is their language—a juxtaposition of Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian words.¹

(3) The *Jamavijayakavya* by Vaninatha. Only one manuscript of this work is known to exist, and this highly important work deals with the history of the royal family of Bhavnagar, the ancestors of well-known Ranji and Duleep Sinhaji.

The work is complete in seven cantos, of

¹ V. 28—Kim vai nijamakhana mustari pratimena tu.

V. 92—Suvaha gosalam kritva sarvabhaumantike svayam.

V. 104—Tamagatam navabam tu jnatva tasaramantara.

V. 431—Aurateeharakochchhde faramoshah prajayete

V. 432-433—Janvaravadanam sarvam vusmayam chasti vai yatah,

Atastasya kshaye yatnah sahibim praptumichchata.

Kenapi na hi kartavyo janata tavakasthitim, Hakkam tvaya maduktam tu mantavyam na

durogakam.

Thus, hundreds of non-Sanskrit words—Arabic, Persian, and Urdu—have been used throughout the work.

which the first gives a panoramic view of the following rulers: (1) Sama, (2) Neta, (3) Mautiyara, (4) Abala, (5) Jaradina, (6) Rahu, (7) Addala, (8) Ahobala, (9) Lakshyari, (10) Laksha, (11) Unnata, (12) Shyam, (13) Kaku, (14) Rayadhana, (15) Bali, (16) Saunda, (17) Vairiha, (18) Laksha, (19) Rayadhana, (20) Garjana, (21) Halla, (22) Rayadhana, (23) Kubera, (24) Haladhara (25) Haripala, (26) Unnata, (27) Umachi (?), (28) Haribhima, (29) Haladhara, (30) Lasa, (31) Shatrushalya.

The second canto is devoted to the description of the war that took place between Shatrushalya and the king of Surat, who was subsequently vanquished.

It is stated in the third canto that Shatrushalya's son Sri Raul was the founder of Navanagar. His son was Virabhadra, and Virabhadra's son was Shatrushalya. Vaninatha, the author, was a court-poet of this ruler, and therefore, it is natural that cantos four to seven have been devoted to the description of this ruler. In the seventh canto it has been stated that the animosity between Chandrasena and the king of Persia led to a disruption between Shatrushalya and the latter.

(4) The *Shurjanacharita* by Chandrashekhara, a Sanskrit poet of Bengal. A critical edition of this work has been prepared by the present author and will soon see the light of the day. This work deals with the life-history of the Chauhan ruler Shurjan and his predecessors. The text compares favourably in many places even with the *Raghuvamsha*, and the reader is constantly reminded of the high excellence of Sanskrit poetry as in the writings of the standard poets of bygone days. The language is simple, the style lucid, while a constant flow of thought makes the whole work a very pleasant reading. This work may be announced as one of the best poetical works Bengal has ever produced. It deserves the highest approbation of all critics.

The *Asaf-vilasa* by Jagannatha Panditara-

ja,² the *Tarachandrodaya Mahakavya*,³ the *Shambhurajacharita*⁴ by Hari Kavi, the

² Critically edited by the present author for the first time and appended to his *Muslim Patronage to Sanskrit Learning*, Vol. I.

³ By Vaidyanatha Maithila. It deals with the life of Tarachandra, son of Keshavadeva, king of Multan.

⁴ Biography of king Sambhaji, successor of Shivaji, in 12 cantos. An excellent work.

Ishvara-vilasa-kavya,⁵ etc. are works of a similar type. There are hundreds of historical *kavyas* of this type which ought to be ransacked for the reconstruction of Sanskritic studies in independent India. India has recovered from a long stupor, and it is high time to make headway in the study of this very important branch of Sanskrit literature.

⁵ Biography of Ishvara Singh, son of Savai Jayasimha of Amber, by Krishna Kavi.

A PILGRIMAGE TO PURI

BY A WANDERER

About twentyeight years back when I visited the temple of Jagannath, a priest who acted as my guide pressed me to offer worship to the deity. But as in the request I scented more of his personal interest than any concern for my spiritual welfare, I said, 'I have no devotion, so I cannot give any offerings. Please pray to the Lord Jagannath that I may have devotion. If I get that, the next time I visit Puri, I shall of my own accord offer worship.' The youngman, who was accustomed to exploit the credulity of hundreds of pilgrims, was surprised at my blunt and unorthodox statement. He looked askance at me and did not know what to say in reply.

Since then I have not forgotten what I said to the priest-guide. Now and then the words I said to him flash to my mind, and with that I seem to see the very face of that man—his eyes piercing, as it were, to my heart to find out if I were true. After such a long time, as I was again seized with a desire to visit Puri I asked myself, 'What did I say to the priest? Have I now genuine devotion? Why do I like to go to Puri?' To my great agony I did not find any definite answer to my questions, but still one evening I found myself at the Howrah station bound for Puri.

Some friends came to see me off at the station. Bidding farewell is always a painful affair. I imagine very few persons can overcome its effects, but in the modern age it is a sign of culture not to betray one's emotion, and so we do not always say what we feel. As the train started, with the engine throwing up curly volumes of smoke in the sky, the friends became lost in the crowd that lined on the platform. I had then nothing but my own thoughts and musings to fall back upon. When you start for a destination, the sights and surroundings of that place come uppermost in your imagination, yet the things that are immediate do not altogether pass unnoticed. In my compartment were an old man—very, very old, a silly-looking youngman, and a tall strongly-built Sikh. We were altogether four. The old man was perhaps in some Government office in his active days. Though the Britishers were now away, and he had long retired, the influence of service life was still on him. When he was asked his name, he unmistakably said, 'Rai Bahadur'. Several times he did that. Though he had one foot in the grave he wanted to bank upon a British title for prestige and respectability. Poor man! he was not conscious that things had now altogether changed. What once was

an indication of honour was now looked upon with pity, if not contempt. But he was too old to sense that. He was living in the past. As one witnessed such sights, one wondered what a great chaos the British rule of two hundred years had wrought in our thought and outlook!

The young fellow-passenger, I learnt, was a son of one of the richest men in our country. As one looked at his dull eyes and blank face, and at the same time imagined the amount of privilege and advantages he enjoyed, which, properly distributed, would ensure bright and useful careers for at least twenty youngmen sunk in poverty, one found the answer as to why socialism was thriving all over the world.

The stalwart Sikh gentleman, with his flowing beard tied with a handkerchief which covered almost his lips was a very obliging person. He was ever ready to help others—so much so that it was striking. If we can think and act in terms of the comforts and convenience of others even in a train journey of a few hours, we can radiate peace and happiness whose memory is not easily forgotten. There is an art of living by which life becomes enjoyable. But how many of us know that, and far less can practise it!

Towards dawn, we were nearing Cuttack. There were stretches of open field on both sides of the railway, and at a distance were visible the small hillocks of the Eastern Ghats. It was twilight. The monsoon clouds playing on the hill-tops made a charming scenery. It was a great joy to be looking at them and enjoy the beauty of nature.... That was all right so long as one could live in imagination and in dreams. But what about hard realities? We were in Orissa, a very, very poor province, where the people were struggling hard for the bare necessities of life. Could one in such circumstances think of anything other than bread problems? Why talk only of Orissa? In India ninety percent of the population are steeped in poverty, and the barest necessities of life are denied to them.

We passed by Cuttack, the present capital of Orissa. Cuttack was also the capital of the Keshari Kings in the 10th century. From the train we could see the long rivetment on the bank of the Kathjuri river built by the kings of the Keshari dynasty. This embankment is over two miles in length, and still stands as a monument of skill in masonry work in Orissa about a thousand years back. It was built to protect Cuttack against the ravages of flood.

*

I got down at Bhubaneswar on my way to Puri. It was early morning. In drizzling rains I entered with my luggage into a carriage which had almost completed its life. The horses also were no better. As we moved a short distance, we were pointed out the site of the contemplated new capital of the province. Bhubaneswar was long the capital of Orissa in ancient times. It is in the fitness of things that it will again be the capital of the province. If the present plan of the Government materializes, history will literally repeat itself.

I

On reaching Bhubaneswar I felt ill and was almost confined to bed for two days. It was a disappointment to me, but it gave me opportunities to read books on the past history of Orissa, specially with reference to Bhubaneswar. What a gorgeous past Bhubaneswar had! Here in ancient times the Jaina and Buddhist kings ruled, later Bhubaneswar became the capital of the Hindu rulers. Even now the surrounding area bears the relics of past glory. About four miles from Bhubaneswar there are rock-cut caves—Khandagiri and Udaigiri. Some say that they were built by Kharavelo—a Jaina King. Some of the caves were built by the Buddhists and served as monasteries. About four miles from Bhubaneswar there is a place called Dhauli, where there are rock-cut inscriptions of Ashoka dated about the middle of the third century B.C. At Bhubane-



RAJA RANI CAVES, BHUBANESHWAR

shwar there is now going on excavation work undertaken by the Orissa and the Central Government, which indicated that this place was a prosperous town between 200 B.C. and 400 A.D. After that came the Keshari dynasty of Orissa, founded by Yayati Keshari in the 5th century A.D. The Keshari and the Ganga dynasties ruled Orissa for more than a thousand years, and kept back the Muslim invasion till the year 1568, when Kalapahar attacked Orissa and broke down the Hindu supremacy. This long rule of the Hindu kings marked the glorious period of Orissa. The rulers did not spend much money on themselves. They lived religious lives and encouraged religion in others. It was due to this that Orissa was dotted with temples and great works of architecture. More important of these can be found in Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Konarak. Of them, Bhubaneswar bears the largest number of temples. Some say that in the past there was a time when Bhubaneswar

contained six thousand temples dedicated to Shiva.

Many persons interested in archaeology, ancient architecture and old history, visit Bhubaneswar; but for millions of Hindu pilgrims the chief object of attraction is the *Lingaraja* (Shiva) temple. Innumerable pilgrims from all over India come to worship at the temple of Jagannath at Puri, and most of them make it a point to see also *Lingaraja* at Bhubaneswar. It is said that Sri Chaitanya also visited this place on his way to Puri, and stopped here for a day.

II

The *Lingaraja* temple is a massive structure—120 cubits in height, the premises comprising an area of 333 cubits in length and 266 cubits in breadth. It is situated near a huge tank called *Bindusarovar*—800 by 520 cubits in area. Pilgrims consider it holy to bathe in this tank. Usually it is after bath-

ing here that they go to the temple. Records say that Sri Chaitanya also did the same. The temple was completed in 667 A.D. by the efforts of three successive kings, beginning with Yayati Keshari.

The temple looks exquisitely beautiful with Bindusarovar as the background. Coming by the main road, as we approached the temple, we found a row of small buildings standing like a wall before us. As we proceeded, we found that the path between two buildings was like a mountain pass, and as we crossed it, the Bindusarovar was before us with the magnificent view of the temple behind it. Many pilgrims were going to the temple, many were found taking bath in the sacred tank. Right from here there was an atmosphere of devotion. But lo, what was there? While on one side of the tank

pilgrims were bathing with priests uttering sacred *mantras*, on the opposite side—at a distance—sitting on some rocklike things on the water were three or four persons, jet black in appearance, the whole body completely bare but for a loin-cloth round their waist, and a piece of white cloth tied on the head, with intense devotion looking to the front—with fishing rods in their hands. So deeply absorbed were they with their own purposes

that they were supremely oblivious of the whole surrounding. The sight seemed so funny and interesting that it could not escape notice. Oh, their concentration and devotion! Like the gurus of the *Avadhuta*, they served

as object-lessons to the pilgrims who lacked concentration and one-pointed devotion!

It was a great joy to enter the temple in company with innumerable jostling pilgrims. In such a company, even if one was wanting in faith, one got inspiration from the devotion beaming through the eyes and face of so many people. Perhaps herein lay the secret and genesis of congregational worship.

But how could one particular temple be the source of so much attraction? Was that due to its architectural beauty, its massive size, the personal influence of its owner, say the king who built it? No,

none of these can supply devotional inspiration to such a vast number of people, and that for such a long time. The real cause was much deeper. It is said that where saints live, or the places they visit, become holy. A temple becomes the source of perennial interest, if any one has got here a direct perception of Truth or feel the living presence of God. Bricks and mortar do not make a real temple, nor any external



LINGARAJA TEMPLE, BHUBANESHWAR

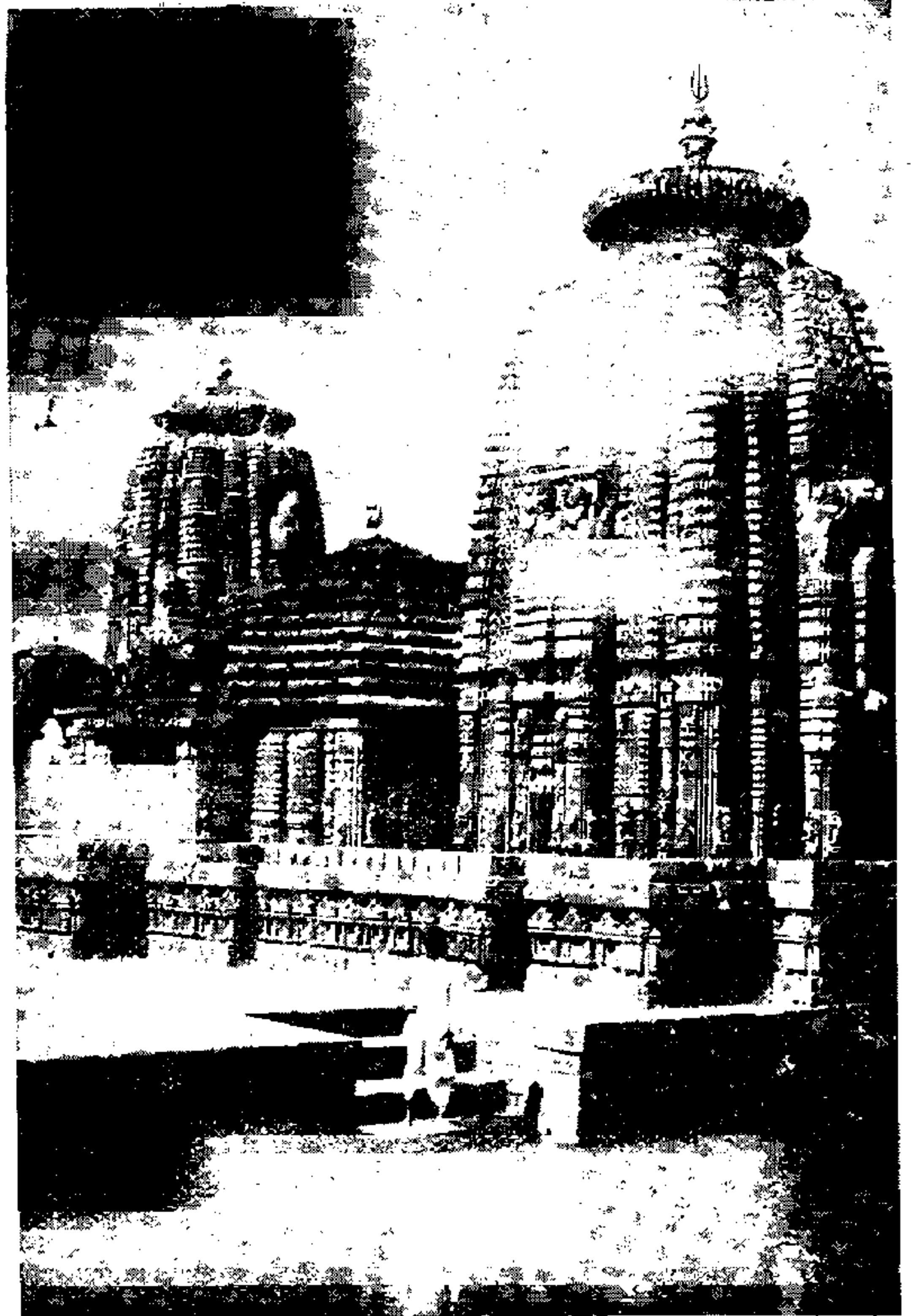
influence, but the soul of a temple is that some one, at some time, had some religious experience there. The more intense and direct that experience, the more lasting the influence. In course of time, the surroundings may have degenerated, the persons in charge of the worship may have degraded, but pilgrims ignore them. They seek to get help from the fountain-head of inspiration. From this standpoint if we look at some of our temples, we find what a great service they have been doing to the vast population for many generations! The temple of Jagannath at Puri, this temple at Bhubaneshwar have built up the religious life of the whole of Orissa, and their influence has overflowed the boundaries of the province.

