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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

1719 Turk Street
San Francisco, Cal.

My dear Joe—

Just a line before you start for France. Are you going *via* England? I had a beautiful letter from Mrs Sevier in which I find that Miss Muller sent simply a paper without any other words to one of boys Kaly, who was with her in Darjeeling.

Congreave is the name of her nephew and he is in the Transvaal war—that is the reason she underlined that, to show her nephew fighting the Boers in Transvaal. That was all. I cannot understand it any more now than then of course.

I am physically worse than at Los Angeles, mentally much better, stronger, and peaceful. Hope it will continue to be so.

I have not yet got a reply to my letter to you—I expect it soon.

One Indian letter of mine was directed by mistake to Mrs Wheeler—it came all right to me in the end. I had nice notes from Saradananda—they are doing beautifully over there. The boys are working up—well, scolding has both sides you see—it makes them up and doing.

We Indians have been so so dependent for long that it requires, I am sorry, a good lot of tongue to make them active. One of the laziest fellows had taken charge of the Anniversary this year and pulled it through. They have planned and are successfully working famine works by themselves without my help. They are fighting the municipal rascals bravely and I am sure we will bring them to book. All this comes from the terrific scolding I have been giving—sure !!!

They are standing on their own feet. I am so glad. See Joe—the Mother is working.

I sent Miss Thursby's letter to Mrs Hearst. She sent me an invitation to her musical. I could not go. I had a bad cold. So that was all. Another lady for whom I had a letter

from Miss Thursby—an Oakland lady, did not reply. I don't know whether I will make enough in Frisco to pay my fare to Chicago!! Oakland work has been successful—I hope to get about \$100 from Oakland—that is all. After all I am content. It is better that I tried. There is nothing in ... for me. Even the magnetic healer had not anything for me. Well—things will go on anyhow for me—I do not care how. I am very peaceful. I learn from Los Angeles Mrs Leggett has been bad again. I wired to New York to learn what truth was in it. I will get a reply soon I expect.

Say, how will you arrange about my mail when the Leggetts are over on the other side? Will you so arrange that they reach me right?

I have nothing more to say—all love and gratitude is yours already you know that. You have already done more than I ever deserved. I don't know whether I go to Paris or not—but I must go to England sure in May. I must not go home without trying England a few weeks more.

With all love,

Ever yours in the Lord,
Vivekananda

P.S. Mrs Hensborough and Mrs Appenul have taken a flat for a month at 1719 Turk Street—I am with them and will be a few weeks.

V.

88T W. 39th Street,
New York.
16th ? Dec. 1895.

Blessed and beloved—

All your letters reached by one mail today. Miss Muller also writes me one. She has read in the *Indian Mirror* that Swami Krishnananda is coming over to England. If that is so, he is the strongest man that I can get.

The classes I had here were six in the week, besides a question class. The general attendance varies between 70 to 120. Besides every Sunday I have a public lecture. The last month my lectures were in a small hall holding about 600. But 900 will come as a rule, 300 standing, and about 300 going off, not finding room. This week therefore I have a bigger hall, with a capacity of holding 1200 people.

There is no admission charged in these lectures, but a collection covers the rent. The newspapers have taken me up this week and altogether I have stirred up New York considerably this year. If I could have remained here this summer and organized a summer place, the work would be going on sure foundations here. But as I intend to come over in May to England, I will have to leave it unfinished. If, however, Krishnananda comes to England, and you find him strong and able, and if you find the work in London will not be hurt by my absence this summer, I would rather be here this summer.

Again I am afraid my health is breaking down under constant work. I want some rest. We are so unused to these Western methods, especially the time-keeping. I will leave you to decide all these. The *Brahmavadin* is going on here very satisfactorily. I have begun to write articles on *bhakti*; also send them a monthly account of the work. Miss Muller wants to come to America. I do not know whether she will or not. Some friends here are publishing my Sunday lectures. I have sent you a few of the first one. I will send by next mail a few of the next two lectures and if you like them I will ask

them to send you a number. Can you manage to get a few hundred copies sold in England? That will encourage them in publishing the subsequent ones.

Next month I go to Detroit, then to Boston, and Harvard University. Then I will have a rest, and then I come to England, unless you think that things go on without me and with Krishnananda.

Ever yours with love and blessings,
Vivekananda

At Mayavati,
Himalayas.
15th Jan. 1901

My dear Sturdy,

I learn from Saradananda (that) you have sent over Rs. 1529-5-5 to the Math, being the money that was in hand for work in England. I am sure it will be rightly used.

Capt. Sevier passed away about 3 months ago. They have made a fine place here in the mountains and Mrs Sevier means to keep it up. I am on a visit to her and I may possibly come over to England with her.

I wrote you a letter from Paris. I am afraid you did not get it.

So sorry to learn the passing away of Mrs Sturdy. She has been a very good wife and good mother and it is not ordinarily one meets with such in this life.

This life is full of shocks, but the effects pass away, anyhow that is the hope.

It is not because of your free expression of opinion in your last letter to me that I stopped writing. I only let the wave pass, as is my wont. Letters would only have made a wave of a little bubble.

Kindly tender my regards and love to Mrs Johnson and other friends if you meet them.

And I am ever yours in the Truth.
Vivekananda

Grand Hotel,
Valai,
Switzerland.

I am reading a little, starving a good deal, and practising a good deal more. The strolls in the woods are simply delicious. We are now situated under three huge glaciers, and the scenery is very beautiful.

By the bye, whatever scruples I may have had as to the Swiss-lake origin of the Aryans have been taken clean off my mind. The Swiss is a Tartar *minus* a pigtail.

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELUR MATH 1931

Mahapurush Maharaj has grown so weak physically that it is difficult for him, without help, even to get down from his cot. So one or other among his attendants always stays near him, even during the night. He generally remains absorbed in a spiritual mood throughout the night. Sometimes he asks the person waiting on him to read to him certain specified portions from books like the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, the *Gita*, the *Upanishad*, and the *Bhagavata*, and listens to these with rapt attention. At other moments he sits quiet in meditation or prays to the Master with folded hands for the good of the world. What a fervent outpouring of the heart! Sometimes again he lies down holding pictures of gods and goddesses in his bosom. In answer to the attendants' frequent queries: 'Maharaj, are you not going to sleep even a little?', he replies: 'What sleep can I have?' and begins to sing forthwith:

My sleep has broken, can I sleep any more?
I am awake in yoga.

Returning your sleep of Ignorance to you
O Mother, I have put sleep to sleep.

I am come to a new state now and have learnt
a lesson from a good teacher,

O Mother, I have got One of a country
Where there is no night.

What is day or twilight to me?

I have made twilight barren.

One day, on the topic of sleep, he said: 'It is said in the *Chandi* that Mother Herself is of the nature of sleep: *Ya devi sarva-bhuteshu nidrarupena samsthita*. She is the support of everything, animate and inanimate. There is nothing besides Her. *Adharabhuta jagatastameka*. The Mother is the only support of the entire universe. The Mother is ever present in the chamber of my heart illumining it. All fatigue goes away at the very sight of Her, and even the need for sleep

is not felt at all. Whenever I have a tired feeling I look at Her. All is bliss at once, and the tired feeling goes.'

It was nearly three in the night, and all was quiet around. A dim electric light was faintly lighting up Mahapurushji's room. Addressing the attendant near he said, 'Look, do *japa* as much as you can in the dead of night. That is a very opportune time for *japa* and meditation. You may feel sleepy when you sit for meditation. But do not give it up still. You will discover afterwards that though you may go off into a light sleep in course of doing *japa*, the *japa* will continue all the same inwardly during that time. Sit in such a way that the body is held erect. If at any time you feel too much sleepy, get up from the seat and do *japa* standing or walking. "Work with your hand and say the name of the Lord Hari with your lips." That is to say be always doing *japa*, whether you move about or do some work. Go on doing *japa* in this way for some time and you will find that a part of the mind will always remain engaged in *japa*. *Japa* will flow like a hidden under-current in all states. If you be up and doing and have fortitude enough to do *japa* continuously, day and night, for two or three years, you will find that everything has come within your power. You may remember that the *Chandi* makes mention of *maharatri*, the great night. The *maharatri* is the best time for spiritual practices. A spiritual current flows at the time. The finer the mind becomes, the more it will feel the effect of that current. Why should the *sadhu* sleep much in the night? It is enough to sleep for an hour or two. If you sleep through the entire night, when are you going to do your spiritual practices? All nature becomes quiet in the dead of night, when mind becomes steady after a little effort, and high thoughts and

feelings come easily to the heart.'

The attendant said in great awe: 'My mind is not absorbed by *japa* and meditation. Whenever I sit for *japa*, I find all kinds of idle thoughts coming into the mind and throwing it into a tumult. Rather I find that I am able to have some remembrance of God while engaged in your service or some other work; it makes the mind calm and gives some joy too. But whenever I sit for *japa* or meditation the mind seems to revolt altogether. After fighting with the mind in this way and experiencing much disquiet, I have in the end to get up from the seat. It is a new phase, which I did not have before. For some time past, particularly since I began to serve you, this phase has come over my mind.'

Listening to these words of the attendant about the disquiet state of his mind, Mahapurushji kept silent for long. Afterwards he said in a quiet tone: 'Yes, some minds have that attitude of revolt. There is a way to bring even such minds under control. It is possible gradually to make even such rebellious minds quiet and point it to the object of meditation. Do not start doing *japa* or meditation immediately after you take the seat. First sit steadily and pray to the Master yearningly. The Master is a living embodiment of *samadhi*. If you meditate on Him after praying sincerely to Him, the mind will immediately become absorbed. Say to Him, "O Lord, do make my mind steady, do make it calm." After praying in this way for some time, think of the *samadhi* of the Master. The picture of the Master that you see is the picture of a very high state of *samadhi*. Ordinary men can have no idea of what the picture really means. Afterwards sit quietly and go on watching the mind and see where it runs away. You are not the mind. The mind is yours; you are different from the mind; your nature is the Self. Sit like a witness and go on watching the movements of the mind. After running about for some time

the mind will get tired of itself. Then seize it, bring it back from its wanderings and set it to the meditation of the Master. Seize the mind and bring it back as many times as it will run away. You will find that as you go on doing this the mind has gradually quieted down. Then repeat the name of the Lord and meditate on Him with great love. Do exactly as I tell you for a few days, you will see that the mind has come under your control. But you must go on doing this regularly every day with great faith.

The Attendant: When I look at the state of my mind I don't think I shall be able to do spiritual practices at all. The only hope lies in your blessings.