In my visit to the temple I was accompanied by a Vedantin, versed in the intricacies of the Advaita philosophy. While in the temple, he performed almost all the ritualistic forms of worship which an ordinary pilgrim, under the direction of priests, does. I asked him how he could reconcile his ritualistic acts with his knowledge of high Vedanta philosophy. The Vedantin replied, 'It is better to identify oneself completely with the atmosphere of the place one goes in pilgrimage to. Only by that one can reap the best advantages of a pilgrimage.' I appreciated his remarks. Yes, if you have not the proper frame of mind, your visit to a holy place becomes like the excursion of an antiquarian, or a history-student. Even in ordinary circumstances how much does a tourist lose, when he visits a country but has not the sympathetic understanding to look at and study things from the standpoint of its people!

III

Other important things to be seen at Bhubaneshwar proper were the Mukteshwar, Parashurameshwar, and Raja-Rani temples. Of these the Parashurameshwar temple is the

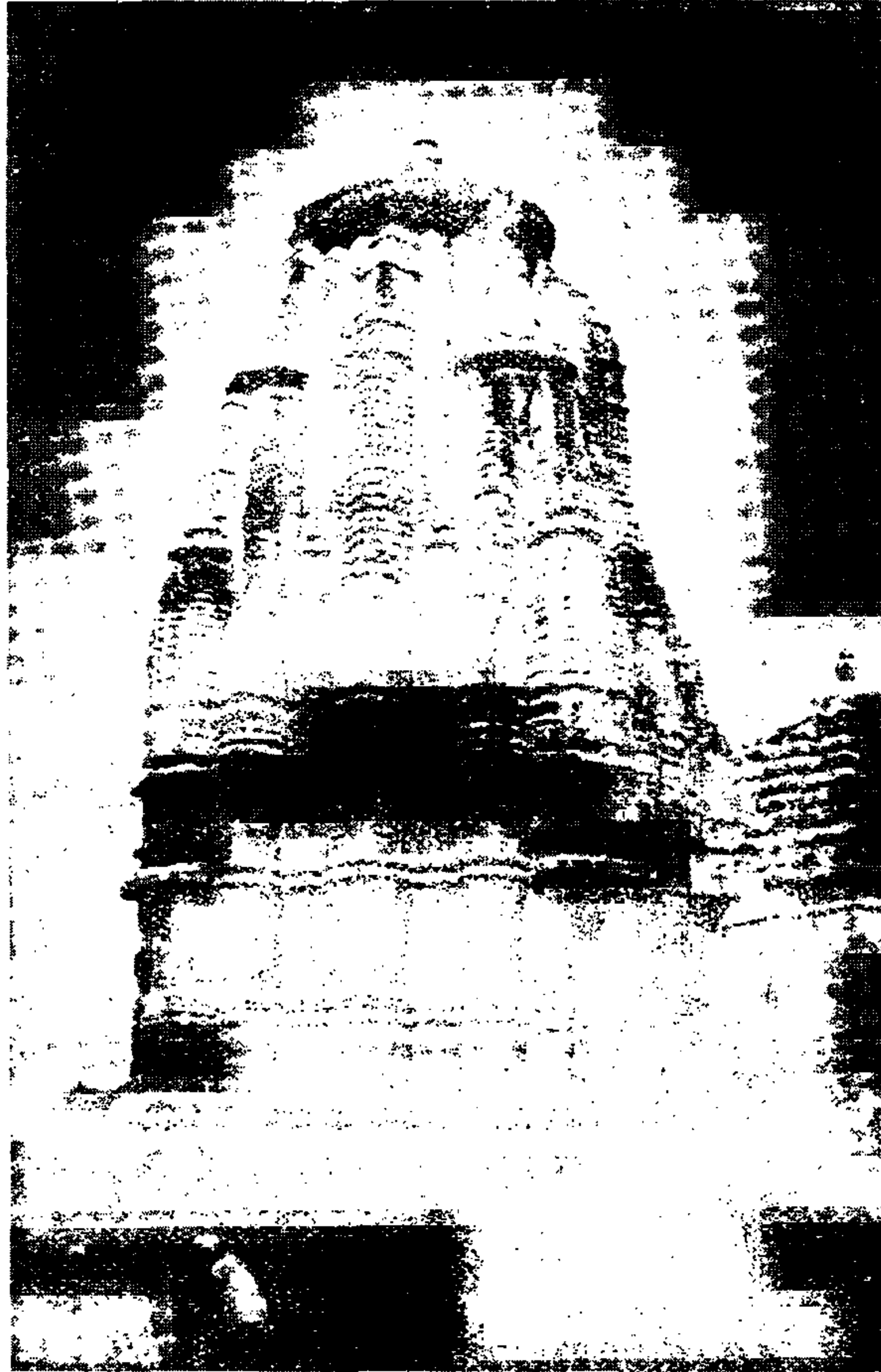
oldest, built in the 5th or the 6th century A.D. The Mukteshwar temple was built in the 6th or 7th century A.D. It represents the high watermark of Orissan architecture, and is appropriately called a 'dream in sandstone'. The *torana* or-the gateway of this temple is extremely beautiful. It is said that this *torana* served as a model to the magnificent



MUKTESHWAR TEMPLE, BHUBANESHWAR

one at Konarak referred to by Abul Fazal, the famous historian in the court of Akbar. This temple, though not very large in size, is a thing of rare beauty, surrounded by shady trees and overhanging branches. It did not seem to attract as many pilgrims as the great *Lingaraja* temple, but situated in a calm and quiet place this gem of architecture is sure to give much spiritual inspiration to a contemplative mind.

The Raja-Rani temple is a Vaishnava temple. Strangely enough, it has no idol in it. There are surmises as to the reason for this. But the temple, situated in the midst of green fields in proud isolation, away from the spots where people offer worship, has a distinct individuality. It is a building which attracts a large number of visitors, though not necessarily pilgrims. It is of a comparatively later date—perhaps twelfth century.



RAJARANI TEMPLE, BHUBANESHWAR

After a short stay at Bhubaneswar, I started for Puri. The famous Car Festival of Jagannath was near. We could feel that even from Bhubaneswar. For there was an influx of pilgrims even here on their way to Puri. As I was going to the railway station I saw long rows of pilgrims wending their way to that place.

When I reached the station, I found the platform completely filled with pilgrims. We heard that the trains were coming packed with pilgrims—so much so that booking was stopped. I was in a fix as to what to do. Perhaps many other passengers felt that way. When the trains arrived, some passengers were allowed to get in. To my

good luck, I managed to be one of them.

At Khurda Road Junction, twentyseven miles from Puri, some additional passengers got into our compartment, which was already crowded. We were each of a different type. One was an industrialist—an England-return-

ed gentleman, with his European wife. Another was a Khaddar-clad congressman. One was an educationist. One was a devout Brahmin from a neighbouring place going perhaps on pilgrimage. Another was a Government official—as could be seen from his dress. In railway travels some persons find it convenient to discuss all manner of things. One starts the conversation, others who find the time hanging heavily on them, veer round him. And there goes on lively—sometimes heated—discussions for hours. During the war-

time the subject of conversation was invariably the strength of the Germans, or the likely invasion of India by the Japanese. After the war had been over, the usual topic would be the Hindu-Moslem riots, or the pros and cons of dividing India into Hindusthan and Pakistan, and so on. Nowadays the subject of talk is usually the alleged mismanagement of Congress Govern-

ments and the corruption and blackmarketing that have been going on unchecked. Every one who joins in the discussion talks so gravely that he seems to be confident that, put in the charge of affairs, he could do much better; only his wise counsel was not sought for. It is interesting to listen to these conversations silently. In such talks nobody under the sun—however great and respected—is spared. In our compartment, too, hot discussions went on by the passengers, representing different interests. The England-returned gentleman was talking vigorously as to what could be done to develop Orissa industrially, and how the Government was doing nothing. The Government official was cautious in his words, though now and then he betrayed his knowledge of corruption in the administration. And the Khaddar-clad congress worker showed his strong resentment of the present state of affairs in the country. As one listens to such discussions—and they can be abundantly heard in railway travels throughout India—one wonders what is the reason for such widespread dissatisfactions. It may be people expect that, with the exit of the British rule, heaven will overnight come down on earth, and they are disappointed. Some forget that people have their own responsibilities, now that the country is free; but people in general are less conscious of their own duties and more keen on finding the faults of others. Or it may be persons who are in charge of administration are new in the field, and they require experiences before they can hope to tackle the difficulties with which they are confronted. Or it may be that these criticisms by people are the result of their political consciousness. Now that freedom has come, each man feels that he has got something to say, or something to contribute, with reference to the Government. As time will pass on, there will be more of political education on the one side and greater administrative experiences on the other. Then these irresponsible criticisms will tone down and the widespread discontent will disappear.

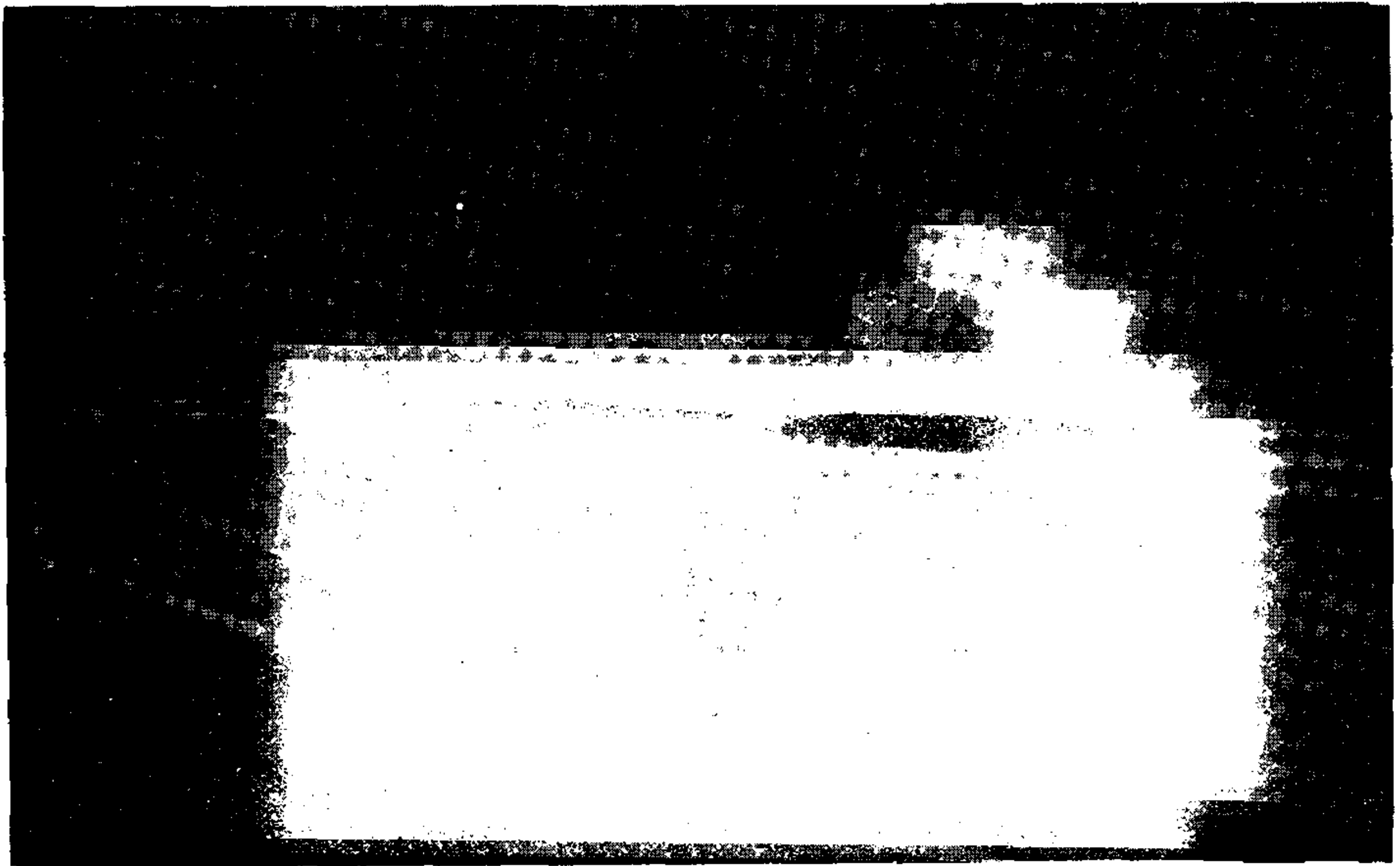
In the meantime one should be patient !