Mahapurush Maharaj (affectionately): My child, there is no want of blessings. You have made the Master the sole support of your life after having renounced everything. If you don't have our blessings, who will? But you have also to toil hard. As the Master used to say: "The breeze of divine grace is ever blowing. Put up your sail." Personal effort means exactly this, namely, the unfurling of the sail. Dogged perseverance and self-reliant effort are necessary for good work and spiritual practices, in particular. One must manifest the strength of a lion for the realization of Self-knowledge. Nothing at all can be achieved without energy and self-reliant effort. When you unfurl the sail, the breeze of grace is sure to blow into it. As long as man retains the notion of the ego, so long he must continue to persevere. Why have you become *sadhus*, leaving your parents, hearth and home? Because, you wanted to realize God. And as a result of merit acquired by the practice of goodness in previous lives you have, through the grace of God, come under the shelter of the Master, and have found a place in His holy Order. Especially, the Master has given you the opportunity for staying near us at all times. If the aim of life is missed in spite of all these opportunities you have got,

can there be a greater cause for regret? Have great strength of mind. You have launched your bark in this ocean of relative existence by taking His name which purifies the fallen. Can you afford to shrivel up in fear at the sight of a few big billows and relinquish the helm? These are the terrors of *Mahamaya*, the Great Enchantress. She tests the aspirants by these. When the aspirants' mind is not swerved by these, but remains steady and firm in its resolve, like the Sumeru mountain, *Mahamaya* becomes pleased and opens the door of Liberation. All is achieved when She is pleased. The *Chandi* says: *Saisha prasanna varada nrinam bhavati muktaye*. This *Mahamaya* Herself, when pleased, grants the boon of Liberation to man. Have you not read the life of the Buddha? *Mahamaya*, in the form of *Mara*, attempted to strike terror even into Buddha's heart by means of frightful forms, but seated on his *asana* he resolved with the utmost firmness:

“Let the body dry up in this seat, and let skin and bone and flesh be annihilated,

Without attaining Knowledge, which is difficult to have even in many cycles of creation, my body will not move from this seat.”

What a resolution! In the end the Mother was pleased and opened the door of *nirvana*, and Buddha became blessed by attaining *bodhi*. The same thing also happened in the life of the Master. So I say to you, my child, toil hard and take to your spiritual practice with great determination. How can you afford to give up *japa* and meditation, because the mind refuses to be absorbed by them? Look at our life also. The life of everyone of the children of the Master is a living and ideal example of hard and austere *sadhana*. What severe *tapasya* haven't they done?—Maharaj, (Swami Brahmananda) Hari Maharaj, (Swami Turiyananda), and Yogen Maharaj (Swami Yogananda) and others. Yet they had

received the boundless grace of the Master who was the Incarnation of the Age. He could give the Knowledge of Brahman to all by mere wish. He used to send people into *samadhi* by mere touch; still he made us go through many extreme and severe forms of *sadhana*. The path of *sadhana* also becomes easy through the grace of God, all obstructions and difficulties vanish. God looks into the heart, He notices sincerity. He reveals Himself when one calls on Him crying with great yearning. This itself is His grace that He mercifully reveals Himself before the devotee. He is Free and Perfect. Can spiritual disciplines create an obligation for Him so that He will come down and reveal Himself after so much *japa* or meditation or austerity has been done? It is never so. But then *sadhana* means *developing* the longing for Him and Him alone. It is the longing for God and the giving up of the world and everything, forgetting name and fame, physical pleasure, and even one's own existence and all about this world and the next. God will mercifully reveal Himself to one who longs for Him in this way. An individual is able to see Him only because He reveals Himself through His infinite mercy. This is His grace. How can it be ever possible for an individual to see Him if He is not gracious to reveal Himself? He is as devoted to His worshippers as He is an ocean of mercy.

The Attendant: The only hope is that we have received your shelter. You will do whatever does us good. When once you have given us shelter, you will never forsake us.

Mahapurushji: The Master is very devoted to those who have taken shelter in Him; He is the protector of all who have taken refuge in Him. Once he has taken hold of a person's hand, the person has no more fear of getting drowned in the ocean of this world. The *Chandi* says: *Tvamashritanam na vipannaranam, Tvamashrita hyashrayatam prayanti*. That is to say,

there is no danger for persons who have been give refuge by You. Those who are sheltered by You become a shelter unto others. Hold fast to the Master in every way, in thought, word, and action. He will liberate you from the bondage of the world. Those who have taken refuge at the Master's feet, giving up all other stays, and those whom we have given shelter, have no worry about Liberation. They will have it. That responsibility is on us, and we shall see to that. In the end the Master will surely lead all by the hand. But spiritual practices are meant not only for the attainment of Liberation. Live like a *Jivanmukta* (one who is Liberated while living even in this world) by realizing God even in this life on earth through spiritual practices. Call on Him as much as you can, take His name to your heart's fill, be merged in His thought, you will

enjoy the bliss of *jivanmukti* (Liberation in life). Apart from this, there is a special purpose of the Order which Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) has built up. On each one of those who have found a place in this Order of the Master Swamiji has put a tremendous responsibility. Each *sannyasi* and *brahmachari* must build up such an ideal life of renunciation and *tapasya* that the life of each may become a fit instrument for the propagation of the pure *sattvika* idea of the Master, that the world at large may understand the Master, by looking not only at His pure Order but at each and every limb of it. Swamiji has laid down : For the Liberation of one's self and for the good of the world. Real good will come to the world when the broad and universal idea of the Master will spread over it. And he has put the responsibility of this work on the entire Order.

THE WESTERN QUESTION (IV)

BY THE EDITOR

The picture of Aryan civilization which ancient Indian literature, vedic and post-vedic, presents to us across tens of centuries is the picture of a moving and enlarging society, constantly growing rich in colour and details as it gradually spreads itself over the vast sub-continent of India. It is a spiritual story more than it is political. Political methods are, of course, employed for expansion and for securing social cohesion by a reign of law. But politics is of secondary importance and is employed as the instrument of a spiritual principle which is broad enough, and which alone is capable, to circumvent the conflicts inherent in a social situation showing wide disparities. More often politics merely gathers the rich harvest of a spiritual sowing which has laid the basis of a psychological

unity among the people. A spiritual unity becomes now and then translated into its equivalent political form. Political supremacy changes hands in later times and passes to new peoples who originally stood outside the vedic tradition but later became its upholders. Consider for example the Satavahanas of the Andhra country who lead, from towards the close of the 1st century B.C., a fresh spiritual and political revival from the South when the North lay in ruins under the blows of foreigners like the Yavanas, the Sakas, and the Pahlavas. Again these Yavanas, Sakas, and Pahlavas themselves enter Aryan society later on as fallen Kshatriyas (*vide Manusamhita*), and stand guard over Indian culture.

The spiritual character of the Indian expansion is reflected very clearly in the Epics,

India has always paid more attention to the spiritual side of life than to its political or economic aspects. But in society this spiritual emphasis has sometimes been carried to a point where it has meant the upsetting of a just balance between all its factors. We shall refer to concrete instances of this later on, but it is not difficult for the reader to anticipate them.

The Epics, however, give us the picture of a balanced polity, often very ideal it may be, where, though spirituality rules, real politics is never at a discount. Their emphasis on a spiritual conception of existence distinguishes these Epics clearly from similar literature that arose elsewhere. They are not mere hero-lauds that is to say, tales in praise of war-lords and military adventurers. The *Mahabharata* says of itself that it is not only a *dharmashastra* (a book of conduct for the achievement, in accordance with moral principles, of *artha*, power, and *kama*, pleasure) but also a *mokshashastra* (a gospel of Liberation). It, of course, also calls itself a *jaya* (a tale of victory), but the tale is one of religious conquest. The *Ramayana* is not only a *kavya* (poem) but also an *itihasa purana*, whose aim is to teach the fourfold aim of existence (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*) by means of apt stories and illustrations. The *Ramayana* primarily sets itself to the task of portraying ideal spiritual characters and an ideal civilization, *ramarajya*. In none of the Epics war and strife occupy the centre of the picture. Can we say the same thing about similar compositions elsewhere?

Rama is no political celebrity seeking military glory by exterminating peoples and laying countries in ruins. He goes everywhere as a friend of the righteous and as a foe of the ungodly, the self-sufficient man. Rama's character symbolizes power subordinated to spirituality. He humbles the pride of Parashurama but makes friends with the Nishada chieftain and the Shabari woman whose acceptance of the spiritual idea makes

them part of a common culture. He destroys Ravana but puts in his place his brother Vibhishana. It is not always easy to sift fact from fiction, but can an open mind which does not approach history with preconceived notions dismiss this vast literature as pure fabrication? Is not the broad underlying fact sufficiently clear? It is a natural habit with us to explain things we do not know in terms of those we do. It is inevitable; but it is also true that when facts demand of our intelligence that we rise above our habitual conceptions we fail very often to do so. Virochana regarded the Self he was taught as the body; it was a natural idea. But to Indra it became evident that such a notion could not be reconciled with the teachings he had received. (It is interesting to speculate if the story does not reflect actual history, at remote vedic times, when masses of 'natural' men failed to grasp the pure spiritual idea and made a travesty of it.) Rama has for this reason been regarded as a political conqueror by 'enlightened' scholarship. At the back of all such erudition are certain assumptions which the present age has converted into dogmas not open to question. There can be nothing beyond touch and sight, and no aim that is not political or economic. All else is unreal and bunkum. This philosophy explains the marked and constant tendency, that has been a characteristic of modern thought since Renaissance, to interpret a developed civilization, in its true spiritual sense, in terms of human societies, early and late, which have not awakened or find difficult to awaken still to the root conceptions of civilization and culture. Modern civilization, it seems, is irrevocably committed to the Aristotelian proposition that man is a political animal. There is no evidence anywhere today of a superior conception ruling society. In a modern society all that floats to the top is usually the scum and not its cream. . . .

The great diversity of social conditions and

peoples, the references to the Vratyas, Vri-shalas, Andhras, Pulindas, Nishadas, Nagas and so on and to new popular cults and beliefs that we find in later vedic and post-vedic literature, and all of which are included in a common society, tell unmistakably a long and exciting story of cultural integration. Unity is established on the basis of a fresh orientation of new beliefs and cults and ways of life.

All this, however, is an inside story. A foreign question in the real sense of the term faced India in an acute form, in recorded history, when the Achaemenian power and, shortly after, the Greeks, extended their operations across the Hindukush to the plains of the Indus and even beyond. These impacts proved momentous for humanity, but not in a political sense. The impacts from abroad, like those within, led to cultural developments which were far-reaching in their consequences. At first the familiar and easy responses arise. We find, on the one hand, some evidence of mimesis of the dominant political power, for example, of the Greek, in particular, in material externals like iconography, coinage, political and administrative terminology and arrangements, but usually the response takes the form of a narrow reactionism in face of the political and cultural danger. Society becomes rigid, status of women changes for the worse, and the orthodox party tries to establish an exclusive, totalitarian cult of vedic ritualism and elaborates rules of ceremonial purity. Slavery and serfdom clearly appear. All these consequences are largely due to fear and necessity. It is futile to attribute them entirely to selfishness. But man is always looking for a devil on which he can foist all blame and fix his hate.

The broad liberal spirit which had however gone deep into the roots of the society was far from dead. It had already come to form a Tradition of pure spirituality. It is reflected in the imperishable upanishadic story of Satyakama Jabala, whose mother, a maid-

servant at the houses of the wealthy, failed to answer her son's question about his parent-hood. But this damaging truth about himself which Satyakama related to his teacher, far from proving a bar to his discipleship, lifted him to the level of a true brahmin in the eyes of the teacher and qualified him for the highest Knowledge. In the Epics, the philosophers declare that in early days there was no distinction of caste (*brahman idam jagat*), and that cast arose later as a result of *karma*. The remark is significant as referring to an early homogeneous and simple society which became diversified and complex as time went on. Intermarriage and commensality still prevailed in epic times. Both the Epics and the early Buddhist literature say that character and not birth or ceremonial purity is the true test of caste.