The heated discussions in the compartment gripped my attention. Unconsciously I turned my eyes, beyond the windows, to the outside, when lovely scenery with green fields, variety of trees and plants, shady bushes, appeared before me as the train ran past. How soothing is it to see beauties of nature ! Thereby you forget your immediate environments, with all their complicated problems, and go beyond the gross world of senses to a higher plane of thoughts.

IV

Loaded with pilgrims, the train reached the Puri station in the afternoon. I got accommodation in a house which was on the front line of the sea-beach. From my very rooms I could see the roaring waves day and night. At night the breakers splashing white foams high up wore a mystic appearance. It thrilled one's heart to be looking at the blue expanse fading into the last line of the distant horizon.

I was wondering why Puri was so much the source of attraction for religious people—for persons of various sects. Here Shankaracharya came and founded a monastery—one of the four he built in the four corners of India for the revival of Hinduism. There is a monastery belonging to the Ramanuja sect. It is said that Nanak also came here, but as he was not allowed to enter the temple he went to the seashore and composed a famous song which describes how the cosmic worship is eternally going on in the universe, in which the sun and the moon and stars take part. Sri Chaitanya, by his stay of long eighteen years at Puri, sanctified this place to the utmost. But then even before his time, the temple of Jgannath was a very important place of pilgrimage. It is said that while Sri Chaitanya was coming on foot to Puri, surrounded by his retinue of disciples, as soon as the tall spire of the Jagannath temple was in sight, he fell into an ecstasy, and it was long before his mind came down to the material



SUNRISE, PURI SEA-BEACH

plane. After that how many times had he not entered into the superconscious state in these surroundings! He lived an ecstatic life—day and night—in this period of eighteen years. A spot is marked inside the temple where he would be standing in beatitude as he looked at the Deity—the Lord Jagannath. Hardly could he see the figure of the Deity with material eyes. For the very sight of the Image threw his mind into a superconscious state. Even at his residence at Puri, now called Gambhira, almost the whole of the day and far into the night he would be found absorbed in singing the praise of the Lord. The influence of such a spiritual giant was bound to last for hundreds of years to come. After that how many great souls got illumination here, who can say? But that many did get will be evident from the close study of the biography of many saints who had visited Puri.

According to the Puri Gazetteer (1929), there are as many as seventy *maths* (monastic houses) in Puri town, belonging to various

sects—Shaiva, Vaishnava, followers of Kabir, Nanak, and others. One writer has enumerated six *maths* belonging to the school of Shankara, fifteen to the Ramanuja sect, twentysix to the disciples of Ramananda, four owned by the followers of Nimbarka. Of them some are in a moribund condition, some are very rich. In any case, all these indicate how this sacred spot has, from time immemorial, supplied India with spiritual sustenance.

V

According to the famous historian Hunter, the present temple of Jagannath was built out of the ruins of the previous one by Sri Ananga Bhima Deva in the year 1198—after fourteen years of work by the artificers. It is said that it cost something like forty to fifty lakhs of rupees. But the early history of the temple is lost in antiquity. Some say that it was originally a Buddhist temple, and Hindus occupied it and converted it into a Hindu place of worship. The three deities

that are now found in the temple originally represented the Buddhist Trinity—Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha. There are many mythological stories with regard to the origin of the temple. Some of them are very interesting. One of them which has captured the popular imagination is this: There lived in the city of Avanti in the state of Malwa (Central India) a king called Indradyumna. He was a deeply religious man. Once a

was through Lalita that Vidyapathi knew that Vishabasu went every night in secret to a remote forest and worshipped the god Nilmadhava. Vidyapathi thus got the information for which he had left his home. He then returned to the city of Avanti and gave the precious news about Nilmadhava to king Indradyumna, who after many adventures, arrived at and besieged the village of the Shabaras. But to his great disappointment,



JAGANNATH TEMPLE, PURI

devotee, sent by God Himself, came to the court of Indradyumna and casually, in the course of conversation, mentioned the name of the deity Nilmadhava. This aroused in the king a great desire to see Nilmadhava. He sent emissaries to all directions to find out where Nilmadhava was, but they all came back unsuccessful. The royal priest Vidyapathi, however, began to wander and wander till he came to the land of the Shabaras, a non-Aryan race so called. There he became the guest of a Shabar named Vishabasu and stayed with him for some time. Gradually he fell in love with and married Lalita, the young daughter of Vishabasu. It

the king found that Lord Nilmadhava had vanished. At this the king felt so sad that he resolved to give up his body through fast. At that moment he heard the following message from Heaven: 'You are destined not to see Nilmadhava. Go to the seashore of Puri and erect a temple there. In that you will find Nilmadhava in another form.' That is the genesis of the temple of Jagannath at Puri. Was Nilmadhava the image of Buddha secretly worshipped by the Shabara people? That is however the subject of research by the historians. But ordinary people find enough feeling of devotion from this simple story.

For hundreds of years, the temple of

Jagannath is considered so sacred, and is looked upon with such respect and veneration that there are religious festivals here almost all the year round. The chief of all these festivals is the Car Festival, which comes off towards the end of June. Thousands of pilgrims flock to Puri to see Jagannath and his companion deities drawn in three huge chariots impressively decorated. It is said that Chaitanya Deva with his retinue would, out of overflowing devotion, dance and sing praise of the Lord before the chariots, as they would be slowly drawn by the pilgrims. The origin of the Car Festival is unknown. Some say it is Buddhistic in origin—it was first started by the Buddhists who celebrated the birthday of Buddha by a Car Festival. It was copied also by the Shaivas and the Jainas. There can be found descriptions of Car Festivals even in ancient Europe. Whatever might be the origin and history of the Car Festival, it is at present a unique sight to see thousands of devotees filling the main road in front of the temple, as also the terraces of the houses on both sides, and looking devoutly to the deities as the three giant cars pass slowly by. The ancient tradition has continued. Time has not been able to lessen the enthusiasm of the devotees.

The actual management of the temple, its daily worship, and many festivals are in the hands of a large number of attendants forming into as many as thirty-six divisions. Each section is put in charge of a particular piece of work. This system has been going on for generations. But the actual administration

nowadays is so bad, that it is repellent to a modern mind. There is a talk that the Government will set up a representative committee to take charge of the management. Let us hope that things will thereby improve, and the unnecessary sufferings of the pilgrims will decrease. But the pilgrims themselves are unmindful of their immediate hardships. Any inconvenience they experience on such occasions, they consider as inevitable: their mind is too full of devotion.

There was a great rush of pilgrims, every time we went to the temple. It was but expected. Somehow we managed once to enter the temple and see the worship from a very close proximity. On the day of the Car Festival we remained for a long time inside the temple and near the shrine, witnessing the acts of devotion of innumerable souls, hungry for increasing faith. Has this intense hankering of theirs no value! Let us hope and pray that they will bear fruit.

I left Puri on the evening of the day of Car Festival, for fear that there would be difficulty of accommodation in the railway compartment. As the train moved and left Puri, I asked myself, 'What have I gained?' I did not know if I had gained anything which was tangible, but the panorama of a long line of devotees and saints who had visited Puri for hundreds of years and got spiritual uplift rushed to my mind's eyes, and I was overwhelmed.

August, 1948.

“First obtain Bhakti and all other things shall be added unto you. First Bhakti, then work. Work, apart from Bhakti, is helpless and cannot stand.”

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS: A VEDANTIC APPROACH

BY PRABAS JIBAN CHAUDHURY

Substance has proved to be a will o' the wisp. Physics has grown self-aware now and has abandoned its quest after the 'core of things,' declaring it to be a non-existent nonsense. This 'core', moreover, serves no useful purpose for physics: the entities such as atoms, electrons, or waves, if regarded as real things, cannot *explain* the perceptible phenomena; they cannot be the adequate *cause* of their so-called 'observable effects.' This is seen from such terms as 'emergence' and 'new substantial relatedness', which some naturalists use to describe their supposed production of a qualitative effect out of a conjunction of some basic elements. Then, there is always the question, what causes the basic stuff itself?—a question that must accompany a 'first cause.' So that, substance raises more problems than it can solve. The physicists have given up their past allegiance not only to substance but also to the notion of a productive cause implied in the above statements. For this notion involves an unsolved paradox. If the productive cause is inadequate to produce the effect which contains some new character (due to conjunction, or 'substantial relatedness'), it is no true cause; and if it is adequate to produce the effect, the latter is identical with the cause and no real relation of causality can bind them. The relinquishment of the ideas of substance and productive cause implies a drastic change in the meaning of explanation, and modern physics has recognized this change. Explanation of a particular phenomenon or law now consists in connecting it with some general quantitative law and showing the former to be a particular case of the latter. In short, explanation consists in description; due regard is now paid to Bacon's caution that science should not attempt to answer 'why' and 'what' of things, but should be content with dealing with the question, 'how things behave?'

Such is the present attitude of physics, the vanguard of scientific thought. The metaphysician is generally abashed as if he has been found out. The positivists speak of his part in physics during the last three centuries as one of a muddle-headed old fellow misleading physics while always meddling with it. The metaphysician in Galileo, Newton, Laplace, Faraday, and others led them to seek a unifying *being* (not logical but the 'thing' itself) behind their formal unification, and, so, set scientific research on an endless track that led researchers from one mechanical model to another, all placed in the order of increasing subtlety, dignity, and 'truth'. It was Mach who first asked scientists to stay on empirical grounds and to treat all facts as equivalent. But the physicist could be weaned of his metaphysical bias for substance or the 'first cause' only very recently. He has now completely broken the three hundred years long partnership with the metaphysician, who has grumblingly left the laboratory for his quiet nook in the library.

Our object in this paper is to see whether it is the metaphysician who is to blame in this joint enterprise known as classical science (or scientific rationalism), or it is the physicist. The general suspicion falls on the former. The result of our investigation will be that in one respect none is to blame, while in another, both are to blame. None, because they naively played their respective parts with considerable zeal; both, because they should have known that the object and method of one's research are essentially different from, and even logically incompatible with, those of the other. Generally these two persons lived in a single physical frame. Evidently, we are assuming here a concept of metaphysics as well as one of science (physics in particular), and our investigation of the case, metaphysics *versus* physics, will mainly consist of an

exposition of these concepts and of their asserted incompatibility. The judgment will follow simply from these concepts.

The scientific object (fact) has its objectivity *given*; the *otherness* of facts is a felt something which is itself not a fact, and science believes all facts as knowable. Thus the implicit creed of science is realism, which ensures objectivity of facts, *plus* a solipsistic idealism, which ensures the knowability of all facts. Science does not worry about its epistemological presuppositions, and, so, of the contradictions in them. The scientific object is not one single thing involving many as its organic parts, that is only what some scientists wish it to be. It is, rather, a multiplicity of facts, loosely connected with many a missing link. A fact is understood with reference to another, which has to be related to similar facts, and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus, empirical thought, proceeding as it does by proper logical judgments, connects a fact with another and is never complete. Because some facts resemble one another and also repeat with tolerable constancy under similar circumstances, empirical thought has been able to economize mental labour and to arrive at some general laws of connection of facts. The functional relations so arrived at are, however, only rough generalizations or working rules which cannot be valid laws for anticipating future facts. They depend for their absolute validity on such principles as uniformity of nature and causality, which are not proven but merely assumed by science to organize its data. So that, science, i.e. empirical thought, can have no rest and can establish itself on no firm basis; its object is the shifty surface of things known as phenomena, and its method consists of observation, classification, experimentation, and careful relating of a fact with another.

Metaphysical thought arises not out of an urge for higher unification of facts, not out of any such scientific mode of research. It arises out of the Self's projection of its inner experiences. The Self in its enjoying attitude

is subjective, but while it contemplates its reality, unity, knowledge, and spontaneity, it believes in an objective entity that is an infinite singular, self-subsistent, and self-evidently unfolding itself through a multiplicity of forms—matter, life, mind, and their multifarious manifestation. This self-subsistent object is neither known as a fact is known through external perception, nor as the self is known through intuition. Rather, it is a believed content, a symbolic representation of the Self's subjective experiences as a subject of knowledge, will, and beatitude. (Feelings other than beatitude are external psycho-somatic facts and belong to the empirical self, the Self knows them through introspection as objects, though it temporarily suffers them as if they are its own states). Thus Self-intuition, as that of the mystics, reveals the reality of the Self as a permanent subject, (a spirit that is never known as an object); contemplation of the Self with consequent self-projection or symbolization produces the self-subsistent metaphysical object; ordinary introspection distinguishes the phenomenal self from the Self (noumenal), and ordinary perception reveals the scientific object (fact). Empirical thought is employed in the last two kinds of knowledge (which are knowledge proper), while philosophical thought is required to elaborate the first two kinds of knowledge. (Philosophical thought is no thought proper, nor the two kinds of knowledge just referred to knowledge proper, yet these have their rightful place in man's mental and spiritual culture which, in its endeavours to comprehend reality as a whole, is never satisfied with the meagre and inconclusive yield of 'proper' knowledge from empirical thought). The question of reality of the metaphysical object is a natural one. The Self, when fully realized as a pure spirit and distinguished from the empirical self, appears as reality itself, for to deny its reality involves a self-contradiction. The metaphysical object, therefore, being but the symbolic representation of the Self drawn by the Self in its

objective attitude has also a kind of reality which the Self can deny only when it ceases to symbolize itself and contents itself with the subjective (enjoying) attitude. Or else, the Self may assume an absolute attitude in which the object is appropriated by it (the Self) and its (the object's) separate being denied, the subject and the object (the latter is but the subject symbolized) are synthetized on a higher plane of self-realization. For the Absolute, therefore, there is neither enjoying of reality, nor any contemplation of it by way of symbolization. The Absolute is, thus, above reality-unreality, subject-object and all such categories. Nothing positive can be asserted of it as every such concept delimits it and so falsifies it. The Absolute can be spoken of only in negatives as is done in Vedanta (in terms *neti, neti*, meaning 'not this, not that!').