It was not long before the liberal tradition mounted a vigorous spiritual counter-offensive, to which both the extreme right and the extreme left gave way. New developments in religion and ethics take place. Different religions of love like the Bhagavata, the Shiva-Bhagavata or the Pashupata, and the worship of Shakti, rise in all their power and glory. All are opposed to the totalitarian vedic ritualism. All of them incorporate into the society new cults and *acharas* alongside the vedic ritual on a broad metaphysical basis (*api ched suduracharah bhajate mam ananyabhak* —*Suduracharah* is usually explained in another way. But the above interpretation is by no means unreasonable in view of its concordance with the broad spirit of the *Gita* and its pointed reference to *shudras* and other modes of worship which were clearly non-Aryan in the beginning) The *Bhagavata* says that according to the *satvata tantra*, i.e. the Bhagavata religion, women, *shudras*, and *dasas* can all become *vaishnavas*. The *Shaivagamas* clearly trace their origin from two sources, vedic and non-vedic.

Jainism and Buddhism, like many other

sects which failed to rise to equal importance, are born of such impacts. They do exactly the same thing, namely, incorporate into the Aryan fold new masses of men ; but they do this by a negation of vedic authority and formalism altogether. In origin Buddhism was a purely spiritual religion, a variant of *nivrittidharma*. But later it developed new forms, particularly under the influence of the Bhagavata religion with its special emphasis on *bhakti* and *nishkama karma* based on the metaphysic of *jnana*, and also due to other racial and cultural factors it encountered on the way of its expansion. The Mahayana school bears the clear and deep impress of the Bhagavata religion. Apart from literary parallelisms and doctrinal similarities, the Buddhist historian, Lama Taranath of Nepal, pointedly refers to the guru of Nagarjuna, a brahmin convert to Buddhism and the reputed founder of the Mahayana school, as having been influenced in his views by Sri Krishna, the central figure of the Bhagavata *dharma*. But this is a side issue, and need not occupy us much when Buddhism itself, as will be presently indicated, is a child of Hinduism.

Buddhism developed into the northern school, the Mahayana, the Broader Way, in response to the need of the people it faced for a more concrete and devotional faith related to activity. The Hinayana, the Narrower Way or the Strait Path in biblical language, could continue its more abstract and philosophical career in an area that had already been prepared for its reception by earlier Aryan penetration. The North is almost always for relaxation of rules, while the South enjoying comparative security could generally afford to be rigid in its orthodoxy. The more austere school of Jainism also found a stronghold in the South in Mysore. Similar is the case with other forms of vedic religion in later times. There are, needless to say, other factors which contributed to these changes and we do not mean to simplify matters beyond the point of reasonableness. But these ex-

planations undoubtedly suggest themselves to a mind seeking reasons for the developments that took place.

It is difficult, in the absence of suitable data, to make any precise guess as to the new masses of men which were brought within the fold of Indian society by the activity of these faiths and philosophies. But undoubtedly their number was very large. Buddhism is often treated as a thing that suddenly dropped from the sky on India, and gave an entirely novel turn to her history and culture. A so-called Buddhist period has been constructed in imagination and pictured as a vast, detached section of brilliant civilization, having no organic relation with Hinduism, that came somehow to be fitted into the frame of Indian history for a period of nearly six centuries, but which later on vanished altogether. It is a habit of the mind, born of practical necessity, to make things absolutely distinct in thought before it can deal with them successfully. But we cannot carry over this very practical rule of thumb into the field of reality or understanding without detriment to truth.

Whatever may be the reason for looking at Buddhism in this way (for it is not just a failure of intelligence, but more), Buddhism cannot be understood apart from its context. If you carefully look to its basic enunciations, the original part will appear to be no more than negative. It is, as Swami Vivekananda said, a 'rebel child of Hinduism.' Take for instance its root conceptions of world as suffering, *karma*, *samsara*, *bodhi*, even its fourfold Aryan truths (this last item is a clear echo of the yogic formula stated by Vyasa, the commentator of the *Yogasutras*, in the following way : *Yatha chikitsashastram chaturvyuham, rogah, rogahetuh, arogyam bhaishajyam iti, evamidamapi shastram chaturvyuham. eva, tad yatha samsara, samsarahetuh, moksha, mokshopaya iti* : As the science of medicine is fourfold, namely,

disease, origin of disease, cure, and medicine, similarly this science of Salvation also is fourfold, namely, transmigratory existence, its origin, Liberation, and its Way. We are aware that Vyasa's commentary as we find it today is post-Buddhistic, but the doctrine he explains was fully developed long before Buddhism), its morality, and its *nivrittimarga*, you will find all these contained in the Indian literature of pre-Buddhistic times. What is peculiar is the repudiation of vedic authority and the promulgation of the doctrine of non-self. On the social plane there is also the very remarkable denial of caste.

We do not say all these in a narrow spirit. Buddha is venerated as a great Teacher outside India, but we worship him as God Incarnate. In India a person is judged great not because he says novel things or starts a fashion or makes gadgets that give comfort, but because he represents in his character immutable ancient truths. But a great man does great things also and initiates new changes, because he has a conception of that which never changes but which requires to be stated and approached in new ways from time to time. He is one who deals with the fundamentals of life. If we pay a little thought to the question of greatness, we shall discover that it rests primarily on the representative character of a person. A man is great in the measure he reflects and solves the deep and profound needs of man, that is to say, in the measure he is universal and not individual. Our political and economic structures change with the times due to the emergence of new social factors. What we build in these fields today do not last till tomorrow. Further, they are secondary. It is for this reason that statesmen and politicians are most quickly forgotten by the people. But consider the beautiful sculptures of the Maurya and the Gupta India, the deathless figures of Ajanta: these creations are truly immortal because they answer to some fundamental universal need of man. Greater still are the

persons, saints and prophets of all religions, who have shown by their lives that the eternal search of man for everlasting truth, immortality, and bliss cannot and will not fail. They are the images of perfection for which we all crave. Without them all our hopes will die, we will be inwardly crushed and lose all capacity for civilization and progress. But all this, however, goes against the modern cult of individualism and novelty.

It is the heart of Buddha which makes the greatest appeal and which conquered for Buddhism nearly a fourth of the human population. It is never the abstruse metaphysical side of the faith which has made converts in large numbers. All these apart, what he did was necessary in the context of the time and place in which he arose.

We have already said that Buddhism, Jainism, and a few similar religions arose on the fringe of the Holy Land of orthodox Brahmanism, the Aryavarta. This fact is as significant as the fact of their birth in Kshatriya communities, some of which later puranic writers condemned as unorthodox. While reactionism ruled in Aryavarta, at its fringes stood peoples and races in some sort of cultural and political opposition to the community that began to give itself superior airs in such a supercilious fashion. Repudiation of the *Veda* and of subtle metaphysical doctrines along with the social exclusiveness of the caste became a necessity if Buddha's message of true spirituality were to reach and help those peoples and bring them under a common idea. He based spirituality on the undeniable fact of human limitations and suffering and indicated the practical way out of it. It was a pure spiritual religion, practical and without pre-suppositions which aroused distrust and hostility. It was a path all could readily accept, because it touched the deep chords of life and appealed to universal factors above petty formulations of dogma. It talked in the language of the peo-

ple. Moreover there was the wonderful expression of that kind heart which took a social form in the repudiation of caste. Without all these Indian society could make no fresh advance.

Buddhism marks a milestone in the march of humanity to a universal civilization imaging the divine sameness (*samatva*) of man. Buddha was a Hindu who adapted the old tradition to the needs of a new situation. It was greatly due to him that a wider social cohesion reflected in the birth of new political organizations could take place. Has Buddhism departed from India? It is like asking if India has gone out of India? What has passed away are simply the factors that had only local and temporary validity.

Caste came back to those areas from where it had departed under Buddhism. The reason is that in the complex situation of the time with its wide disparities, racial and cultural, in every field it provided the only feasible means for mitigating the conflict and competition inherent in it. Some kind of social hierarchy and division was essential for maintaining the integrity of Indian social polity. When we remember the horrible practices to which Buddhism degenerated later on, because the new peoples who entered Aryan

society carried over into the new fold all their ancient cults and superstitions and failed to be civilized overnight, we may find just reason for the re-appearance of some form of social safeguard for preventing the entire community from being drawn into a religious and cultural sewer, which could only mean complete disintegration. Caste then maintained culture and unity. Today, in altered circumstances, its skeletal remains stand in the way of enlightened social rearrangement. It has become a social enormity when we have opportunities to add a new breadth to our society. But it was not so in the past when science and technique were not there rapidly to translate our ideal of sameness (*samatva*), into concrete realities. We are apt to judge the past in the light of the present. No institution can arise or last long without good reason. It is easy to berate a thing after it has served its purpose, but very often we fail to see it in its true context. If all of us, orthodox and non-orthodox, friends and opponents, can today be clear about the basic principles of our social structure, we shall perhaps be able to agree on a common method that will add a new dimension to our society without taking anything away from its ancient depth.

(To be continued)

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE UPANISHADS (I)

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

THE VEDAS

THE VEDAS are the basic scripture of the Hindus and their highest authority in all matters pertaining to religion and philosophy. They are, moreover, the earliest extant Indo-Aryan literary monuments. The Hindus regard them as eternal, without beginning, without human authorship. The primary meaning of the name *Veda* is Knowledge, super-sensuous wisdom. The secondary re-

ference is to the words in which that knowledge is embodied. And so the term *Veda* denotes not only the orthodox religious and philosophical wisdom of India, but also the books in which the earliest utterances of that wisdom are preserved. The Hindus look upon these books with the highest reverence. They are known as the Word-Brahman, the *Shabda-Brahma*.

Knowledge is of two kinds. The first is

derived from the sense-organs and corroborated by various evidences based upon the experiences of the sense-organs. This is the form of knowledge that falls within the scope of the physical sciences. The second, however, is transcendent and is realized through the mental and spiritual discipline of yoga. This is the subject matter of the *Vedas*. According to Patanjali, the traditional master of the yoga doctrine, it is not the words of the *Vedas* that are eternal, but the knowledge or ideas conveyed through them. This knowledge, also called the *sphota*, has existed always. At the conclusion of a cycle both the *sphota* and the created universe merge in the undifferentiated causal state, and at the beginning of the new cycle the two together again become manifest. The Lord brings forth the universe with the help of the knowledge of the *Vedas*. He Himself utters the words that express this Knowledge and confers upon them their appropriate meanings. That is to say, it is the Lord, the Creator of the universe, who has determined the precise meaning that is to be attached to every vedic word. He is the first teacher of vedic truth. Though the words may be different in different cycles, the ideas conveyed through them remain unalterable: no human intellect can interfere with them. According to Vedanta, the words of the *Vedas* come from the Lord spontaneously, like a man's breathing.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* commences with the statement that, in the beginning of the cycle, the Lord taught the *Vedas* through Brahma, the first created being. According to the *Puranas*, Brahma had been absorbed in meditation on the Supreme Lord, when, through the Lord's grace, there arose in his heart an indistinct sound. This was followed by the sound Om, the Sound-Brahman, which is the essence of the vedic wisdom. This sacred syllable transformed itself into the various vowels and consonants of the alphabet. With their assistance Brahma

uttered words, and these are what became known to the world as the *Vedas*. He taught the *Vedas* to his disciples Marichi, Atri, Angira, and others, and thus mankind came to possess the vedic revelation.

The *Vedas* are called *shruti* (from *shru*, to hear), since they were handed down orally from teacher to disciple. The Hindus did not at first commit them to writing. Either writing was unknown to them at that early period of history or they considered the words of the *Vedas* too sacred to set down. Written words become the common property of all, whereas the *Vedas* were to be studied only by those who had been initiated by a qualified teacher. Such was the high esteem in which the Hindus held the words that they did not make the slightest change even in the pronunciation while passing them on from generation to generation. Hence, though committed to writing only many centuries after their composition, the *Vedas* as we now possess them contain the exact words and ideas that were known to the most ancient Hindus.

THE DIVISION OF THE VEDAS

The *Vedas* have been divided in various ways. The two most general divisions according to subject-matter are known as the *karmakanda* and *jnanakanda*. The first deals with *karma*, ritualistic action, sacrifices, etc. the purpose of which is the attainment of material prosperity here on earth and felicity in heaven after death. The second is concerned with the knowledge through which one is liberated from ignorance and enabled to realize the Highest Good.

In the *Puranas* it is stated that Vyasa was commanded by Brahma to make a compilation of the *Vedas*. Vyasa is reputed to be the author of the *Mahabharata*, of which the *Bhagavad Gita* forms a part.¹ He lived at

¹ The authorship of several Hindu scriptures is ascribed to Vyasa. Either there were more than one

the time of the battle of Kurukshetra. With the help of four disciples, so the tradition goes, this great saint and poet arranged the *Vedas* in four books, namely, the *Rik*, *Yajur*, *Saman*, and *Atharva*. He was thus the classifier of the *Vedas*, though not their author. For many centuries before his time the *Vedas* had been known and their injunctions had formed the basis of all Hindu philosophic thought and all brahminical ceremonial. But the texts had not existed in a systematic form. They had been revealed by the Lord to certain holy men of the remote past who had purified their minds by the practice of such spiritual disciplines as self-control and concentration—the great teachers known as the *rishis*, or seers of truth. The *Vedas* name both men and women among the *rishis*.

Vyasa compiled the *Rig-Veda* by collecting the *riks*. Of the *samans* he composed the *Sama-Veda*, while the *Yajur-Veda* he composed of *yajus*. The *Rig-Veda*, which may be called a book of chants, is set to certain fixed melodies. The *Sama-Veda* has no independent value; for it consists mostly of stanzas from the *Rig-Veda*. The arrangement of its verses is solely with reference to their place and use in the Soma sacrifice. The *Yajur-Veda* contains, in addition to verses taken from the *Rig-Veda*, many original prose formulas which may be called sacrificial prayers.² The *Atharva-Veda* consists of a special class of vedic texts known as *chhandas*. These deal with spells, incantations, and kingly duties, as well as exalted spiritual truths. Western scholars sometimes exclude this compilation from their consideration of the *Vedas*; but according to the Hindu view

Vyasa or other Indian writers, following a well-known custom by means of which importance was often attached to books in ancient times, published or circulated their own works under the name of this great philosopher.

² See S. N. Dasgupta, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I. p. 12. Cambridge, London 1932.

it definitely belongs among them. The name *Trayi*, or *Triad*, often used to denote the *Vedas*, is collectively applied to the *Rig-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda*, and the *Yajur-Veda*, the *Atharva-Veda* being excluded from the *Triad* because it has no application to sacrificial actions. Nevertheless, one of the four priests officiating in all vedic sacrifices had to be thoroughly versed in the *chhandas*.

Each of the four *Vedas* falls into two sections: *Mantra* and *Brahmana*. The *Mantra* is also called the *Samhita* (from *sam*, together, and *hita*, put), which means, literally, a collection of hymns, or *mantras*, used in the sacrifices. The offering of oblations for the propitiation of the *devatas*, or deities, is termed the sacrifice, or *yajna*. This was a highly important ceremony through which the ancient Indo-Aryans communed with the gods, or higher powers. The *Mantra* comprises the prayers and hymns, while the *Brahmana* contains the rules and regulations for the sacrifices, deals with their accessories, and also reveals the meaning of the *Mantra*, which otherwise would remain obscure. Therefore both the *Mantra* and the *Brahmana* were indispensable for the orthodox worship and propitiation of the gods.

A further development of the *Brahmana*, and included therein, was the *Aranyaka*, the so-called 'forest treatise.' This was intended for those people who had retired into the forest in accordance with the ideal of the third stage of life, and were consequently unable to perform in the usual way the sacrifices obligatory for all twice-born householders.³ The sacrifices required many articles and accessories impossible to procure

³ The members of the three upper castes in Hindu society—the brahmins, the *kshattriyas*, and the *vaishyas*—were called *dvija*, twice-born. Their first birth refers to their coming out of their mother's womb; the second, which is a spiritual birth, to their initiation by a religious teacher, who invests them with the sacred thread, thus entitling them to study the *Vedas* and participate in the Vedic rituals.

in the forest. Hence the *Aranyaka* prescribes symbolic worship, describes various meditations that were to be used as substitutes for an actual sacrifice. To give an illustration from the first chapter of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: instead of actually performing the vedic Horse-sacrifice (*Asvamedha*), the forest-dweller was to meditate in a special way upon the dawn as the head of the horse, the sun as the eye, the air as the life, and so on. The worship was lifted from the physical to the mental level.

THE FOUR STAGES

The full life-period of an Indo-Aryan was divided into four stages, namely, *brahmacharya*, *garhasthya*, *vanaprastha*, and *sannyasa*. The first stage was devoted to study. The celibate student led a life of chastity and austerity and served his teacher with humility. He learnt the *Mantra* and the *Brahmana* sections of the *Vedas*. And when he left the teacher's house, after completing his studies, he was commanded not to deviate from truth and not to forget to persevere in the study of the *Vedas*. The second stage was devoted to household duties. The young man took a wife. Both together performed the vedic sacrifice with the hymns of the *Mantra* and in accordance with the rules laid down in the *Brahmana*. The third stage commenced when the hair turned grey and the face began to wrinkle. The householder consigned the responsibility of the home to his children and retired with his wife into the forest. He was then known as a *vanaprastha* or *aranyaka*, a forest-dweller. The *Aranyaka* portion of the *Vedas* prescribed for him sacrifice by meditation and symbolic worship.

The final stage, called *sannyasa*, was the culmination of the strictly regulated life of an Indo-Aryan.⁴ During this period having

⁴ According to a vedic injunction, one can renounce the world whenever one feels distaste for it.

totally renounced the world, he became a *sannyasin*, or wandering monk, free from worldly desires and attachments and absorbed in the uninterupted contemplation of Brahman. It was no longer necessary to worship God by means of material articles or even mental symbols. One experienced directly the non-duality of God, the soul, and the universe—Spirit communing immediately with the Spirit. The *sannyasin* took the vow of dedicating his life to Truth and to the service of humanity, and was honoured as a spiritual leader of society. And it was for him that the *Upanishads* (which are mostly the concluding portions of the *Aranyakas*) were intended. The *Upanishads* are concerned with the direct experience of Brahman, which liberates one from the bondage of the relative world.

Thus the Indo-Aryan seers arranged the *Vedas* to conform to the four stages of life. The *brahmachari* studied the *Samhita*, the householder followed the injunctions of the *Brahmana*, the forest-dweller practised contemplation according to the *Aranyaka*, and the *sannyasin* was guided by the exalted wisdom of the *Upanishads*. According to the Hindu view, all four portions of the four *Vedas* were revealed simultaneously and have existed from the very beginning of the cycle. They are not to be regarded as exhibiting a philosophical development or evolution in the processes of thought.⁵

Thus one can become a *sannyasin* from any stage. The normal course, however, is to proceed through the series of the four stages.

⁵ Some Western scholars divide the vedic age into four distinct periods. These are named the *Chhandas* period, the *Mantra* period, the *Brahmana* period, and the *Sutra* period. According to this view, the *mantras*, or hymns, were composed during the *Chhandas* period and compiled during the *Mantra* period. During the first part of the *Brahmana* period were composed the *Brahmanas*, and during the second part, the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*. During the *Sutra* period were written the well-known *sutras*, namely, the *Kalpa*, *Grihya*, *Srauta*, and others. Then a decline

It has already been stated that Vyasa systematized the *Vedas* in four books. He taught the *Rig-Veda* to his disciple Paila, the *Yajur-Veda* to Vaishampayana, the *Sama-Veda* to Jaimini, and the *Atharva-Veda* to Śumanta. Among the disciples of Vaishampayana was the celebrated Yajnavalkya, one of the great teachers of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. A legend states that this disciple became so vain of his knowledge that he incurred the displeasure of his guru and was expelled from the hermitage, with the command that he should leave what he knew of the *Veda* behind. The proud disciple spat out everything that he had learnt and went away. But some other disciples of the sage Vaishampayana were grieved at the sad plight of the vedic lore and so, assuming the forms of partridges (*tittira*), they swallowed it, and later on taught that vedic knowledge to their own disciples. Since then that portion of the *Vedas* has been known as the *Black Yajur-Veda* (*Krishna Yajur-Veda*) and also as the *Taittiriya Samhita* (from *tittira*). Yajnavalkya, however, worshipped the sun god, who was so pleased with his devotion

began. There is some plausibility in this division into periods. Hindu scholars however, challenge the categorical conclusion of Western scholars who claim that no vedic literature but the *Samhita* and *Brahmana* existed before the *Upanishads*. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (II.iv. 10) states: 'As from a fire kindled with wet faggots diverse kinds of smoke issue, even so, my dear, the *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda*, *Atharva-Veda*, history, mythology, arts, *Upanishads*, verses, aphorisms (*sutras*), elucidations, and explanations are like the breath of this Infinite Reality.' In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (VII. i. 2) Narada gives an account of various subjects studied by him prior to his coming to Sanatkumara. They include—besides the vedic tests—history, mythology, the lore of portents, logic, ethics, and various other sciences. Similar instances can be given from the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* and other scriptures. All this shows that the vedic literature was extremely various even before the compilation of the *Upanishads*. It may be admitted, however, that during the four periods recognized by the Western scholars, the various designated portions of vedic literature came in sequence to the fore.

that he appeared before him in an equine form. The god committed to him the vedic knowledge that later on became known as the *White Yajur-Veda* (*Shukla Yajur-Veda*) of the *Vājasaneyi Samhita* (from *vaja*, meaning energy, strength). This was the version of the *Veda* that Yajnavalkya taught to his disciples.

The four basic *Vedas* gradually branched off into many recensions, or *sakhas*, at the hands of various teachers, after whom they were named. Thus the *Shatapatha Brahmana* of the *White Yajur-Veda* survives in the Kanva and Madhyandina recensions, according to the two disciples of Yajnavalkya. They differ from each other greatly in content as well as in the number and arrangement of the sections and chapters, the former having seventeen and the latter fourteen sections. The concluding portion of the last book of both recensions is the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*; but here again the two versions often differ. Shankaracharya based his commentary on the Kanva recension.

Each of the *Vedas* contains its own *Brahmanas*, which, as already stated, provide instructions regarding the procedures of sacrifice and also, through the *Aranyakas*, meditations and symbolic worship for the forest-dwellers. The *Aitareya* and *Kaushitaki Brahmanas* belong, for example, to the *Rig-Veda*; the *Taittiriya* and *Maitrayani*, to the *Black Yajur-Veda*; the *Shatapatha*, to the *White Yajur-Veda*; the *Chhandogya* and *Tandya*, to the *Sama-Veda*; and the *Gopatha Brahmana*, to the *Atharva-Veda*.