However, our concern in this study is with the metaphysical object. We find from this rough sketch of a transcendental psychology that the reality of the metaphysical object is similar to that of an illusory one (e.g. one seen in a hallucination) which the self (here empirical) projects outwards. The object thus projected represents some state of the empirical self, some affection, or tendency. The illusory object is real in a sense, yet unreal in another sense. For the illusion breaks and the illusory object is no longer believed in, but that it was cannot be denied. In the case of the Self (noumenal) the illusory object projected is no image but a symbol which has nothing in common with an image but its objectivity. The illusory object is *maya*, and this is the metaphysical object. It is yet *is not*. For the Self is eternal and it projects itself in its objective attitude; again, the Self may not project itself and be totally unaware of the metaphysical object. Moreover, the projection outwards and the withdrawal into itself are not temporal activities (for the Self is above time), so that, speaking in ordinary terms, we may say that the metaphysical object (*maya*) eternally is

and never is. Such is the contradictory nature of *maya*. From an empirical standpoint it is ununderstandable and ineffable. From the standpoint of the Self, realized (i.e. enjoyed) as the pure subject, it is a non-entity, but from the standpoint of the Self, contemplating itself in an objective attitude, it is an entity as real as a symbol is real with respect to a reality symbolized. And lastly, from the standpoint of the Absolute, the metaphysical object is again a non-entity. There is a difference, however, in the two cases of the metaphysical object being a non-entity. When the Self in its subjective attitude is innocent of it, the latter has a potential being, for the Self by its very nature takes up an objective attitude, the subjective attitude implies the objective one by contrast. The two attitudes of the Self are logical alternates which the Self transcends only in its absolute mode of being. Then *maya* ceases to have even a potential being.

For empirical (i.e. scientific) thought, thus, the metaphysical object is a nonsense, and the positivists have done the right thing in eliminating it from scientific vocabulary. The metaphysician in the classical physicists did not see that the metaphysical object, substance, was never to be arrived at by inference from the manifold of facts. For a true inference will yield but another fact; an atom, an electron, or a wave is either such a fact (waiting to be perceived as the realists believe), or a fiction. The fact is never self-subsistent and, so, cannot be the metaphysical object. And the fictions which empirical thought spins out for economical description of facts, (the methodological concepts, hypothetical models) have not the same kind of reality as is possessed by the symbolic Self-representation on a different plane made by the Self. So that, the metaphysical object cannot be proved by either an inductive or a deductive method, in each of which the ultimate sources of (and also courts of appeal for) knowledge are facts. Philosophical reasoning, if unadulterated with empirical

thought, is no reasoning at all, but a systematic exposition of concepts self-evidently intelligible with reference to the spiritual experiences of the Self. The deductive proof in a metaphysical theory is only a make-belief, an exposition of an implicit tautology. The metaphysical concepts of substance and causality are not the same as the postulates of some basic stuff and of some functional relation between facts which science requires in order to systematize its results. The former are really derived from consciousness by Self-objectification, while the latter are formal axioms which are formulated from time to time. The Euclidean axioms are no longer valid for the physical space as inferred from present data, and the postulate of a continuum as the prime stuff is disproved by quantum theory. In fact, there are many possible sets of axioms for covering the same set of data, and the latter too are neither fixed nor can be anticipated. To regard the four-dimensional world-picture of relativity physics as the real world (the metaphysical object), or, again, to regard Schroedinger waves as Substance, is but an instance of confusion of science with metaphysics. On the other hand, to treat matter, life, and mind as scientific objects is an instance of confusion of metaphysics with science. The non-discrimination of science from metaphysics, that is, empirical thought from rational or intuitive (that deals with a content that is self-evident and symbolic of the Self) is the root cause of the great mess of both metaphysics and physics which the classical scientists made in the last three centuries. These men were great geniuses and would have made better progress both in metaphysics and physics had they *known* better, that is, had they been more conscious of what they were seeking. Classical physics, with plenty of energy and creative force, and plenty of new-found data too, did not *know* much. Modern physics knows better; it has learnt to think clearly about what it can hope to know in science and about the scientific method. In

other words, it is now able to distinguish the scientific object from the metaphysical one, and the scientific method of research (inductive-deductive) from the metaphysical (intuitive).

But the modern physicists, in their positivistic zeal, deny metaphysics all value and significance. This is but a reaction against the mischief which the metaphysical bias did to the progress of physics. A cooler understanding of the issues involved will, however, lead them to appreciate the part played by metaphysics in human knowledge in general which includes, besides scientific knowledge (proper), such kinds as may be intuitive. For it is dogmatic to maintain that sense-perception is the only valid source of knowledge. Scientific knowledge, moreover, is by its very nature not complete in itself, the scientific object being not self-subsistent, and we require some other kind of knowledge to supplement it. This is philosophical knowledge with its three grades: the philosophy of the spirit, the philosophy of the object (metaphysics), and the philosophy of the Absolute. Evidently, this philosophical knowledge is intuitive and lacks that kind of objectivity or communicability which characterizes scientific knowledge. But it is not to be suspected as idle speculation, for though there is no knowledge (proper) of the Self, or of anything relating to it, yet there is felt a demand in us to realize or intuit the Self. Thus there is a place for spiritual culture (*yoga*) leading to Self-realization spoken of by the mystics. Kant abolished knowledge to make room for faith; the greatest philosophers and mystics have done the same thing. This faith is not mere wishful thinking of the empirical self (that which is ruled by affections that are objects for the Self to contemplate and rule at will), but a direct intuition of the Self demanding Self-consciousness or Self-comprehension. To deny this is to shut a door of knowledge and deny oneself the privilege of a direct communication with multifaced reality. The metaphysical depth

of things is not to be confused with scientific facts, yet it has to be accepted as something real (on a different grade of reality) which is needed to have a complete comprehension of things. How the fact and the metaphysical object are related is a question which is born of a confusion of the two grades of reality, which is the same thing as a confusion of the two attitudes of the Self, one receptive outwards (empirical) and another intuitive and symbolizing (transcendental). To attempt to relate the two grades is to ignore the gulf between them; the idea of reality as one systematic whole where every part is organically linked with every other is but a poetic idea imagined after the image of an organism. So, the belief that the empirical world can be explained from a so-called 'higher' plane of reality is unfounded. Any such philosophical thought which proceeds from an observation of the empirical world through inference or analogy (and not from an intuition of the Self and

contemplation of it) produces but imaginative pictures of reality which are not really believed in. They have at best 'a suggestive value for science and an illustrative value for philosophy'.¹

To conclude, metaphysics is to be avoided in science but allowed in knowledge in general, though no continuity between the two grades of knowledge can be asserted and no grading in terms of 'higher' and 'lower' is tenable.

¹ See K. C. Bhattacharyya: 'Concept of Philosophy' in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*. Edited by Profs. Muirhead and Radhakrishnan (Allen & Unwin, 1936). In the present study I have freely used Prof. Bhattacharyya's concept of philosophy as offered in that essay though I have given my own approach to the concept and have introduced some important changes in the detail. This concept of philosophy is essentially vedantic. Thus Vedanta contains the germ of the solution of the problem of substance, which (problem) is at once important and intriguing in modern scientific philosophy.

THE SADHANA OF MIRA BAI: GLEANINGS FROM HER SONGS

BY MRS C. K. HANDOO

'I have watered the creeper of love with my tears ... Mira Bai.

Mira Bai is a much loved poetess, singer, and saint of medieval India. Though the main features of her life are too well known to bear repetition, the details of her spiritual struggle are not available to us. There is a tendency of the human mind to extol the great and make them appear as perfect beings from the very beginning of their career. Accordingly we often see that the disciples of saints and prophets either deliberately suppress, or carelessly forget to hand over to posterity that most important and interesting period of their lives when they are still striving for the desired end. To us, as to the vast majority of mankind who are less ardent than

them, the distance that is thus created is the cause of much despair; for though our eyes look up to the skies our feet are set in clay and we anxiously seek for some common bond of humanity to unite us with the ennobling lives of the great. To know that they also suffered from human weaknesses makes them infinitely dear to us, and we rejoice in thinking that if we but faithfully trudge on the chosen path, in some far off future life we also may attain to those heights that seem to be an impossible dream at the present moment, but are nevertheless the guiding light of our own prosaic and mundane lives.

However pronounced a talent one may have in a certain direction, no one is born an artist, a craftsman, or a scholar, and it is good

to remember that all knowledge or skill is gained by sheer perseverance and hard work. If this is true in the ordinary walks of life, how true it must be of life in the spiritual path. It is said in the scriptures that the act of creation has to be prefaced by the austerities of the Creator, and even the Incarnations of God have to struggle considerably before they become fully conscious of their Divine nature and mission. It is sufficient to say that greatness acquired in any sphere of life is largely due to self-effort. We would like very much to know what was the effort that Mira Bai put into her life and how she fought against the overwhelming odds that faced her. Did her steps ever falter and did she despair of reaching the end? Not mere idle curiosity impels us to lift the veil of four centuries and peer into a heart while it was still weighed by the frailties of the flesh, torn with different loyalties, and wounded by the insults of an ununderstanding husband and the intrigues of the proverbially jealous sister-in-law.

Unfortunately most of our questions will have to remain unanswered, for the very early songs are either lost or not recorded, and the psychological struggle of her life was overlooked or ignored by those who first wrote her biography; still common sense may help us to reconstruct to a certain extent a picture which, had it been preserved, would have been of great value to all spiritual aspirants. From her own words such as the following:

‘I have made friends with Giridhar since
childhood.

The bond has grown too strong to be
broken,’

and also from stories current about her we can safely conclude that her deep devotion to God was visible even in early childhood. Later it seems that she became conscious of a continuity of purpose that had been guiding her from life to life as she constantly brings into her songs the well-known line ‘Mira is thy servant since many lives.’ It is often said that Mira was an incarnation of one of the *gopis*. But while recognizing the similarity in the

purity and intensity of her devotion to the blessed milkmaids of Brindaban, we do not think that such an assumption, in any way, adds to the greatness of Mira. Though the *gopis* set up a great ideal—and far be it for us to detract from it—it is not as if they were the chosen ones for all time to come for the expression of *madhurya-bhakti*. Infinite are the avenues of approach to the Divine, and infinite is the store-house of the universe which contains in its womb innumerable perfected lives in latent form. It is, therefore, but natural that great saints should appear from time to time to shed light on the path of humanity and inspire earnest seekers of God. It is more in keeping with common sense to believe that the suffering of Mira was as real as ours would be, if we were placed in the same circumstances, and her greatest claim to our love and homage lies in the fact that she went on her path undaunted in the face of all opposition and calumny.

Scholars are of the opinion that Mira might have been influenced by the followers of Nimbarka Swami and the life of Chaitanya Deva. The former was a South Indian who lived in the twelfth century and preached the Radha-Krishna cult from Brindaban. Mira was an immediate successor of Chaitanya Deva in time, and we can easily imagine how greatly attracted her pure and devoted heart must have been to this living apostle of the Divine love of Radha and Krishna. In one song at least she makes a loving reference to Him when she says:

‘He whose feet were bound by mother
Yasoda for stealing butter,

That boy of dark hue became Gora
whose name is Chaitanya.

In the garb of a *sannyasi* he depicted the
emotions of the yellow-clad One,

Mira is the servant of Gaur Krishna, and
Krishna’s name dwells on her lips.’

In her *Notes on Some Wanderings With Swami Vivekananda* Sister Nivedita has recorded that in comparing the two Swamiji held that while Chaitanya preached love for

the name of God and mercy to all, Mira, in contrast taught submission, prayerfulness, and service to all. The whole of Mira's life is an expression of her touching and deep self-surrender to the feet of God. She also says in one of her songs :

'I dress as he dresses me, I eat what He gives,

I sit when He commands, and I would sell myself if He wished.

My love for Him is of longstanding, I cannot live for a moment without Him.'

It is evident from Mira's songs that she eagerly sought the company of *sadhus* and was in her turn greatly influenced by them. To cultivate the friendship of holy men and serve them in love and humility is a recognized way of progressing in the spiritual path. As man is essentially spirit and not matter, so knowingly or unknowingly his innermost nature responds deeply to the uplifting influence exerted by the seekers of God. That an advanced soul like Mira should be devoted to *sadhus* is therefore nothing to be surprised at. Much of the anger that her behaviour aroused amongst her in-laws was due to her mixing freely with the *sadhus* and admitting them to the royal temple, where she sang and danced in divine ecstasy. The following conversation with her sister-in-law is typical of the attitude of both parties.

Udabai: The Rana is angry with you,
do not seek the company of *sadhus*.

People are defaming you,
and the family name is being abused.

You roam from forest to forest with *sadhus*,
and have also lost your *sari*.

You are born in a royal family but dance to
the clapping of hands,

Amongst Hindus your husband shines like
the sun, but your mind like stagnant
water is covered with scum.

Give up the company of Giridhar and the
sadhus, and come home with me.

Mira :

The *sadhus* are my parents, family, friends,
and dear ones, good and wise,

I always say, that day and night I seek
refuge at their feet,

Please tell Rana I cannot agree to his
proposal

Giridhar is the Lord of Mira, and she has
sold herself into the hands of the *sadhus*.

There are two *sadhus* to whom she openly owes her indebtedness: one is her *guru* Raidas and the other is the great saint Tulsidas, who befriended her in time of great perplexity and trial. Though Mira's surrender to God was direct and her relationship with Him intimate, yet she recognizes the greatness of the *guru*, and pays homage to him in the following words:—

'I have surrendered myself at the feet of
the *guru*,

I am attracted to nothing but his feet and
the world is but a dream,

The ocean of birth and death has dried up
for me,

I have no anxiety to cross it, Mira's Lord
is Giridhar Nagar and my eyes have
turned inwards.'

In other songs she mentions the name of Raidas, such as 'I met my *sadguru*, the Saint Raidas',—which leaves no doubt that he was in fact her acknowledged *guru*.

Her letter to Tulsidas is of special significance. It is the only record of a conflict in her mind, when she seems to waver on her path and admit of the intense suffering she was undergoing due to the unkind treatment of her family. The provocation must have been great to have induced her to write such a letter seeking for guidance and help. The letter is as follows :

!Sri Tulsī, Abode of happiness, Destroyer
of sorrow,

I bow to you again and again; please
destroy the accumulated affliction of
my life,

All the members of my family are creating
trouble,

I suffer greatly because of my worship and
association with *sadhus*,

.... You are like father and mother to me,
you bestow happiness to lovers of God,
What is the right path for me, please
write and explain.'

Understanding her mental anguish Tulsidas promptly sent the following reply :-

'Those who do not love Sita and Ram,
Give them up like you would a million
enemies, though they are your dear ones.
Prahlad gave up his father, Vibhishana his
brother, and Bharat his mother,
Bali gave up his *guru*, the *gopis* their hus-
bands, but all of it resulted in joy,
Love and serve those only who accept
relationship to Ram,
What use of collyrium if it destroys the
eyes, what more shall I say,
Tulsi says, those only are worthy of respect,
and are dearer than life,
Who are devoted to the feet of Ram : This
is my advice to you.'