In most cases the concluding portion of the *Aranyaka* is the *Upanishad*—also called the Vedanta because in it the vedic wisdom reaches its culmination (*anta*). It shows the seeker the way to Liberation and the Highest Good. Usually there is a full series, from the *Samhita*, or *Mantra*, through the *Brahmana* and *Aranyaka* to the culmination in the *Upanishad*. For example, the *Taittiriya Samhita* is followed by the *Taittiriya Brahmana*,

at the end of which comes the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*; and this is concluded by the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. But in rare instances an *Upanishad* may come directly at the conclusion of the *Samhita*, as is the case with the *Isha Upanishad*. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* forms the last three chapters of the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*; the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the last six chapters of the *Shatapatha Brahmana*; the *Aitareya Upanishad*, the last five chapters of the *Aitareya Aranyaka*; and the *Kena Upanishad*, the ninth chapter of the *Talavakara Brahmana* of the *White Yajur-Veda*.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE VEDAS

One hesitates to enter into a discussion of the time when the *Vedas* were collated. The compiler Vyasa is reputed to have been alive at the time of the battle of Kurukshetra; but when was that battle fought? Some European Indologists assign the *Vedas* to the twelfth century B.C., others to earlier ages. Max Muller, for example, supposed the date to be about 1200 B.C. but Haug, about 2400. Neither believed, of course, in the divine origin of the hymns. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an eminent Indian scholar, calculated from astronomical data and suggested that the *mantras* of the *Rig-Veda* were brought together about five thousand years before the Christian era, while, according to the orthodox tradition, the texts, even before their compilation, had been known to the *rishis* for unnumbered years. In short, the dates of the vedic hymns and collections are far from clear.

One reason for the obscurity is that the ancient Hindus lacked the historical sense. They seldom kept records of the dates of their literary, religious, or even political achievements. The *Vedas*, furthermore, which had

been handed down orally for so many centuries, were never believed by them to have had human authorship; they had either been taught to the sages by God or had become manifest of themselves to the primordial *rishis*, who were the seers of the *mantras*. Hence in India the tendency has always been to regard the *Vedas* as eternal, rather than as compositions of a certain historical moment. But even from the modern historical point of view it is not easy to determine the origin and trace the gradual development of the vedic tradition. The *Rig-Veda*, which is generally recognized as the earliest of the four, contains lofty philosophical concepts, and sentiments of a monistic cast such as Western thinkers are inclined to assign to a later and highly developed stage of human thought. 'The Reality is one,' we read, for example, 'but the sages call it by various names.' Moreover, we find that a critical spirit has already developed. The ability of the gods—who themselves exist in time and space and are victims of causality—to create the universe is questioned. Such ideas indicate a maturity of philosophical insight and by no means the primitive infancy of thought.

Following their historical method, the European Indologists regard the *Upanishads* to be of later composition than the *Mantras* and *Brahmanas*. They do not admit any of them to be earlier than the eleventh century B.C., while to many are assigned a much later date. In this respect the Hindu tradition, as we have seen, is totally different, the orthodox belief and teaching being that all parts of the *Vedas* were revealed at the same time, though the various collections might have been compiled in different periods.

(To be continued)

ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

BY JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Swamiji and friends, I am grateful for this invitation to come to this celebration and I am glad to take this opportunity to express my homage to the memory of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. I do not know that I am particularly fitted to speak about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, because he was a man of God and I am a man of earth and engaged in earthly activities which consume all my energy. But even a man of earth can admire and perhaps be influenced by a man of God, and so I have been admiring Godly men, though sometimes I do not altogether understand; and though I do not fully understand what they said, I have admired these great men of God, and have been influenced by reading what was written about them by their disciples. These extraordinary personalities have powerfully influenced their generation and the succeeding generations. They have powerfully influenced great men and changed the whole tenor of their lives. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa obviously was completely outside the run of average humanity. He appears to be in the tradition of the great *rishis* of India, who have come from time to time to draw our attention to the higher things of life and of the spirit. For India never ignored, in the course of her long history and in spite of the other activities of the world, the spiritual values of life, and she always laid certain stress on the search for truth and has always welcomed the searchers of truth by whatever names they may call themselves. And so India built up this tradition of the search for truth and reality, and at the same time she built up the tradition of the utmost tolerance to those who earnestly strive for

the truth in their own way. Unfortunately, recently, that tradition of tolerance has been rather shaken and we have sometimes fallen into evil ways and have become narrow-minded and thought that we people who walk in a certain narrow path alone are right and others are wrong.

That has never been the tradition of India. What made India great was her broadmindedness. It was her conviction that truth is many-sided and of infinite variety. How can any man presume to say that he only has grasped the entire truth? If he is earnest in the search for truth, he may say that he saw a particular facet of truth. But how can he say that somebody else has not seen truth, unless he follows a similar path? So India encouraged the pursuit of truth, and of moral values, and that was perhaps the most distinctive feature of India's culture. And in spite of the many ups and downs of her history, something of the original impress continues throughout these long ages.

One of the effects of Sri Ramakrishna's life was the peculiar way in which he influenced other people who came in contact with him. Men often scoffed from a distance at this man of no learning, and yet when they came to him, very soon they bowed their heads before this man of God and ceased to scoff and 'remained to pray.' They gave up, many of them, their ordinary vocations in life and business and joined the band of devotees. They were great men and one of them, better known than the others, not only in India but in other parts of the world, is Swami Vivekananda. I do not know how many of the younger generation read the speeches and the writings of Swami Vivekananda. But I can tell you that many of my generation were very powerfully influenced by him and I think that it would do a great deal of good to the present generation if they also went

* Speech delivered on the 114th Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on 20 March 1949.

through Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, and they would learn much from them. That would, perhaps, as some of us did, enable us to catch a glimpse of that fire that raged in Swami Vivekananda's mind and heart and which ultimately consumed him at an early age. Because there was fire in his heart—the fire of a great personality coming out in eloquent and ennobling language—it was no empty talk that he was indulging in. He was putting his heart and soul into the words he uttered. Therefore he became a great orator, not with the orators' flashes and flourishes but with a deep conviction and earnestness of spirit. And so he influenced powerfully the minds of many in India and two or three generations of young men and women have no doubt been influenced by him. Other things have happened in this country and a very great man came—Gandhiji, who shook up the whole of India—another great man in the old line of *rishis* of India.

Much has happened which perhaps makes some forget those who came before and who prepared India and shaped India in those early and difficult days. If you read Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, the curious thing you will find is that they are not old. It was told 56 years ago, and they are fresh today because, what he wrote or spoke about dealt with certain fundamental matters and aspects of our problems or the world's problems. Therefore they do not become old. They are fresh even though you read them now.

He gave us something which brings us, if I may use the word, a certain pride in our inheritance. He did not spare us. He talked of our weaknesses and our failings too. He did not wish to hide anything. Indeed he should not. Because we have to correct those failings. He deals with those failings also. Sometimes he strikes hard at us, but sometimes points out the great things for which India stood and which even in the days of India's downfall made her, in some

measure, continue to be great.

So what Swamiji has written and said is of interest and must interest us and is likely to influence us for a long time to come. He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national modern movement of India, and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly he has powerfully influenced the India of today. And I think that our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom, of spirit and fire, that flows through Swami Vivekananda.

We are faced in India and the world with many problems, terribly difficult problems. How are we to deal with them? There is the politician's way of dealing with them, the statesman's way if you like—I am not talking to you about the opportunists. Unfortunately, the politician or statesman has, to some extent, to be opportunist in the sense that he has to deal with things as they are, with the materials that he has. He cannot put across something which the people do not understand or cannot live up to. He has to face that difficulty always, and what is more, especially in an age which calls itself democratic—and democracy I believe is fundamentally good—but democracy also means that what you do must ultimately be understood and appreciated and acted upon by a large majority of people. If the large numbers of people do not understand or do not appreciate it, then even the truth that you possess cannot be put across to them. So the politicians and statesmen have to make, very often, compromises even with the truth because the people's receptivity of truth is not enough. I do not know whether this is good or bad. But it so happens, and looking at it from a statesman's or a politician's point of view, there appears to be no alternative, for if he were to do something else, he would

be pushed away, and others with a clearer perception of the limitations of the majority will take his place. Now, on the other hand, the prophets deal with truth in a different way. The prophet sticks to truth whatever the consequences and often because he sticks to truth, he is stoned to death or shot or killed in some other way. That is the way of the prophet. That has been the way and that will still be the way of the prophet. Of course the prophet is stoned to death or killed, but the killer does not kill the truth. Truth is greater even than the prophet and the prophet lives in that truth even more vividly than if he had been alive.

Always there are these two approaches. The approach of the prophet and the approach of the political leader or statesman. Neither approach can be said to be, at least in terms of today, or in terms of a limited period, a wholly effective approach. In long distance terms one might say, perhaps, that the prophet's approach is the best; but one cannot carry on politics or public affairs of a country in these days through long distance terms though generations later the truth will be appreciated, because he will cease to have the opportunity to carry on if he did that. Though the prophet's way may theoretically be the best, it does seem a little difficult to give effect to it during his time. On the other hand, the politician's and the statesman's way, however, well meant, leads from compromise to compromise. It is a slippery path. Once you enter that path, each succeeding compromise might lead you farther away from the truth. What one may want to do may be ignored in the existing circumstances. Shall we hold on to the truth as we see it or shall we think so much about the existing circumstances as to forget the truth itself? That is the problem that humanity and people who are responsible for the ordering of things in this world have continually to face and it is a very difficult problem, and all one can say is that in so far as it is possible, the statesman should adhere to truth, or, at any rate, he should aim at that

truth, even though he may indulge in temporary compromises. Once he loses sight of that, then he might go astray, very far. It is difficult to deal with day to day affairs without paying any heed to the understanding and receptivity of men's minds to the truth. It is important to know how far that truth is understood and finds some kind of reception in men's minds. If the politician does not do so, if his words pass over their heads, then even the prophet's words have no meaning to these people. Therefore one has to interpret that truth and limit it, even to some extent, from the point of view of man's receptivity to it.

Now we live in an age when scientific and technical advances have gone very far indeed, more especially in a country like the USA. Technically and industrially they are a very advanced country and they have achieved there a high standard of material and physical life. I have no doubt that culturally too, they are advancing in many ways. Nevertheless, it must be said of the world that man's mental or moral advance has not kept pace with his technical and scientific advance, and that is a dangerous thing, because science and technology are weapons of tremendous power. We have got these weapons, if you like, in the atomic power. Atomic energy can be used, I think, when it can be produced in simpler ways for the tremendous benefits of the human race. Atomic energy can also be used for destruction on a colossal scale of the human race. Science and technology are just things which are neither good nor bad; it is the user of them that can be good or bad. And if a human being gets these tremendous weapons it becomes very important that he should know how to use them properly; that means that he should be morally and spiritually advanced to know how to use them properly for proper needs. He should know what he is aiming at ultimately. Now it can be said that humanity as a whole, individuals apart, has not advanced to that standard yet, despite all the religions, all the churches, temples and mosques to the contrary. And

that is the misfortune of the age. We fight for our petty dogmas and petty customs amongst ourselves, calling ourselves religious men and the like, while we do not even know how to behave to our neighbours properly and decently, and the world hovers on the edge of repeated catastrophies. We find, therefore, in the world two types of forces, call them if you like, forces of destruction and forces of construction. For the moment, if I say that I have faith in the forces of construction, I cannot justify that statement except by saying that it is an act of faith on my part, there is no particular logic behind it ; it is just that I believe in it, although I cannot justify it. Nevertheless, whether you believe in it or not, one should make up one's mind clearly as to how we are going to strengthen these unifying and constructive forces and oppose those forces which destroy and disrupt. And I think you can only do that if you have a certain moral foundation, certain moral concepts which will hold together your ideals and your general life. If you have none then the disruptive forces, I think, are bound to gain advantage.