Thus it may be that this letter helped to re-
solve her doubts and give her courage and
strength to go on in her difficult path in spite
of opposition.

If we are to study the external environ-
ment of Mira the first thing that strikes us is
the complete blindness of the members of her
family to her great spiritual genius. It is
often disputed that the Rana to whom she
makes a constant reference in her songs is not
her husband (who, it is alleged, died early),
but is her brother-in-law. But we find there
is nothing in her songs either in support of
her widowhood, or of the Rana being her
husband's brother. This is a theory which
is hard to believe in the face of lines such as
the following :

"I will go neither to father's house, nor
father-in-law's, nor to my husband,
Mira has found Govind and for *guru* she
has found Raidas".

We cannot, therefore, help concluding that
the Rana who provided the background to her
colourful life was none else than Bhojraj, her
husband. He plays such an important
part in the development of her character

that he deserves more than passing
attention. He was a typical man of
the world, deeply conscious of his position
and with little or no finer feelings of
the human heart. He was neither vicious nor
deliberately unkind, and any other problem of
life he would have solved according to the
tradition of the Rajput race, but here was a
situation which his rigid conventionalism and
narrow heart could not cope with. Why did
not Mira, his queen, dress herself in gay
clothes and spend her time in joy and merriment
with the ladies of the court? His
coffers were full of treasures he could shower
at her feet; but the jewellery that Mughal
princesses would envy remained untouched.
The remark that she was 'the queen who would
not be queen but would wander the world with
the lovers of Krishna' (Swami Vivekananda)
has been very aptly said of her. She was
obedient and loyal to her husband, but in her
uncomfortable presence the enjoyments of
life turned cold. Unfortunately he did not
heed the call of a greater destiny following
which he could have been a helpmate and
companion to her and thus would have made
her life smooth and his own life blessed. Mira
never scorned him, but her very meekness and
docility exasperated him. Soon his patience
wore off, and he who would have been a
devoted husband to a woman of a less fine
calibre turned harsh and bitter. She tore at
the very roots of his heart; she eluded him
though he possessed her, and her desire to
obey his slightest command and fulfil his
whims to the letter baffled and annoyed him
beyond measure. Then only he resolved to
break her indomitable spirit by means so un-
worthy and questionable that he excites in us
nothing but a supreme contempt for the
utter stupidity and meanness of his small and
selfish mind. The best comment we can pass
on him is in the words of Somerset Maugham,
when he says : 'In the ordinary affairs of life
stupidity is much more tiresome than wicked-
ness. You can mend the vicious, but what in
Heaven's name are you to do with the foolish ?'

And it is only when we think of the repentance that filled his heart in later life that we are inclined to excuse the blindness that was ultimately the cause of his own sorrow. If we but believe in the maxim of the *Gita* that 'There lives a master in the hearts of men, maketh their deeds, by subtle pulling strings, dance to what tune He will,' we shall be obliged to admit that, had it not been for the ordeal that the Rana provided, Mira's devotion would have remained untested, and to those of us whose minds are dulled by worldliness the radiant purity of her life might not have been discernible; so let us not weigh his sins in grudging scales knowing him to be a mere pawn in the Divine *lila*, and a fellow-sufferer in the same spiritual darkness as ourselves.

No character sketch of Mira can be complete without enumerating the horrible way in which the Rana tried to get rid of her by putting an end to her life by foul and unfair means. Wherever the name of Mira is known these stories are repeated endlessly and yet no one tires of them. They are the wealth of the common man to whom they stand for the ultimate triumph of the forces of good over evil, and of spirit over matter. Briefly they may be told in the words of Mira :

'Rana sent a serpent in a basket,
it was delivered into the hands of Mira,
When she examined it after her bath
She found an image of the Lord.
The Rana sent a cup of poison,
It turned into nectar;
When she drank it after her bath
She became immortal.
Ranaji sent a bed of nails for Mira to sleep,
At night when Mira went to bed, she slept
as if on flowers.
The Lord is even the helpmate of Mira
He removes her obstacles.
Mira moves about absorbed in an ecstasy of
love for Giridhar.'

Three distinct periods in the *sadhana* of Mira Bai seem to be reflected in her songs. The first is that of a calm and steady devotion

which may be likened to a smoothly flowing river. These are the songs that are least known at the present day. A typical song of this period is as follows :

'Make Mira thy true servant O Lord,
Free me from the false duties of the world,
My house of discrimination is being robbed,
Though I resist with all my intelligence and
strength,

Alas ! alas ! I am helpless.

Run O Lord, I die without succour,
Daily I listen to the teachings of religion,
I fear the vagaries of the mind.

I serve the *sadhus* faithfully.

I set my mind to remembrance and con-
templation,

Show thy maid servant the path of Devotion,
Make Mira thy true servant O Lord.'

In this song we find that the element of self-effort and struggle is emphasized, and her mode of life is laid down in simple language. Another song which may be classed in the same category, but seems to come later, is as follows :

'Listen to my prayer O Lord, I take shelter
in Thee

Thou hast purified many sinners and freed
them from the bondage of the world;
I do not know the names of all, but only a few
are known to me,

Ambarish and Sudama You took to - Your
abode,

Dhruva a child of five saw Your vision of
deep blue;

You ripened the fields of Dhana, grazed the
cattle of Kabira,

You ate the fruit that Shabari had defiled,
Your actions please the mind.

You accepted the barbers Sadana and Sena
You ate Karma's *khichri* and freed the woman
of ill fame.

Mira has coloured herself in your hue, and the
world is well aware of this.'

Here there is a greater awareness of the grace of God and the main idea is of surrender to Him, which comes only after struggle and effort.

Just as the current of the river, as it nears the ocean, becomes swift and deep, so we find that slowly the quiet prayer and silent meditation of Mira gained in momentum, and calm devotion gave way to the pain of *viraha*, when the absence of the beloved can no longer be suffered with equanimity. There is an arresting sweetness in the songs of this period, and they are also the best known and are most widely sung by our own generation. The yearning is so intense that it pierces the armour of all mundane interest and occupation, and for a moment even the hardest of hearts trembles in sympathy as it listens to these songs :

‘O Lord of my house, come home to me,
Cool the fire of my feverishly restless body,
I spend the whole night in weeping,
I have lost appetite and sleep but the wicked
breath of life goes on,
Make the sorrowing one happy by blessing her
with Thy vision ;
Do not delay any longer for Mira is suffering
the pangs of thy separation.’

Among the poet-saints of medieval India no one has depicted the feeling of *viraha* of *madhurya-bhakti* like Mira. Surdas has developed a variety and abundance of emotions, but in poignancy and depth of feeling Mira’s poetry is unsurpassed. In the abandonment of love she sings :

‘O Friend, my sleep is destroyed
I spend the night waiting for my Beloved,
My mind is set on meeting Him so I am
restless,
Each limb of mine is aching and my lips can
only utter Piya ! Piya !
No one knows the pain of my heart stricken
with the anguish of separation,
As the *chatak* pines for the rain cloud and
the fish for water,
So Mira has lost outer consciousness in deep
yearning for Thee.’

In unendurable agony she cries out :

‘I wander about wounded, no one knows the
pain of my heart.

. . . . My life is lost through sorrow, my eyes
are lost through tears.

If I had known that there was so much
suffering in love,

I would have sent a crier round the town
saying that no one should love.’

In our present age Sri Ramakrishna has said again and again, ‘Cry to the Lord with an intense yearning and you will certainly see Him.’ Again he says, ‘Longing is like the rosy dawn. After the dawn out comes the sun. Longing is followed by the vision of God.’ Accordingly Mira’s irresistible cry could not be denied for long and her unendurable suffering at last changed into the joys of God-vision. Thus we come to the fulfilment and end of her *sadhana*. In the gladness of her heart she sings :

‘Mira dances with anklets on her feet.
People say Mira is mad, the mother-in-law
says she has destroyed the family,
But Mira has found the eternal with ease,
and Giridhar Nagar is her Lord.’

As we of lowly understanding cannot properly appreciate the intense sorrow of Mira in the seeking of God, so in great awe and wonder we look upon her joy in the finding of Him. In her songs we now hear the happy murmuring of a river which, after carving its way through hard rock and flowing through dry and parched land, finds itself in the embrace of the infinite and fathomless ocean.

We hear her singing joyously :

‘My friends are drunk with wine
but I am drunk without it.

I have drunk from the pot of love and
wander night and day in my intoxication.

I have lighted the lamp of remembrance and
renunciation,

My mind is the wick,

The oil has been drawn from the machine of
the Inexhaustible One,

And the lamp burns day and night.’

We would fain follow her into that realm of the pure spirit which is as deep as the ocean and as infinite as the sky and having reached which most people are struck dumb. But

our earth-bound feet prevent us from doing so, and we are constrained to stand outside this enchanted circle, straining our ears to catch some echo of the ineffable sweetness that now flows through the blessed life of Mira. Before we close we cannot help but hear her sing once again :

'I have coloured myself in the hue of Shyam,
Decking myself and with bells on my feet,
indifferent to the opinion of the world,
I dance,

In the company of *sadhus* ; gone is my
ignorance, and I am truly transformed
in the form of the devoted,

Singing the glories of God day and night,
the serpent of Time cannot harm me.

Without Him the world is tasteless and all
else is fleeting.

And Mira has developed sweet devotion to
Giridhar Lal.'

Before the last echo of her song dies out we swiftly move across the centuries hoping to catch a glimpse of this vision of heavenly joy, and we are struck by the utter self-effacement of her song and dance as well as the joyful radiance of her personality. With heavy hearts we at last turn back reluctantly, but the tinkling of her anklet bells and her sweet voice linger strangely in our memory. And finding now that she is in a world where our intellectual criticism and comment is of no avail, we end in proper orthodox fashion by laying our hearts and those of our readers in loving homage at the magic of her dancing feet.

BRITAIN'S ACHIEVEMENT IN INDIA : AN ESTIMATE

BY DR NANDALAL CHATTERJI

India has achieved her independence after about two centuries of British domination, and now that we have celebrated the first anniversary of the advent of freedom, it is only proper that we should try to analyze and assess on an occasion like this the legacy that foreign rule has left behind it. The task is by no means easy, for British rule in India was not merely a chronological incident or episode, but was also one of the determining factors in India's long and chequered history. It is this complex character of British rule which has given rise to conflicting views about its character and legacy.

While some have viewed the English conquest of India as a grand illustration of large-scale piracy and brigandage which uprooted the foundations of Indian society and devitalized her culture, there are others who look upon British rule as an event of divine dispensation which, according to them,

has operated as a dynamic force in our life. There are still others who think that British rule is just a casual or isolated episode in the vast panorama of Indian history, which started as an accident and ended likewise, leaving only transitory marks on contemporary life with no lasting impress on India's inner soul. Again, those who base their judgment on Marxian principles would be inclined to regard the British conquest as a process which was both inevitable and beneficial. Marx himself wrote in his letters on India that 'England has been the unconscious tool of history' in fulfilling a double mission in India, one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old society and the laying of the material foundation of Western society in Asia. 'The native army, organized and trained by the British drill sergeant,' according to Marx, 'was the *sine qua non* of Indian self-emancipation, and of India ceasing to be

the prey of the first foreign invader.'

That each one of the interpretations cited above is only partial or one-sided would be apparent to any one who takes a synthetic view of history. Nobody will deny that British rule was essentially no better than military occupation, but the fact remains that for a considerable period it secured the willing and even spontaneous loyalty of the common people. It also materially conditioned our life in all spheres. But, to treat it as something of a divine dispensation would be meaningless. It would be equally futile to argue that it is just a casual and unconnected event or episode, for a view like this is based on an imperfect grasp of the fundamentals of history or it is just political propaganda. The Marxian analysis, highly plausible though it is, is again historically disproportionate and unconvincing, and it fails also to establish the supposed interdependence of Britain's so-called double mission and 'the profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization.'

The history of British rule in India is a good illustration of the technique and character of modern imperialism and mercantile colonialism. The British conquest was not a difficult affair, but the conquerors hardly started with any pre-conceived plans. Success was gradual, and it was more a result of local circumstances than of definite long-term plans. The Britisher introduced modern methods of administration and material development, but his interest was hardly altruistic. The English imperialists conquered India to enable the British financiers to exploit it, and the British millowners to undersell the Indian craftsmen. They succeeded through a grand levelling process which shattered the old economy and weakened the old values, traditions, and ideas. The Britisher sought to anglicize, christianize, and mechanize Indian life. The consequences of this policy were, however, entirely unforeseen. The imperialist process

of grand levelling and the imperialist logic of dead level ultimately led to a political as well as a cultural revival, which could hardly have been desired by the Britisher, for it could never suit the British interests. A new class of English-educated Indians appeared who had no faith, and who were bound to be inquiring, doubting, and reasoning. The political ideas of Europe on which they were fed created a new passion for rationality, and the resultant spirit of enquiry inevitably led to the emergence of a new national consciousness. This, however, did not mean the total extinction of India's ancient spiritual heritage. The very process of anglicization created a simultaneous reaction in favour of India's own religion, culture, and traditions. The Britisher's theories of racial superiority, divine dispensation, and 'white man's burben' provoked the urge for political progress, and finally excited agitation, terrorism, and non-cooperation. The British technique of *divide et impera* caused fusion no less than disintegration.

One enduring effect of British rule was, however, secularization through rationalization and liberalization. But, secularization could not be either radical or complete, and its inevitable reaction took the shape of revivalism and narrow reactionism. This led to a revaluation of the Western civilization, and many were repelled by its gross materialism. The educated classes also began to regain their faith in the verities of their own culture. They refused to abandon these in favour of the new values. The emergence of spiritual leaders like Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Dayananda Saraswati, and Vivekananda shows that India's spirituality was too potent to be liquidated by the Western sciences, or by the anglicizing and denationalizing power of foreign rule. These pioneers of Indian renaissance succeeded in rescuing some of the fundamentals of our cultural heritage from the onslaughts of Western unbelief. Mahatma

Gandhi was the culmination of this process of reawakening of India's spirit. His life and message symbolize the reassertion of the ancient idealism and spirituality of Indian culture as against the materialism and militarism of the West.