Now to come back to what I began with. Men like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, men like Swami Vivekananda and men like Mahatma Gandhi are great unifying forces, great constructive geniuses of the world (*loud and prolonged cheers*) not only in regard to the particular teachings that they taught, but their approach to the world and their conscious and unconscious influence on it is of the most vital importance to us. You may or you may not accept some particular advice of Mahatmaji on economic or other grounds. But his fundamental approach to life, his constructive unifying approach as applied to various problems of India, that is of vital importance. If you do not accept that, then you really are on the side of destruction and disruption. His approach—quite apart from

the particular advice that he gave—his approach was fundamentally the approach of India, of the Indian Mind and of the Indian genius. (*Loud cheers*). Although Sri Ramakrishna was a man of God and religion, and was not saying anything about politics, it is his fundamental approach that counts. And while, I am a man of politics, not dabbling much in or saying much about other matters, spiritually and the like, nevertheless, I do feel that our public affairs and our life in general, would become much the poorer in quality, if that spiritual element and the moral standard were lacking. India, as the rest of the world, faces these difficult problems and questions, and all of us, whether as individuals, communities, groups or nations, are being put to very severe tests. Because I have faith in India, I believe that India will not only survive these tests, but will make good ; because, I think, that in spite of our weakness there is fundamental vitality which has enabled it to carry on all these millennia of years and which will now function much more effectively and vividly having got the opportunity now. I have that faith ; but faith is not enough. We have to work for it, and we have not only to work for it, but work for it with that clear vision before us. That vision we may apply to India, but it is essentially a larger vision to be applied to the world. It is not a narrowing vision. Our nationalism must not be a narrow nationalism. Swami Vivekananda, though a great nationalist, never preached anything else. His was a kind of nationalism which automatically slipped into Indian nationalism which was part of internationalism. So, it is that broad approach that we must learn from those great men and if we learn it and act upto it to the best of our ability, then we shall honour their memory and we shall serve our country with some advantage, and possibly also serve humanity. *Jai Hind*

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND INDIA*

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Romain Rolland has described Sri Ramakrishna as the fulfilment of the spiritual aspirations of two hundred millions of Hindus for the past two thousand years. He has said, further, that Sri Ramakrishna was the younger brother of Christ. Thereby he implied no spiritual inferiority but merely indicated the fact that he was born in a later period in history. Sri Ramakrishna represents in our age the spirit of India, which was brought into being by the *rishis* on the banks of the Indus and Ganges, and which, since then, has been sustained by an unbroken line of prophets and saints. Mahatma Gandhi has written that his words are not those of a mere scholar but are pages from the book of life.

What is the spirit of India that found such vivid expression through the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna? The Indian philosophers have given a sacramental and spiritual interpretation of life and the universe, as opposed to the merely mechanistic and secular one. The universe, they declare, is a projection of the Lord Himself. It is an outcome of His thought. A supreme artist, He first conceived the universe in His mind and then projected it outside. The *Isha Upanishad* says that all things are permeated by the spirit of the Lord; therefore we should enjoy the world, through renunciation of the ego, and not covet other people's wealth. An illumined soul does not see nature as 'red in tooth and claw', nor does he accept ruthless competition as the means to progress. To him co-operation is a higher means of evolution, and consecration or dedication, the highest. Sri Ramakrishna was a living witness of the reality of God. He saw God

face to face; he saw Him more tangibly than we see the objects around us in the outside world. To him God was Spirit and Consciousness, a supersensuous and supramental Reality that pervades the universe and transcends it. And that same God, He affirmed, by His own inscrutable power becomes manifest in time and space, assumes various forms, and is worshipped by different religions under such names as the Father in Heaven, Jehovah, Allah, Krishna and Siva. Sri Ramakrishna worshipped God as Kali, the Divine Mother of the universe, whom he affectionately addressed as 'my Mother.' It is God who, being the inmost essence of all things, gives them the appearance of reality.

Man is rooted in Spirit. He is an eternal portion of the Divine. The *Bhagavad Gita* condemns the mechanistic view that the living soul is the outcome of the union of the male and female principles, with lust for its cause. The Upanishad says that man is born of bliss, after being born he is sustained by bliss, and in the end he is absorbed in bliss. It was emphasized by Swami Vivekananda that each soul is potentially divine. Man is primarily Spirit, and he is endowed with a body; he is not merely a body endowed with a soul. It is this that makes the difference between the spiritual and the secular view of life.

The divinity of the soul is the unshakable foundation of true freedom and of true democracy. Every man is entitled to respect, because he reflects the Godhead, no matter what be the outward mask he wears. Sri Ramakrishna regarded every man and woman as a veritable representation of Narayana. Even the fallen woman, whom society despises as unclean, he regarded as a form of the Divine Mother. Once someone spoke to him about showing kindness to living creatures.

* From the speech delivered at the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday, New Delhi, 20 March 1949.

Sri Ramakrishna became excited and said that a man's attitude toward others should be not one of kindness but one of service. He asked Swami Vivekananda to commune with God not only in the depths of meditation but also through service to man—especially the sick, the poor, the ignorant, the destitute. Later Swami Vivekananda advised his followers to practise work and worship as twin disciplines for the unfoldment of their inner life. Every *sannyasin* of the Ramakrishna Order takes the two vows of dedicating his life to the liberation of the self from ignorance and to service of humanity. Centuries before him, the great Sankaracharya said that a man should first realize his oneness with Brahman and then look upon all beings as manifestations of that same Brahman. The Hindu ideal of service does not correspond to the vague secular humanism practised in the West. It is the outcome of a direct perception of the Godhead in every living creature.

Sri Ramakrishna experienced the unity of Existence, which is a unique contribution of the Hindu spiritual culture. Scientists and idealistic philosophers find non-duality in the realms of matter and of mind. To Sri Ramakrishna this unity, as Spirit and Consciousness, pervades the whole universe, with all its animate and inanimate creatures. We read in his biography that when two boatmen on the Ganges quarrelled and struck each other, the blows were impressed on his own back. Another day someone happened to walk on the tender green grass of the lawn of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar, and Sri Ramakrishna uttered cries of excruciating pain, his chest becoming red and bruised. His measureless love and compassion for humanity were the logical result of this experience of unity. This experience is the spiritual foundation of the Golden Rule and of all moral precepts. Man should love his neighbour because his neighbour is none other than his own self. Man's neighbours are not only his kith and kin, or his fellow believers

in a common religious faith, but include the whole of humanity, nay, all created beings. He can never be happy or at peace by causing suffering to others, even if they be in a distant part of the world. A single standard of ethics for all mankind is the only effective means of attaining world peace. As long as there remain one standard of justice for the strong and another for the weak, one standard for the white and another for the coloured, one standard for the brahmins and another for the untouchables, one standard for the Hindus and another for the Moslems, there will be no peace in the world. An illumined person like Sri Ramakrishna regards happiness and unhappiness in others as he regards them in himself.

Another important message of Sri Ramakrishna to a world torn asunder by religious bigotry is the harmony of religions. It was his favourite saying that religions are so many paths to reach the same goal. His was not the theoretical attitude cherished by many religious liberals. He actually practised the disciplines of the various faiths and found God alone to be their ultimate goal. Once he admonished Swami Vivekananda to look upon even a certain cult which indulged in immoral practices as a door to God's mansion—may be the back door, through which the scavenger entered. A devotee need not see it, but it was a door just the same. God is the centre upon which the radii of the different faiths converge. The farther one is from the centre, the greater is the distance one finds between one radius and another. The farther we move from God, the greater are the differences we find between one religion and another. We quarrel over the empty baskets, while their precious contents have slipped into the ditch. Sri Ramakrishna has taught us to show to other faiths not merely toleration, which carries an undertone of arrogance, but positive respect, which proceeds from the perception of God alone as the essence of all faiths. Let Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians

and Jews be genuine devotees of their respective faiths, and they will surely hail one another as fellow-travellers to the common goal of Truth. We need Sri Ramakrishna's message of harmony in this world of ours, where there are, alas, enough religions to help men hate one another but not enough religious spirit to promote love and goodwill.

To Sri Ramakrishna religion was realization. It did not mean simply believing; it meant being and becoming. Knowledge, he said, must be accompanied by actual perception. He was a true scientist in the field of religion. He did not accept anything on blind faith, nor did he ever impose anything on others. He experimented with the injunctions of the scriptures, observed their results, verified them with his own experiences, and finally drew his conclusions. Often he asked God to send him a disciple who would doubt his experiences. Swami Vivekananda was such a disciple. He laughed at the Master's visions. But Sri Ramakrishna never asked his disciple to accept his words blindly. He met the challenge of Swami Vivekananda's intellect with a superior intellect. What doubt can remain before actual experience? Many are the people who become agnostics or atheists simply because they do not find in their church or temple an idea of God big enough to satisfy their hearts and their intellects. The true Hindu religion has never asked its devotees to surrender reason. The *Upanishads* prescribe hearing, reasoning, and contemplation as the three steps to the vision of Truth. The evidence of others, reason, and experience constitute its validity. There is nothing in genuine Hinduism that is opposed to the true scientific method.

Even a casual visitor to Dakshineswar, where Sri Ramakrishna lived, could not but be struck by the joy that the Master radiated. He often prayed to the Divine Mother not to make him cross-grained, pain-hugging sadhu. That religion is an affirmative, joyous experience, and not a negative nonsense, he

amply demonstrated. Spiritual bliss is different from sensuous pleasure. The latter is unreal, having a beginning and an end, and is a source of suffering. Spiritual bliss is eternal and real; it is the bestower of peace. Sri Ramakrishna saw everywhere the manifestation of God, who is the embodiment of bliss. The world conceived of as divorced from God is without significance, like a dream. But the *Upanishads* never say that the world is unreal in the sense that a barren woman's son is unreal. Where the universe is described as a dream, the implication is only that it is unsubstantial when conceived of as divorced from Brahman. Two important schools of Vedanta, namely Dualism and Qualified Non-dualism, accept the reality of the tangible universe. The Non-dualists call it *maya*. This means simply that between the two orders of experience, namely, the transcendental and the empirical, one cannot establish a logical relationship. Before the transcendental, the empirical is non-existent. Further, the Non-dualists use the theory of *maya* not to prove the unreality of names and forms, but to demonstrate that the universe is Brahman. 'Thou art Brahman' and 'All that exists is Brahman' are two of the great conclusions of the Vedantic seers.

Thus one can regard the universe from two standpoints: relative and transcendental. From the relative standpoint, which is the one accepted by the average man, time, space, and causality are real. Good and Evil exist and one must try to eliminate the evil and multiply the good. There are four ends of human life: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. *Dharma*, or righteousness, is the very basis of life and should determine the relationship in society between man and man. *Artha*, or wealth, serves a very important purpose and is an effective means to express our fellowship with others. *Kama*, or sense pleasure, is also praiseworthy. By cultivating aesthetic sensitivity one appreciates art, music, and literature. Without it life remains inadequate.

Moksha, or the realization of the Infinite, is the culmination of man's spiritual evolution. There is no real happiness in the finite. Without the ideal of the Infinite, ethics is transformed into an instrument for man's self-interest, wealth becomes a means to satisfy his greed and his lust for power, and sense-pleasures degenerate into sensuality. The Hindu seers have given a comprehensive view of life. Boyhood should be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, youth to the enjoyment of material pleasure, old age to the practice of contemplation, and the hour of death to communion with the Godhead.

The illumined soul, on the other hand, views the universe from the transcendental standpoint. He has gone beyond good and evil, pain and pleasure, and all the pairs of opposites. But by no means can he indulge in unethical actions. He is free from the limitations of time and space. For him ego and desires have ceased to exist. To him everything is Brahman. But he is neither a recluse nor misanthrope. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that he devotes himself to the welfare of others. And to the truth of this statement the lives of Shankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda bear testimony.

The Indo-Aryan seers called the knowledge of the relative world the *apara vidya*, or inferior knowledge, and the Knowledge of the Absolute, the *para vidya*, or Superior Knowledge. Though the Knowledge of the Absolute was the goal, yet the knowledge of the universe was not neglected by them. The *Mundaka Upanishad* says that both forms of knowledge are to be cultivated. According to the *Katha Upanishad*, the fetters of the heart are cut asunder and all doubts set at naught when one gains the knowledge of both the Absolute and the universe.

The culture of India has been determined by the religious experiences of her seers and prophets. It is a spiritual culture that proclaims man to be a spiritual entity with a spiritual end. The Hindu view of life is neither pessimistic nor otherworldly. It gives

a spiritual interpretation of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the watchwords of modern European culture. The Hindu religion shows man the way to ultimate freedom and bliss through a disciplined enjoyment of the legitimate pleasures and through the fulfilment of just aspirations. The ideal of *jivanmukti*, freedom while living in the body, is the grandest contribution of the Hindu culture. Man can acquire mastery over his baser passions and attain perfection in this very life. Sri Ramakrishna's own life shows how the spirit of man can keep body and senses under complete control. It is an effective answer, at the same time, to the charges often made against the Hindu religion that it is anti-social, pessimistic, intolerant, visionary, and opposed to reason and the scientific method.

Since India has attained her freedom, we have been busy making plans for her future reconstruction. Sometimes the heart sinks to think of the mountainhigh obstacles that stand in our way. The future becomes blurred to our vision. At such a time, it will be well to remember the words of Winston Churchill: 'Those who want to see farthest into the future of a nation must look farthest into its past.' Our past failures should not bewilder us. In the words of Lord Acton, it is a false study of history that emphasizes a nation's three hundred years' failure and overlooks her three thousand years' achievements.

India has a definite message for the world. Thoughtful people in the West have been realizing the inadequacy of the mechanistic interpretation of life. The resources of science have culminated in the creation of the atom bomb. Technology, which has been promoting the creature comforts of the Western peoples, has not been an unmixed blessing. The emphasis on science and technology has distracted man's attention from the spiritual value of life and is undermining the moral and spiritual foundation of society. In spite of its many physical amenities, the West is distracted

and confused. Many eyes are turned to India for light and vision.

The malady of the world is a spiritual malady. Economic maladjustment, political confusion, and moral disintegration are but the outer symptoms of this deep-seated illness. The world is suffering from greed, lust for power, and sensuality, which Sri Ramakrishna described by the expressive word *kamini-kanchan*. Today aggressive evil is abroad. Its challenge can be met only by aggressive goodness. The Hindu view of life has a great deal to suggest for the correcting of the present human situation. The ideals of renunciation and service, set forth by our *rishis*, are a sure panacea for the ills of the world.

One of the most significant events of our age is the meeting of East and West. The West has been the bearer of a great culture. It has promoted man's physical well-being. Here in India we desperately need the knowledge of science and technology to remove our ignorance and poverty and our present social stagnation. In their absence, our ideals of the divinity of man and the unity of Existence will remain mere abstractions.

But the spiritual culture of India will serve as the unfailing pole-star to guide our Ship of State through the sea of darkness and confusion. Consciousness of the eternal spirit of India and pride in our matchless religious heritage will give us courage and hope in the present struggle for our national existence. It is true that our *Sanatana Dharma* has been abused. Heavy encrustations have hidden its shining truth. But the way does not lie through neglecting it or directing our national aspirations into altogether new channels. Let us study the way of our forefathers side by side with the findings of modern science. Whatever of it is unworthy or effete will automatically be discarded. Let us remain loyal to what is eternal in the legacy of our *rishis* and learn in humility what is healthy in other cultures. Let us remove the ignorance, poverty, and stagnation of the masses through knowledge learnt from the scientific and dynamic West. Thus rejuvenated, India will once more assume her place as the spiritual leader of the world. This is our responsibility; for India is the last great hope of humanity. May we not fail humanity in this hour of its crisis!

HOW SHALL I FIND GOD WHEN I HAVE LOST HIM ?

BY GERALD HEARD

This is the second of the three key questions asked of masters of spirituality. This question, naturally follows on the first—How can I love God? We have been told that we love him by wishing it, by the will. This advice when it is followed leads inevitably to our 'getting results.' We find that something has begun to happen. It may be what we hoped and wished. It may not be. But it will be something that intensely interests us. We may be able to describe it by the terms that others have used. We may not be

able to describe it at all. One thing however is so probable that, (though it is not so certain as the fact that we shall find that something of strange importance has happened), it may be said to be almost as certain as that:—We shall begin to think that what we have found, however dim and odd it is and however hard to tell anyone else of, is something that we have gained for good. We may say we are converted for life, 'have a new heart' was the old phrase, or we may say we have found the autotherapy that suits us at

last, that we do know ourselves and have penetrated down to self-knowledge and interior peace. One thing we are sure of is that we shall never lose this state and go back to what we were before, any more than we shall once again become an adolescent. Indeed one of the surest symptoms of this state is that we feel very mature, really grown up, rather solemn, quietly assuredly rational, patient with others who seem to be curiously unsure. In short we are in a state of self-contained discreet self-satisfaction. Then it goes. We may do something that accounts for this. We may have done nothing in particular. Just being comfortable in the way described above seems enough—and certainly it should be—to lose us our modest complacency. Then the discomfort may well be intense. We had become used to a certain experience and that experience not only freed us from a lot of rather silly and some harmful ways we had of killing time and soothing our sense of futility, before we found this other way. That experience made us able to entertain ourselves and not be frightened or disgusted at ourselves, as we had never been able to do and to be before. If religion is, as Dr. Whitehead used to say, 'What a man does with his solitude,' this new exercise of using the will to make acts of comprehensive interior attention certainly made loneliness more interesting than most company. If we find that theological language suits us best, we have to own that we are in a terrible muddle because, having thought we found God for good, we now have to own that we have lost Him.

If we have been having feelings—however quiet and refined—the glow has gone out of them. If we have been enjoying thoughts that seemed to clinch matters—we find that the neat bindings have become loose. After a time we find that this losing is, if not a 'Night of the Soul' at least part of its spiritual exercising—painful but helpful—if we know what to do about it. Eckhart gave the answer

to the question, what am I to do when I found that I have lost God—Go back to where you last had Him. Eckhart does not seem to have blamed the person who asked. He seems to have taken for granted that this losing was part of the process of learning—as the lung has to empty to take a new breath, as the mind when learning a language seems to have phases of forgetting before going on to a new and wider grasp of remembering. The author of the *Imitation* certainly thought these fluctuations were unavoidable and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing* in one of his shorter works likens them to the tidal and wave conditions that a voyager on the sea must be prepared to find and in which he must learn to handle his ship.

The Desert Fathers held strongly that 'Short Prayer Pierces Heaven.' As sustained pressure of unwavering attention is impossible to most of us, we must, and can by a series of blows, or lance thrusts as the *Cloud of Unknowing* calls the process, pierce for moments into that upper atmosphere where we could not sustain ourselves. And, though we cannot yet stay there we can bring back something that makes us more resolved to continue striving to cause what has still to be only an instant, to become eternal.

Certainly the time when anyone never loses hold on God would seem to be equated with the time when they have attained to constant practice of the Presence, and surely that must be very close to the Unitive State? Father Baker notes, with that curiously pleasant diagnostic detail he employs, that the soul was bound in the twentyfour hours to go through a series of such dislocations, interruptions of its current from its source. He thought that for 20 minutes after a meal it was not possible to retain the awareness of the Presence of God and that sleep generally 'de-ordinated' the attention. Perhaps some people would deny that—but he certainly had much experience and the state that he was referring to was probably a very dis-

tinct and clear condition of recollectedness or to use a favorite word of his 'abstraction.' That point will come up again—the point of the degree of 'abstraction' or detachment that the soul has attained—when the third question and answer is being discussed in the third article. Here it seems interesting to note that man would appear to be a creature whose consciousness is an 'alternating current' rather than a continuous one. We are tidal creatures. There seem to be in the daily cycle three such rhythms and each one of them may—may be should—strain and if we are not ready detach our hold on the unseen Eternal. There is the tide of sleep-waking, the wave of the diet-nutritional rhythm and the ripple of the breath. Perhaps behind that again is the heartbeat. Each of these sway and swing the frame of mind and angle of thought and base of feeling out of its position and throw it into another. May it not be that this is a necessary part of our training in achieving constancy of consciousness? Even if we leave go we are free to catch hold again before we have been swept too far from our moorings. And if we do not leave go, the strain, like the gentle pull on the thread when it is being spun, gives us tensile strength. Consciousness has continually to be reminded that it must keep conscious or it ceases to be so. Of course at the beginning we all know how slow we are to wake up to the fact that we have fallen asleep. That is the great value of following a rule of life. For then when we have fallen to sleep round comes a duty, an 'office' a call to prayer and, though we feel as uninclined to it as we feel uninclined to get up out of a warm bed at two in the morning, we have to do it whether we like or no—and that however badly we do it is better than letting the whole thing slide because 'one does not feel in the mood.' Of course one does not—the mood has gone and it is for us to make the next one.

The spiritual life is then for all beginners and perhaps for all the middling lot which the

western mystics call 'Proficients' and we might term 'professionals,' a constant and ever more rapid Recollection—another word much used by occidental religions. We are continually pulling ourselves together because we have in the 'stream and fluctuation of time and under the wash of events, begun to fall to pieces and to become completely unravelled. Progress in the spiritual life, one supposes, might be gauged by the speed with which one gets on to the unravelling before too many stitches have been dropped and unknitted. Most people find that they are getting a little handier at the task as the years go by, if they really think the matter is as important as thought would seem to show that it is. Of course if one lets oneself become badly 'de-ordinated,' engrossed in some addiction of the body, some anxiety of possessions, some desire for social approval, then that is as though one's knitting had caught in the paws of an extremely agile and ill-willed monkey. Before the remnants can be recovered little may be left of long periods of patient work. Francois de Sales himself said he might easily lose what had taken him many years to work—in a quarter of an hour—one outburst of hastiness or of what the world would call 'righteous anger' might prove fatal to the endeavour of the large part of a life-time. It appears that our knitting of ourselves is always done, till we are out of the body, and perhaps long after, by 'chain-Stitch' and not 'lock-Stitch.' But however far we have become unravelled there is always this sovran advice to help us back. We have lost God, but once we had Him, not of course in actuality or we would never have lost Him, but in potentiality; we were on the way, on the trail. All we have to do is to trace back to that moment and there start again. Of course, though the advice is clear, it is hard. Discouragement keeps on tempting us to cheat and advises us to try and start where we are. That will not do. Recollection is, in one of its meanings, remembering. We have, like senile people in their

talking, wandered, and we must go back to the last time we were coherent. We must trace back to where the deviation and the dissipation began.