While the British rulers sought to weld India into one imperial unit, they fostered separatism, communalism, and a neo-feudalism as a matter of policy so that the Indian advance towards national unity could be effectively countered. They aimed at creating a politically integrated but morally disintegrated India. Insistence on communal, feudal, and other minority rights and privileges formed the keynote of British policy which has finally led to the partition of India, and which has hampered the growth of common citizenship on a secular footing. The rule of law as introduced by the British merely aggravated the evils of political subjection, and planted the seeds of hate and obscurantism which still remain a tragic legacy of British rule.

The British rule failed in other respects too. It paralysed the economic life of the masses, for the Britisher exploited the country for his own national interests. It shattered the military strength of the people by creating a purely mercenary army of sepoys under the exclusive control of British officers. In the domain of culture, it discouraged India's own art, architecture, and literature. What advance was made by the people came in spite of opposition, apathy or neglect. The Britishers boasted of their religious toleration, yet they were guilty of studied partiality to Christians and Muslims. Their much-vaunted rule of law did not promote real social justice, for it was based on discrimination—racial or communal. Their educational policy which was vitiated by selfish motives allowed India's old culture to be neglected, or suppressed, while it gave no serious encouragement to higher technological or industrial training. In the administration, Indianization commenced on a paltry scale in recent times, and it proceeded so slowly that it remained more

or less nominal until almost the other day. The Political and Diplomatic services were closed to the Indians throughout, and the higher military cadres were beyond the reach of the Indians till the last World War. Constitutional reforms were conceded after the Mutiny in such a tardy and niggardly fashion that the government remained bureaucratic and despotic till almost the transfer of power. In the international field, India was made to remain a helpless satellite of Britain and a source of cheap labour for the British colonies. Indian interests were consistently subordinated to those of the ruling race, and the Indians were no better than hewers of wood and drawers of water in the British empire. The disabilities under which they always suffered from European racialism have survived to this day.

The record of British rule is, therefore, anything but glorious. The economist could impute India's appalling poverty to British rule. The educationist could hold the British responsible for India's insufferable illiteracy. The politician could indict the British of having planted the seeds of separation and partition by the policy of divide and rule. The social reformer could accuse the British of having caused moral degradation by encouraging double-dealing, toadyism, litigiousness, and corruption. The man of religion could attribute the growth of atheism, agnosticism, and materialism likewise to British rule. The artist blames the British rulers for having neglected India's art traditions. The businessman and industrialist could find fault with the anti-Indian bias of the British government in matters of trade and industry.

But, the legacy of the British is not all dismal and dreary. An impartial student of history cannot ignore the contributions that the British have made to the growth of our national life. British conquest was an unedifying process, yet it at least unified and modernized India and prepared the ground for the eventual culmination of India's

nationhood. The unification of a disintegrated and politically decomposed India as also its material development by railways, telegraphs, and other scientific means constitute no mean achievement, and all this imposed by force of arms and diplomacy was, despite its destructive character, the necessary condition to a fresh regeneration. English education stimulated national feeling and broke up India's mental inertness. It opened the way also to the new sciences and technologies and ideologies of the West. British rule may thus be likened to the indispensable

clearance of the stubble that precedes fresh sowing.

The greatest achievement of British rule was, however, the maintenance of peace and order through military occupation and bureaucratic autocracy, for the long peace that India enjoyed under foreign rule gave full play to the processes which have shaped India's regeneration in modern times.

British rule in India has come to an end as an historical event, but its effects are far too tangible to be overlooked or forgotten.

EAST AND WEST*

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

It is a pleasure and an honour to participate in the dedication ceremony of the Community Church of New York. On behalf of India and of the Hindu community in New York City, I offer warm felicitations to Dr John Haynes Holmes, his worthy associate Mr Donald Harrington, and the devoted members of the Church on this historic occasion, when their noble dream of building a permanent place of worship for the Community Church has been realized.

The Community Church performs a vital function in the religious life of our great city. Among its many noteworthy achievements I wish to call attention to only two.

Dr Holmes preaches the harmony and fellowship of faiths. Here in this temple, under his inspiring guidance, a Christian, a Hindu, a Jew, and an Agnostic commune with the Highest. They all regard this church as their own. Ladies, and gentlemen, we all talk about religious toleration. Community breakfasts, inter-faith dinners, and round-table

conferences are organized to promote it. But a true harmony of religions is far from realized in actual practice. It will indeed be a great day in the religious history of the world when, in Christian churches, the prophets, Incarnations, and saints of non-Christian faiths are officially honoured; and likewise, when the Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist, and Jewish places of worship demonstrate their sincere appreciation of faiths other than their own. Today the real problem is not to prove whether Christianity or Hinduism or any other religion is the true revelation of God; it is to present a united front of all the religions against the mounting tide of atheism, with its mechanistic interpretation of life and the universe. As Benjamin Franklin said, in discussing the drafting of the Constitution of the United States of America: 'Either we hang together or we shall all hang separately.'

Religious bigotry has been responsible, to a great extent, for discrediting religion in the eyes of modern men and women. There are, indeed, enough religions to hate one another; but there is not enough religious spirit to bind men in a common quest for truth. Re-

*Address before the Community Church of New York at the dedication of its new building on October 17, 1948.

ligion is a path to realize God. The *Vedas* say: 'Reality is One: sages call it by various names.' Ramakrishna often repeated that the different religions are so many paths, all leading to the hilltop of one and the same God-consciousness. They are not contradictory, but complementary and suited to different tastes. What we need is not toleration of other faiths, a niggardly admission of certain acceptable features in them, but an unreserved and wholehearted reverence for all. A devotee of one religion need not accept for himself the form of worship of another, but he should discover that underlying all rituals and strivings is the sincere yearning of the worshipper to be led from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death, disease, and suffering to Immortality. The universal religion which we all seek is not to be created. It already exists and has only to be discovered. As the worshipper transcends rituals and forms he finds in his own faith the universal truth. God is the universal religion. 'On Me,' Sri Krishna says in the *Gita*, 'all faiths are threaded, like the pearls of a necklace.' The way to the realization of the universal religion is to deepen one's own spiritual consciousness. As you walk away from God the gulf between the religions widens. Religions, like the radii of a circle, meet at the centre.

The Community Church, under the leadership of Dr Holmes, emphasizes the essence of religion and thus creates an atmosphere of harmony and fellowship.

The second achievement of Dr Holmes that I should like to mention is the important link he has created between India and the New World. We all know of his unflagging devotion to Mahatma Gandhi and his ideal of love, non-violence, and truth—by means of which, for the first time in the world's history, the Mahatma achieved political emancipation of a nation from alien rule. Ladies and gentlemen, the meeting of India and America is an important event of our times. Its far-reaching

consequences will unfold with the progress of time. Columbus, in his search for the fabulous wealth of India, stumbled upon America. Four hundred years later, in 1893, Swami Vivekananda brought spiritual India into the life current of American history. Dr John Haynes Holmes has put on the mantle of Emerson, who sought the marriage of India and America and who accepted for the motto of the Transcendental movement: *Ex oriente lux*. Today perhaps no two countries of the world are as far apart as the poverty-ridden and scientifically backward country of the Hindus and the materially affluent and technologically advanced United States of America. Yet a bridge is being built to connect these two civilizations—the oldest and the youngest.

India is the mystic of Asia, the heart of the Orient. She is the custodian of an ancient spiritual heritage. The Western civilization, which originated in Greece and several times in history has changed its centre, may find itself under the protecting wing of America. The West has a very great message for humanity. In the meeting of West and East the scientific and the spiritual views of life have been brought face to face. The hope of our survival lies in their harmonization. In the past similar meetings have been followed by great upheavals in the human situation. To this the Greek invasion of India, the Crusades, and the fall of Constantinople bear testimony. Once more an inscrutable providence has brought together the two halves of our One World. They need each other. To-day the East needs the dynamism of America to revive its moribund spirit. The East needs science and technology to pull it out of its social and economic stagnation. India, no doubt, discovered through contemplation certain precious spiritual truths, such as the divine nature of the soul and the oneness of existence; but she must have the benefit of modern technology to apply these truths in her everyday life. Otherwise they will remain the empty speculations of her pundits.

Modern Western culture, dominated by science and technology, has created a critical condition in the world. If the great discoveries of science are handled by geniuses without spiritual vision and moral responsibility, they may annihilate the whole of civilization. The West needs the spirit of contemplation, in the depths of which are revealed the abiding spiritual verities. It was an Oriental who said, two thousand years ago: 'What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?' All strivings and aspirations of man find their fulfilment in the realization of his true Self, which is birthless, deathless, eternal, and everlastingly free.

One cannot imagine a more propitious time than the present for the joining of West and East. May their union bring to birth the world's unborn soul! It is this hope that enables humanity to bear with patience its present travail.

I have often felt that many intellectual people do not take part in the conventional worship of our temples and churches because

they do not find there a God big enough to satisfy their minds and hearts. It reflects great credit on the Community Church that Dr Holmes has given a satisfying faith to rational minds. Though the core of religion is eternal and immutable, its outer expressions must conform to the changing conditions of the times. As I see it, the religion of tomorrow will not draw its inspiration solely from books or altars, cloisters or cells. The laboratory, the farm, the crowded marketplace, and the industrial plant will also be considered fit places of worship. Man will contemplate God not only with his eyes closed, but also with his eyes open. His every action and thought will be influenced by the knowledge that each human being carries within him a portion of the Divine and that the world he lives in is one. He will realize that life itself is religion. There is nothing to accept and nothing to renounce.

The appeal of the Community Church lies in just such an all-embracing interpretation of religion.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The *frontispiece* of the present issue is a picture of the house-boats on the Jhelum, in Kashmir, where Swami Vivekananda and party stayed in the summer of 1898. About this picture Miss Josephine MacLeod, who was in the party and to whom we are indebted for its reproduction, says: 'Swamiji lived in the big boat. It was seventy feet long and had a matting house on top, which in the day time we lifted on the roof, so that there was nothing but windows all round. At night we dropped it and were as snug as possible. We had four of these boats. We gave Swamiji his own. Then there was a dining room boat where we

all met. Mrs Ole Bull and I had one. Nivedita and Mrs Patterson, the wife of our Consular General, had the other. ... Under these trees we used to make our own butter.'— (Miss MacLeod, Tantine-Joe Joe). ...

We are also indebted to Miss MacLeod for the reproduction of the picture of Mr Samuel Hale's house in Chicago. (*Facing Page*). Regarding this photo of Mr Samuel Hale's house where Swamiji lived, she says:

'This is Hale's home in Chicago where Swamiji lived. One day somebody wrote Mr Hale that Vivekananda was not fit to live in the same house with young women. Swamiji knew this had happened and waited. He overheard Mr Hale saying to his wife,

“Well, Mary, if that man is a fraud I’ll not believe in God.”

‘The Hales were very well off, and Mary Hale, the daughter, married Mr Matinee in Italy. She always read Swamiji’s works. Never got away from him. During my travels I was in Florence, where Mary was living, and on my way to the station I stopped to visit her. I said to her, “Well, Mary, I see you are always reading Swamiji. But he is poor. Why don’t you give him some money ?” And she sent him \$. 15,000.’

Swamiji has frequently referred to the Hale family in his letters. One letter in particular is to be found on page 116, letter No. 75, *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 3rd edition....

The present issue opens with an unpublished letter of Swami Vivekananda written to Miss Josephine MacLeod. A facsimile of the letter in which the Swami himself explains the meaning of the Emblem of the Ramakrishna Mission and the motto is given along with a transcription of it in printing types. The Emblem, as many of our readers may be aware of, was drawn by the Swami himself....

The present month’s editorial attempts to envisage, even in the limited time-perspective of the last half-century and in the space-perspective of the entire world of today, the capital part India may play, provided we are intelligent and energetic enough to see and act upto it, in a common civilization of mankind in the future....

There is a tendency among persons not acquainted, or only imperfectly acquainted with the greatness and future possibility of Sanskrit to look at it in the same way as people in the West look at Latin or Greek, that is to say, as a language that is dead. But nothing can be more superficial, for apart from its wide prevalence even now, Sanskrit is the language of a culture that has not gone to pieces, but is breathing still and is going to be very much alive not only here but on a far wider scale. Besides this, while thorough

scholarly investigations have been made as regards Greek and Latin, only a fraction of Sanskrit literature is known and that none too well. In her closely reasoned article *The Place of Sanskrit in the New Curriculum* Dr Roma Chaudhury, an old and valued contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*, argues strongly for making Sanskrit a compulsory subject, at least for six years, in the High School. We believe her arguments will be found telling, for nothing can be more harmful to our culture and its healthy development than neglect of Sanskrit in any scheme of Indian education....

Posterity, upto now, has not been fair to the memory of Sister Nivedita. It is sad to reflect that such a life and character and understanding as were hers should so quickly pass out of our view. What she did for us has never been even partially told, though there are a few eminent Indians still living who will bear witness to the profound and far-reaching character of her influence on Indian awakening in a very comprehensive sense. The late Mr S. K. Ratcliffe, one of the distinguished editors of the now defunct but then influential daily, the *Englishman*, in the early years of this century, and one who knew Nivedita intimately, wrote in a memoriam on her in 1913: ‘The influences that have gone to the shaping of the New India are still obscure; but this may be said with complete assurance, that among them all there has been no single factor that has surpassed, or equalled, the character and life and words of Margaret Noble.’ Mr Dayamoy Mitra who had opportunity in his youth to see Nivedita at close quarters to form some impressions about her in his youthful mind tries to convey some idea of the Sister in his article on *Nivedita’s Personality*, which he rightly concludes with the words: ‘The time is now ripe when a life such as hers can burst forth in all its effulgence on our national consciousness, filling us with new stimulus and energy to make India as great as she was in the past, or perhaps, greater still, ...’

Dr J. B. Chaudhuri, Principal, Sanskrit College of Calcutta, is a distinguished Sanskrit scholar who has for long been creditably striving for reviving interest in Sanskrit studies. He has also brought to light interesting facts about Sanskrit literature in the middle ages. In the article entitled *Sanskrit Historical Kavyas*, he gives a brief outline of a few Sanskrit historical *kavyas*, written during the middle ages. Considering the fact that historical literature as such is meagre in Sanskrit, the 'classical' sources of Indian history pointed out by the author are bound to be of particular significance from more than one standpoint....

The illustrated article entitled *A Pilgrimage to Puri* by a Wanderer recounts the musings and impressions of his visit to Puri and Bhubaneswar....

In *Physics and Metaphysics : A Vedantic Approach* S. J. Prabas Jiban Chaudhury points out that science and metaphysics should be kept clearly apart in order to avoid confusions that are inevitable if their distinct spheres and methods are not recognized. Science, limited by its peculiar methods, is unable to explain reality as a whole ; the knowledge it yields is, therefore, strictly limited. But there is a felt demand in us to transcend the limited relative knowledge of science. This demand lies at the root of metaphysical effort, which relies on the intuitive as opposed to the deductive-inductive, logical method of science. Vedanta, therefore, as the writer points out, contains the germ of the solution of the problem of substance, that has so far baffled science, which is based exclusively on empirical methods....

It is a common tendency of the human mind to picture the ideal characters it adores as perfect in all details right from the start of their life. This, of course, arises from a deep psychological necessity of man at a certain stage of development. But the tendency can be easily overdone, and fail of its main purpose by repelling a more analytic mind. Thus, fact as well as fiction may be

thrown overboard in impatient haste. The inner history of struggle of saints remains generally hidden from our gaze, a knowledge of which will undoubtedly benefit many spiritual seekers. Mira's life is a case in point, its early and historical part being almost entirely submerged under a mass of legends. Mrs C. K. Handoo, who knows well the literature on Mira, tries to give in *The Sadhana of Mira Bai : Gleanings From Her Songs* a picture of the human and struggling Mira on the basis of her songs, and thus brings her closer to the common heart.

SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI ON SWAMI DAYANANDA AND HIS MISSION

India is fortunate in having at this juncture Sri C. Rajagopalachari as head of the state. The public utterances of His Excellency mark him out as a man of mature wisdom and deep understanding. In fact they put him, so far as the deeper issues of life are concerned, on a level above others charged with the government of the country. Speaking at the sixtyfifth death anniversary of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, at Ramlila Grounds, New Delhi, on 31st October 1948, His Excellency observed on the services of Swami Dayananda and the future of the Arya Samaj in the following way :

'Our religion,' the Governor-general said, 'was founded by and added to, from time to time by some of the greatest souls that ever walked this earth. Their one passion was the quest of truth. They dug into the mysteries of mind and matter with a will and an energy and a poise of reason and emotion unsurpassed by any other people in the world. It is our special good fortune to be born to such a rich inheritance. If, instead of using and benefiting by an inheritance, we feel it to be a millstone round our neck, no one but ourselves are to blame.'

'Truth is one and eternal. But by reason of the natural limitations of the human mind, it is discovered by us only in parts. At any given moment there is a sum-total of knowledge, which has to be collected and synthesized without prejudice or passion. A continuous re-adjustment is necessary so that the sum of truth in our possession at any given time may be combined into a whole. Previous conquests over darkness handed down to us will serve as safe stepping stones and not

hindrance, if we do not erect impassable barriers between old and newly found knowledge.

'In an integration of ancient truth with modern knowledge lies the only way to life to which we are entitled. Ancient wisdom should not be treated as a thing apart from modern truth. Just as the material wealth of our forefathers has merged into our own resources, so also must the moral wealth inherited from them flow into and become one with modern truth and wisdom.

'There is no reason whatever, why the religion of the Hindus should in any respect be unsuitable for modern times. Our forefathers could not and did not intend to provide for all time. They gave us more than the forefathers of any other people ever gave to them. They left a tradition of wise conservatism for ensuring continuity of culture. The safeguard is for providing against decay and destruction. They did not prohibit re-adjustment to modern knowledge. Failure to re-adjust must lead to decay and destruction. It is our own fault, not that of our forefathers, if we misinterpreted protective conservatism into a death-trap for truth.

'Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati was among our people a hundred years ago. The religion of our forefathers was at that time sore pressed by modern science on the one hand and by Christianity on the other. The chronic attack of Islam was also there. The fault was not in the *rishis* who gave us the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* but in us. The Maharshi diagnosed the disease and he treated the cause surgically, by a process of bold excision. In this his method differed from some other great men, for example Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who applied an all-embracing tolerance and understanding which dissolved all barriers and made the crudest parts of Hinduism as good as the highest. The goal is the same, but the approaches differ.

'Swami Dayananda strove by a process of merciless chopping off to make the ancient forest habitable for modern life. Let us not convert the result of his labour into another obstinate sect; but rather, let us understand the purpose and meaning of his noble effort and strive to fulfil it as he wanted it, viz. to make Hinduism a habitable tenement for progressive modern life, a religion whose culture, tradition, and tenets make no compromise with evil, but offer no impediment to human progress. If there is one religion that followed the scientific method in the search for spiritual truth, it is the religion of the Upanishadic teachers. If the *rishis* were told that, out of deference to them, new knowledge would be kept apart and their teachings would be protected in isolation, they would have been shocked.

They would have condemned it as the greatest act of heresy in the worship of truth.

'The present phase of Hinduism is a period of re-absorption and integration of all reforming sects. It will of course mean a certain amount of self-effacement of denominations. Pride is the enemy of truth as well as of human welfare. Swami Dayananda's aim can be fulfilled only by re-absorption of his reforms as well as of the Sikh *gurus*, the Brahma Samaj and all others into Hinduism as a whole.

'Truth is automatically self-effacing. This is the very nature of truth. If any reforming school resists this self-effacement and seeks to live apart from that which it is its function to reform, thenceforward it begins to rot and decay. The unreformed may indeed prove better than the isolated reformer-denomination, for age gives a power all its own.

'Swami Dayananda's teachings have permeated wide, and a stage has been reached when they can no longer form a denomination apart, but must live in the soul of Hinduism itself. And this has been the trend of thought and of action on the part of all Arya Samajists.' (A.P.I.)

We have quoted nearly full of the speech, because of its merit and real understanding.

The reform movements of the last century in India arose as responses to the challenge of Christianity and materialism of the West to Hindu culture. Hindu society had become narrow and stagnant and failed to recreate new forms in accordance with the novel factors. But history does not have a stop, and a culture which imagines that it can emancipate itself from history goes to pieces. This fact has now been grasped by the Hindu society in general, thanks mainly to the recreation of the original vedantic tradition by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. But a no less serious mistake can be made by those who think that they can write off their entire past and live apart from the oecumenical tradition of Hinduism. Such attempts will inevitably mean, as in the case of decadent and narrow Buddhism, that history will get such movements by the throat. The observation of Rajaji need to be taken to heart by all the different religious denominations in India.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE INDIAN CONCEPT OF THE BEAUTIFUL.
BY DEWAN BAHADUR K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRY.
 FOREWORD BY SACHIVOTTAMA SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI
 AIYER. *Illustrated with 13 monochrome plates.*
Published by The University of Travancore.

Not a mere theorist but one who has achieved a name for poetry, drama, and criticism in English, Sanskrit, and Tamil, Sri Ramaswami Sastry seeks here to define the Beautiful in Indian Art with the help of its surviving manifestations in architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, music, drama, and dance in India. This is a learned and synthetic disquisition indeed, tracing the origin of all art, philosophy, and life to the manifestation of God in Nature through form, colour, and sound. God's creation has genesis in His sportive mood, charged with the Bliss of Self. Sri Shankara implies this in his statement, 'On the vast canvas of the self, the Self itself paints the picture of the various worlds, and the Supreme Self seeing itself therein derives great Bliss.' This is the basis of all Art. God's creations, with His essence in them, can never fail to be blissful, beautiful and good (Cf. Plato, Plotinus, Dionysius, St. Aquinas, Baumgarten and others) in their own endeavours at creation, in moods of consecration and surrender unto Him, for 'He is devotion; He is worship; He is liberation and its means; He is the Ruler of all beings, and the Root-cause of all that is past, present, and future (Cf. V. 134 of *Svatmanirupadam*). Thus Advaita has played not a little part in the evolution of the perfect Concept of the Beautiful—a concept which is synthetic, comprehensive, and inthreads all the 'aspects of art' in all lands and conditions. The artist is one 'who has realized the supreme Truth giving up everything, such as form, caste, etc. and who abides in Self, in infinite Consciousness, and Bliss.' (Cf. V. 40 of Shankara's *Atmabodha*). Therefore Art which has its beginning in sport (*Lila*), has its end and fruit in sport alone, which connotes a blissful union with the Fount of all life. Thus Art becomes a sadhana in the endeavour to see itself in the Supreme Self, irrespective of the vehicle, the form it employs in the bargain. A perfect artist is, therefore, the unconditioned Lord in the infinite realm of creation which bows down to his will. (Cf. *Agni Purana* and Shelley). It is not an empty boast of India that its Vedic and Upanishadic thought influenced the Grecian philosophy and aesthetics, which are the sources from which all the European concepts of the Beautiful are derived.

Against this spiritual background of *Ananda* (Bliss), and *Rasa* (Aesthetic flavour) the learned author examines Architecture, and the Fine Arts, and their different styles, the Northern and the Southern, and bewails the Westernized modern productions. He adjures the

'progressivists' especially to put the clock back to the Vedic times, if they mean to lead the rest of the world to peace and plenty. The author is at his best when he evolves his concept of the Beautiful through literatures, Indian and European. The mention, and short descriptions, of (a) some at least of the popular *mudras* like the *vitarka*, *simhakarna*, *bhusparsha*, *pataka*, *kataka*, *shuchi*, and *ardhachandra* among the *asamyuta* ones, and the *anjali*, *garuda*, *khatva*, *matsya*, *kurma*, and *samkha* among the *samyuta*; (b) the distinctive traits of *bharata-natya*, *kathakali*, *kathak*, *mohini-attam*, *kuchipudi* and *manipuri* among dance styles; (c) the distinctive features of the North Indian and South Indian music, and some at least of their *sampurna ragas* like the *thodi*, *kambhoji*, *kalyani*, *samkarabharana*, *bhimpalasri* etc; and (d) the essential differences in the various schools of painting, the Rajput, the Mughal, and the present Bengali and the Andhra, together with their symbolic and emotive qualities, would have helped the reader to appreciate his art-heritage better. For both Indian music and Indian dance had their great inspiration in the *tantric* ritual of worship which, our ancients had powerful reasons to believe, established an easy road to the Godhead for many.

Besides one does not fail to notice the learned author's apologia for Raja Ravi Varma's art and his high opinion thereof, in the face of the author's own spiritual doctrines about Art, which cut the ground from off his feet. His tirade against the Bengal artists is too general and unqualified. It cannot be justified, if one has seen 'Queen Tishyarakshita' and 'Kajri' of Sri Abanindranath, 'Sarat Bree', 'Annapurna', 'Siva of the Himalayas' etc. of Sri Nandalal, 'A Tryst in the Heavens' and 'Sri Kali' of Ukil brothers, 'Relativity' of S. K. Dhar, 'The Evening Glow' and 'At Dawn of Day' of Charu Chandra Dey, 'Kaliyadaman-Krishna' of Aswini Kumar Roy, 'Chitrangada' of Pratima Devi, etc. Mr. Sastry's statement on p. 98 that 'Indian painting achieved brilliant results in the past, but its achievements are not comparable to the wonderful achievements of Italian Painting ...' has no legs to stand upon in the face of the existence still of 'The Meeting of Laila and Majnun' by Hakim Khan, 'The Conquest of Ceylon by Wijayo' and 'Padmapani' etc. of Ajanta, the various 'Queens of Beauty' of Sigiriya etc. among our ancient; of 'Sandhya Gayatri', 'Gajendra Moksha' of an unknown artist, 'The Bride', 'The Golden Rain', 'Buz Bahadur and Rupamati', 'The Divine Cowherd' etc. among the medieval, and of the abovesaid of the Bengal School among the modern paintings, which are as good as, if not better than, 'Mona Lisa' and 'The Last Supper' of Leonardo da Vinci, 'The Birth of Venus' by Botticelli, 'The Adoration of the Magi' by Albert Durer, 'The Immaculate Conception' by Murillo etc.

If *ananda* is a self-effacing spiritual joy it can never

be cross-grained, as the author says on p. 3, by being 'that exquisite mixture of *ananda* and agony ...'. Nor can there be 'Realism in Idealism' in the common import of the terms. They are mutually exclusive as the author himself implies in his reliance on Shakespeare's and Wordsworth's lines: 'Gives to airy nothings a local habitation and a name', and 'The light that was never on sea or land. The consecration and the poet's dream,' respectively on p. 5. He would, however, be right, if realism is truthfulness to species or genus, biologically. Since highest Art is free, transcendent, infinite, and eternal, it is unconditioned by our adjectives like 'realistic, idealistic, classical, romantic' etc. Besides there is a lurking confusion between the Hellenic and the Indian ideals of Art. If Idealism, both Indian and Platonic, has its roots and prototypes in divine patterns (Vide *Kathopanishad*, Plato's *Republic*, *Ion*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, *Phaedo* etc.) the Hellenic art based solely on the perfection of the human form made up of well-formed muscles and limbs and buxom rotundity is not really idealistic in the Indian sense. For there would have been no justification then for the injunction, *devo bhutva devam yajet* (By becoming God worship God). In the best 'idealistic' specimen of Grecian Art it is the intellect that combines the various perfect parts into a perfect whole; whereas in the Indian idealistic type it is intuition and vision (after a devout consecration unto God) that fuse the parts together with the grace of the artist's *Ishtadevata*. The Buddhistic sculpture and iconography are not really 'confined to an expression of the body in repose'. This is true only of the *dhyani* Buddhas, and not of the Jataka depictions etc. at Ajanta, Amaravati, Boro Budur etc.

Despite the above limitations, the book is really a good supplement to the authoritative ones of Dr Coomaraswami, Brown, Havell, and Fergusson; for while it refutes some of their inferences, it also supplies many of their omissions. The author's plea for the founding of a Central Academy of Fine Arts and Letters for educating Indians for the task of a proper assessment of their art-heritage and of broadcasting the same to the world at large for its appreciation and spiritual benefit, is quite timely now that we have attained freedom.

The book has an elegant format but contains a lot of typographical errors.

P. SAMARAO

CENT PER CENT SWADESHI, OR THE ECONOMICS OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES. BY M. K. GANDHI. *Published by the Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 3rd Ed. Pp. 132, Price Rs. 2.*

This book is a collection of Gandhiji's writings in the *Harijan* for over several years on the subject of swadeshi as also those of Mahadev Desai and others on it. The subject roused the interest of many during the fight for the political freedom of the country, and

many are the queries that are posed from several points of view and answered by Gandhiji exhaustively in his own inimitable way. For Gandhiji *swadeshi* was of lesser importance as a means for political fight than as a means of economic uplift of the masses. He derives the principle of *swadeshi* from the principle of *swadharma* and interprets it from a spiritual standpoint. He has spiritualized the conception of *swadeshi* as he has done many an other subject. Its application is not confined to India; other countries may as well apply it adapting its working to suit the needs of their masses.

It is not a fact, as a reading of the book shows, that Gandhiji stood against big industries; but he would not allow *swadeshi* workers to advertize for big industries, which are able to look after themselves. He wanted them to concentrate their energies on the useful village crafts which are dying out for want of encouragement and support. He wanted the industries to be revived not in competition with the former but as a means of utilizing the idle hours of the nation, which lives in the 700,000 villages of India and is slowly being impoverished due to the disruption of its rural economy. It is a consuming love of the masses, an agony at their miserable plight and suffering, the living machines behind these crafts reduced to bare skeletons for want of even a square meal, that dictated to him this policy to encourage the village industries even at a sacrifice and to prefer them to the products of the dead machine, though superior in quality, which are able to look after themselves, and which only fill the pockets of a rich few. Ultimately, to Gandhiji, it is the love of the people that matters and that love must express itself, if it is genuine and if it is to be effective, in an effort at alleviating their suffering through proper means, and the one that Gandhiji found suitable was cent per cent *swadeshi*.

The printing and get up of the book are excellent and the price cheap.

THE GOSPEL OF ISLAM. BY DUNCAN GREENLESS. *Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 215. Price Rs. 3-12.*

This book is the first volume in *The World Gospel Series* which the Theosophical Publishing House has undertaken to publish in about twentyfive volumes covering all the great religions and important religious sects. This series is intended to bring out in a precise and lucid manner the essence of the various scriptures so that they may be easily understood even by lay men and be available cheaply to the general public.

The Gospel of Islam is a collection of some of the verses from the *Qur'an* under suitable heads with their translation into simple prose from the Arabic original, supplemented with notes by the author. The author has brought deep sympathy and understanding to his task. He has provided the book with a nice preface, an

introduction dealing with the life and times of the Prophet, and a synopsis of the contents which add to the usefulness of the book.

A detached study of the book will show that Islam is a manly religion in the sense it exhorts man not to surrender to anyone except God, to live in peace with all, and resist all injustice. It is primarily social in its emphasis and not transcendental; and, as such can be easily understood by the common man. The context in which Islam arose, the fact that the Prophet had to fight defensive wars, and the later history of most of its followers who professed Islam only in name and followed the promptings of their own personal ambitions, indulging in violence and deceit, give to Islam—which means the religion of peace—the appearance of a fanatic and bellicose religion which is not warranted by the teachings of the *Qur'an*. It is very difficult to extricate Islam from the plight into which it has fallen. The author suggests 'back to the *Qur'an*', without caring for any other authority, however high, as a means of bringing Islam to its pristine purity or to what the Prophet wanted it to be. Its aim, as that of every other religion, is to lift man to God. Its teachings were suited to the needs and the capacity of the people among whom it arose.

LIFE AND MYSELF. VOL. I. DAWN APPROACHING NOON. BY HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA. *Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Price Rs. 6-12.*

This is the first volume of Mr Chattopadhyaya's autobiography and carries the tale half-way, in his own words, from Dawn to Noon. On the whole, it is well written and holds the attention of the reader almost throughout, though greater objectivity would have given it significance as a personal and social document. The outstanding interest of this volume is provided by the portraits of his parents—the father, Dr Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, physician, scholar, and humanist of extraordinary attainments, and a man of the highest integrity and the truest generosity, and the mother, Varada Sundari, a woman of great nobility of heart, kindness, and courage. The account of Harindranath's meeting with his brother Virendranath is of absorbing interest, giving as it does a vivid picture of Indian revolutionaries abroad in the nineteen-twenties and their heroic struggle against British imperialism. Not much light is thrown by Mr Chattopadhyaya on the growth of his poetic talent; perhaps we shall hear more in the second volume. It is rather curious that a poet should so often misuse the word 'literally' in the context of obvious metaphors. The book is finely got up, but suffers from a number of avoidable misprints.

A. V. R.

AN OUTLINE OF INDIAN ART. BY P. RAJESWARA RAO. *Ellore, Andhra, India.*

The writer's aim in this booklet of 53 pages is to introduce the general public to Indian art. He has

divided up his subjects into small chapters on Painting, Architecture, Music, Drama etc. The book has been dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. The treatment though 'cursory and superficial', to use the author's own words, may prove to be of some use to students who are just beginning a study of the cultural arts of India.

DAYAMOY MITRA

EYES OF LIGHT—POEMS. BY DILIP KUMAR ROY. *Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Rs. 4.*

Mr D. K. Roy's volume of poems is an achievement far above the ordinary in what has been called Indo-Anglian poetry. He is not an idle versifier, the victim of poetic *cliches*, futile rhymes, and echoes of Keats and Shelley. There is substance in his best poems, and he has a fairly adequate command of many metres, including blank verse, and a gift for original imagery and expression. At times he is singularly energetic and effective, as in the descriptive passages in the longer poems. A few of the lyrics reveal true poetic sensibility, but much of his work suffers from mystical and esoteric symbolism, and cannot escape being called 'so misty, so vague.' No doubt the poet is at liberty, as Dr K. R. S. Iyengar who writes the foreword says, to make poetry the medium of mystical experience, incommunicable as it is, but the reader of such poetry is equally at liberty to dismiss it as too insubstantial and remote. Again, there is mysticism and mysticism. Where Mr Roy draws largely on the sources of spiritual experience familiar to most students of Hindu philosophy, he is secure, but when the personal element enters, he is hard to understand. The renderings from the *Bhagavat* are poems of distinct merit and deserve special mention,

A. V. R.

BENGALI

SHILPA KATHA. BY SRI NALINIKANTA GUPTA. *Culture Publishers, 63, College Street, Calcutta.*

Sri Nalinikanta Gupta of Pondicherry Ashram requires no introduction to the Bengali public. He is one of the very few first-rate critics of literary art and aesthetics, who happens to combine a thorough knowledge of Western literary art, especially English and French, with Eastern art and metaphysics. Here we have as many as seventeen articles collected together from his contributions to Bengali journals. He sets before us a rich intellectual fare on themes like Modern Poetry, Mystic Poetry, Sound in Poetry, The Poet and the Mystic, The Poetry of Mallarme etc. To have dealt with such a varied range of literary topics in a judicious and balanced spirit, with deep insight and in a style which is at once clear and penetrating, is no ordinary achievement. Nalini Babu's book should be in the hands of all our youthful aspirants to literary fame.

DAYAMOY MITRA

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR REPORT FOR 1947

The Deoghar Vidyapith has been experimenting, with laudable success, for nearly a quarter of a century, in putting into practice the true ideal of Education which, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'is the manifestation of the Perfection already in man.' With this as its guiding principle the Vidyapith runs a residential High School on the lines of the ancient Gurukul system adapted to modern conditions. It tries to help each of its pupils to attain the maximum of physical, intellectual, and moral development so that he may be well-fitted for the discharge of the duties of adult life efficiently and nobly.

The twentysixth annual report of the Vidyapith reviews its activities as under :

School Department: The classes were small, and individual attention was paid to the pupils. They were encouraged to develop their aptitudes along healthy and useful channels. There were 176 resident students on the roll at the end of the year. Nine boys were sent up for the Matriculation Examination in the year, all of whom got through.

Boys were given regular physical training and they had various kinds of games and sports.

The Literary Society conducted by the boys functioned well. They were encouraged to write papers and deliver speeches on different occasions. The two Quarterlies *Vidyapith* and *Kishalay*, both Manuscript Magazines, came out regularly. The boys also conducted successfully a hand-written daily *Viveka* by name.

The boys were given practical training in domestic duties. Classes in flower-gardening, tailoring, vocal and instrumental music, takli, first-aid etc. were also held to coach the boys. They managed their own Bank and Co-operative Stores creditably.

Religious education was also imparted to them through shrine work, daily worship and conducting *aratrikam* etc.

The *Sevaka Samiti* of the Vidyapith boys undertook beneficial activities on various occasions.

Many festivals and the birthdays of the great religious prophets of the world were observed in order to create a spiritual atmosphere in the Vidyapith.

Library and Reading Room: At the end of the year there were 5468 books in the Library. The Reading Room was furnished with 20 periodicals and 4 dailies.

Philanthropic Work: The Dispensary conducted by the Vidyapith rendered medical relief to about 4000 patients including poor villagers from the neighbourhood.

Publication Department: The Vidyapith has a publication Department which has published some useful and valuable books.

Dairy and Vegetable Garden: It maintained a

huge Dairy with 72 heads of cattle and cultivated an area of 12 bighas. These departments helped a good deal in improving the nutritive elements of the diet given to the boys and teachers.

The Vidyapith is in urgent need of a separate Prayer Hall to accommodate 300 persons, some class rooms for the lower classes which, for want of accommodation, are being held in dormitories, a water reservoir with a pipe system for supply of water, and a small building for its vocational classes. While thanking all its donors and sympathizers for all the help they have given in the past, the Vidyapith fervently hopes that more and more help would be forthcoming from them to help it meet its immediate and urgent needs.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, LUCKNOW

REPORT FOR 1947

The report under review shows a commendable record of social service and educational activity despite the hardships the Sevashrama had to face due to its unstable financial position.

During the year the outdoor Hospital of the Sevashrama treated 95,504 cases of which 19,382 were new ones.

In the Afternoon School conducted by the Mission there were 75 boys and 10 girls. Thirtyeight boys and adults were studying in the Night School. The Library with over 4,500 books, and the Reading Room with a good number of periodicals, proved to be of great service to the people of the locality.

Under the head, Pecuniary Help, the Mission was rendering help to 3 persons regularly, and occasional aid was also given to 21 persons.

The Milk-Canteen run by the Sevashrama distributed milk free of charge to 4,080 mothers and children.

The Sevashrama celebrated the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and other religious prophets of the world. The monk in charge of the institution conducted regular discourses on scriptures such as the *Gita*, *Upanishads*, etc.

The Afternoon School run by the Mission is in urgent need of a building of its own. The management of the Sevashrama appeal to the charitable public to help them in this regard, and also to strengthen them in their financial position, which is very uncertain now, in order to help it carry on its normal activities.

RAMAKRISHNA ANNIVERSARY BANQUET, CHICAGO, U.S.A.

The annual Ramakrishna dinner was held on 12 May 1948 at the Hotel Maryland. After the dinner a program of Hindu music was enjoyed and enthusiastically applauded by the guests.

Swami Vishwananda opened the meeting with the following remarks: We have invited you in the banquet hall of a hotel to celebrate the birthday of a great sage, seer, illumined Teacher whom the French Savant Romain Rolland calls the 'Prophet of New India'. The eternal quest of man is to find God. Many dream about God, many long for God-vision, and a few strive for God-realization. But the vast majority have to disappear from the stage of the world before they attain the goal. How blessed must be the man to whom the Unknown has become known, the Invisible has become visible, the Transcendental has become real. How precious must be such a life for the world.

This extraordinary life was lived in the noonday glare of the nineteenth century positivism and agnosticism. Like another Buddha, Ramakrishna buried himself in meditation under a banyan tree on the bank of the Ganges. While the advancement of science was making the external world more and more real and was undermining faith in Eternal Verities Ramakrishna was exploring the inner world and added realization to realization, and the crowning realization was that all religions are pathways leading to the selfsame God. Swami Vivekananda brought the ancient wisdom of India and the universalism of Ramakrishna's teachings to the American people.

Dr Robert Browning of the Northwestern University took as his subject the conflict between religion and science. Making the point that the controversy must be resolved by science becoming religious and religion scientific, Mr. Browning described the rigorously scientific attitude of Ramakrishna's teaching and Vivekananda's insistence upon a personal method of strict experimentation.

Comparing the external, material quest of physical science with the interior, spiritual experimentation taught by Vivekananda, Mr. Browning warned that it takes time to overcome the temptation to spiritual pride. Referring to Ramakrishna as a great spiritual experimentalist, he concluded with a discussion of the need for a reconciliation of the tension between the absolute, transcendental aspect of religion and the personal, individual life as the central problem of modern man.

Swami Akhilananda, leader of the Vedanta Society of Boston, traced the growth of spiritual understanding through the written and spoken words of many Western thinkers, demonstrating that the deeper the human mind probes into the mysteries of the universe, the nearer do the conclusions reached approach the prophetic finalities revealed in Ramakrishna's illumined messages.

Reiterating that Ramakrishna's methods of observa-

tion and personal experiment are open to all, the Swami warned that not everyone may expect suddenly to become an illumined prophet, but that everyone may begin at once to advance toward the goal as the Master did a hundred years ago, for the validity of religious experience is verifiable by everyone.

The Swami then made a detailed explanation of the nature of religious experience as contrasted with disturbed or pathological mental states. He referred to a recent work in which the author attempted to show that Jesus was a paranoiac, and stated that anyone who had any doubts as to the validity of religious experience need only study the effects in the life and works of mystics, which do not in any way resemble the illnesses to be observed in mental hospitals. Religious experience, he said, integrates the personality. Mental illness dis-integrates.

The Swami mentioned the present spread in American cities of the neo-Freudian vogue and warned of the dangers in a system of psychology which excludes religion as a basic human need. This godless teaching, he said, is invading cities everywhere, even in India, thriving upon the present widespread bewilderment and emotional starvation of the people. 'Tensions and frustrations,' he concluded, 'both individual and national, can only be resolved by religious realization. Religion is the only way. Ramakrishna shows us the means.'

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, PURI

AN APPEAL

The Ramakrishna Math, Puri, started in 1932, is situated just on the seaside, not far away from the famous temple of Jagannatha. The main object of this branch centre of the Belur Math is to give shelter to those monks of the Order who want to take rest after strenuous work or to devote themselves to meditation and study in this congenial climate and holy environment. Besides, it ministers to the spiritual needs of the visitors through worship, discourses, etc.

The institution is maintained by voluntary gifts of devotees who occasionally come here on pilgrimage. But their contributions are too insufficient to meet its daily expenses in these days of high prices.

The charitable and religious-minded public is therefore requested to help this Ashrama to discharge its duty. All contributions will be thankfully acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI UTTAMANANDA
President, Sri Ramakrishna Math,
Chakratirtha, Puri (Orissa)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 21st January 1940.



THE HOUSE-BOAT ON THE JHELUM AT SRINAGAR, KASHMIR,
IN WHICH SWAMI VIVEKANANDA LIVED IN 1898



THE HOUSE OF MR. SAMUEL HALE AT CHICAGO, WHERE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
LIVED FOR SOME TIME.