But as we continue, we do find that we do not have to go quite so far back, each time we slip, as we had to do so earlier. That does not mean that the task gets easier. For the goal is constant recollectedness, each act performed in the sight of God and then discharged and left with contrition but not with remorse or even regret. We have to work up the whole series of approaches that lead to perfect instantaneity. When we are past being swept away by passions then we have to learn to correct the tidal displacement of mood and consciousness made by the tide of sleep. Some Sufis say that it takes several years before the sleep-mind will accept the attitude of the waking-mind. And even when it does, most of us know that it is still very capricious. Sometimes in sleep we can control the dream, sometimes we can detach ourselves from it knowing that both the dream and earthly waking are dreams. But most of the time we are its object and not it ours. Then there is becoming aware of the optimum psychophysical lucidity which appears somewhere in the alimentary cycle. Swami Brahmananda thought that the best condition for meditation was when the stomach was partly filled. Sir John Woodroff quotes a Tantric authority saying that the stomach should not be wholly empty because this produces a slight but definitely distracting tension in the mind. And of course about the care of the breath so that the lucidity that opens between each inhalation and exhalation may be caught, about this Sanskrit authorities

have told us much. Every one of these 'dips' after a 'crest' will tend to 'ebb us out' until we lose touch with the shore we should hold to and find ourselves adrift. But Eckhart seems to teach, and experience would seem to confirm, that if we would have the courage to trace back the moment we discovered our loss, we should be able to find the spot where it began and once there we could start again. Again of course temptation to discouragement appears. We feel we cannot go on this hindsight search time and again. We fear we are making no progress if we spend nearly all our time going back. But this may be a complete misapprehension of our process and progress. For each of these returns is really far more like a zig-zag ascent in which, it is true, after going right we then turn left, but always the traverse whether to right or left goes up and each drive is on a higher level than the one before. By this going back we are learning two essential things; self-knowledge—the structure of the human mind and the kind of things that throw it off its rational attentions and further we are learning humility. This humility is the real stuff, for it leads to true discrimination so that at last we can make the distinction between ourselves and the thing that is always straying. When we reach that stage it would appear that we discover that the straying part of ourselves loses its power to wander. We begin to make the final recollection, we at last 'come to ourselves,' we remember who we are. And once we do that the journey is over. For the whole notion that we were far away from our Source and Goal was the illusion and the distance we were from God was never more than the depth of our illusory self-love.

'You will see God if your love for Him is as strong as that of the attachment of the worldly-minded person for things of the world.'

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

THE PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK OF POPULAR HINDUISM

BY DHIRENDRANATH MUKHERJI

Hinduism as it is popularly practised will remain unintelligible until we know something of its philosophical background. The tendency of Hindu polytheism is definitely monistic. The metaphysical outlook of the Hindus can be said to rest upon two schools of thought—the Sankhya and the Vedanta. Without entering into much scholarly discussions about them, we may say that the Vedanta tries to determine the nature of the Absolute and the Sankhya, of *Prakriti*—the infinite substratum of all material evolution. The metaphysics adopted by the Hindus as a basis of their theology is a combination of the two. Accepting both the speculations as true in their respective provinces, and considering them as not wholly unconnected, the Hindu mind in its religious cravings made a synthesis of the two, and to this synthetic whole traced the hierarchy of their gods and goddesses. The modes of their treatment are both psychological and idealistic. In the evolution of this pantheon, the element of nature has never been lost sight of, nor has the mystery of human mind been overlooked. The nature of this great fundamental basis recognized by theology and its relation to the manifold of creation have been nicely illustrated in the following obeisance to Brahman :

*Avyakta-vyaktarupaya nirgunaya
gunatmane
Samasta-jagadadhara-murtaye Brahmane
namah.*

'We bow to the Great Brahman—the Unmanifest which seems to be manifested, the Unconditioned which assumes condition, the Form of all forms, the Ground of this universe.' Now this great creative principle, this Absolute inspired by the desire to become many, this Universal Person or Saguna Brahman, is the great source from which all the divinities of the Hindu pantheon have sprung

into being. They are but his emanations or *vibhūtis*, given independent name and form for the purpose of worship. The Hindus never believe that they are essentially different from Him, but think that they bear the same relationship to Him, as parts do to the whole, as particulars to the Universal, and as the appearances of an object seen from different view-points to the object itself.

Yet the Hindus have a peculiar way of viewing these separate aspects of the Supreme Being, these deities of their adoration. Although they are essentially ideal in character, they are not without personalities, though their personalities are derived from the personality of God. Thus they are both dependent on, and independent of, God—just as in a living organism, the cells building the body are both independent of and dependent on the body, into which they enter as constituents, or as in a society, the individual members are independent units as well as subservient parts, of the social entity.

If we take the social whole as a person, then the constituent units are also persons—restricted persons—having only limited scope and activities. Thus the personality of the Supreme Being is a larger one, containing all the lesser personalities within itself. This type of relationship has been clearly hinted at in the grand pauranic text of the Hindus, the *Chandi*, where the Great Goddess, who is recognized as the ultimate ground of all realities, has also been represented as all the dualities of life and nature, such as motion and rest, energy and lethargy, strength and weakness, love and hatred, shame and glory, and so on, meaning thereby that She is both analytically and synthetically the one. She is the potential of the Supreme Being, inherent in His very nature. But She is both a state and a person, and being invoked by Brahma, revealed Herself before him in the

form of a woman. She is the cause of all personalities and even of the personality of the Supreme Being Himself, upon whom She exercises an independent influence. All the goddesses who fought on her side in the war with the *asuras* have been described as her emanations, who afterwards merged in her and became one with her. We find here an interblending of the Sankhya and the Advaita Vedanta views. That which is *maya* or great illusion of the Advaita Vedanta is *Prakriti* or the great ground of diversity of forms in the Sankhya. This personality, multiplying itself into many personalities without being any the lesser thereby in its essence, is the peculiar characteristic of the Hindu view of evolution. It is like kindling one fire from another fire. The Hindu philosophers in describing the relationship between Brahman and the evolved parts, and in emphasizing how the All is not affected in its entity by this evolution, say :

Purnamadah purnamidam purnatpurnamudachyate

Purnasya purnamadaya purnamevavashishyate.

‘That is Full and this is Full, and the Full emanates from the Full, but when the Full is taken away from the Full, what remains behind is also Full.’

The Hindu philosophers believe that a living personality cannot be a personality at all, unless it is personal, both in the aggregate and in the constituent parts, for, how can a life be life in any sense, unless it is life all over, without the darkening, disconnecting interception of death to obstruct its steady flow, because in case of any such interception, the entire process would mean a negation. Death is nothing but a matter of notion, a reflection or shadow of our limited nature on the bright effulgence of immortality, it is a *maya* or illusion, the same illusion which is at the root of all creations of name and form. This pan-life or all-life theory may be best illustrated by an analogy. Let us take the case of a

huge dynamo, where millions of units of electricity are being constantly generated and used for the purpose of lighting a city. Now when this total quantity of electricity has the power of blazing up into one great light, its constituent units are not also destitute of that power individually, for they too manifest themselves into so many smaller lights, whenever they find an occasion. Thus the total electric production of the dynamo is light both in the whole and in the parts; rather it manifests itself more in the parts—the total remaining unmanifest on the whole. Hence the conception of Brahman with the potentiality of manifestation, being unmanifest on the whole, but manifested only partially does not seem to be a wholly absurd one. Taking the question of personality in this connection, we can push the analogy a little further. If we take the total quantity of electricity as one person, then its whole flow is inspired with that personality, and every individual moment in it is no less a person than the entity itself. In this light we should understand the emanation theory of the Hindu theology. We may then understand how various gods and goddesses, arising out of one Supreme Deity, may themselves be treated as independent persons.

We can approach this question of relationship from another standpoint. Brahman, which is both being and not-being, the ground of all possible forms and also the Beyond, is itself formless, not because It is incapable of assuming form, but because being resolvable into all sorts of form, It cannot be identified with any particular one. It can be recognized in a form, only from a subjective standpoint, or in other words, by the recognition of a *bhakta* or devotee within the limit of his capacity. But in that case Brahman no longer remains Brahman or Absolute, but becomes a *deva* or god with a definite name and form peculiar to the taste, need, and mental constitution of the votary himself. Hence there are as many gods and goddesses as there are

votaries, all of whom are real taking after (so to say) the realities of the worshipper. Thus these gods and goddesses are, in one respect, but the ideal selves or extended selves of the votaries themselves—their real selves in the Brahman, while they themselves are the narrower expressions of these ideals in the grosser plane of worldly existence. This naturally reminds us of Plato's ideas, but while Plato's ideas are only class ideas, the originals of the classes which appear in nature and which are but their imperfect reflections, the Hindu ideas or ideals are real individual ideas—all the individual reals in existence are nothing but the expressions in a narrow circle of these ideas with dim circumscribed light, owing to the grossness of the plane where they temporarily reveal themselves. This is the meaning of the text *aham devah nach anyasmi* etc. 'I am the deity himself and no one else.' There is no intrinsic difference between the supersensible ideal and the empirical real, the difference lies only in the way of seeing things. The particulars of the world, seen from the standpoint of the universal, appear only dim, lustreless, and narrow, just as in another way, the huge orbs of the sky, looked from our earthly plane, appear small and twinkling. The cause of this altered look lies in the limitation of our vision. This is the reason why every individual in him has a natural craving to be greater than what he is, to rise higher than where he is placed by his birth, and also the reason why he is never satisfied with whatever progress he makes in his life. According to the Hindu view, this is the call of the Eternal in him, an unconscious quest for his ideal self, the end of which lies only in the realization of that self—or in other words, in the realization of his divinity. Hence the Hindus believe that every one is a seeker of his god, consciously or unconsciously, to find whom is the one object of his life. Other aims and objects which he may have, and which, for his circumscribed vision, may appear to him very important and prominent, are only subordinate to this one great object.

This, then is the meaning of the Hindu polytheism, which, we thus see, is nothing but the elaboration of a highly developed monotheism.

But from what we have said above about the invocation of a deity by his votary, and about putting into it the life of the worshipper himself, there is the risk of this deification being misunderstood as only a creation of fancy, an idle self-delusion of fools. But this, by no means, is so. From the Sankhya standpoint, reality, as we understand it, or more properly materiality, is only an attribute of form—whatever has a form, idea or matter, has a reality—subtle or gross as the case may be; thus there is also reality both in universal and particular. If we trace the origin of the reality from the universal ideal, and gradually come down to the particular and concrete, then the more ideal an object is, the more it is real; hence our deities are by no means fictitious, they are more real than we ourselves are. We only try to have a glimpse of them through our mental vision. As regards the question of putting life (*pranapratishta*) into the deities to be worshipped we must remember that the universal and the particulars are like concentric circles. The universal is the wider circle of light, of which the particular is the narrower form, albeit grosser and more obscure, nevertheless one of light. If we are to make a big fire ablaze, that which burns low and in a small way in the dim lamp, must be enlivened and extended. There is no reason to believe that the light in its revived form is no longer light, and that the anticipation of it in a larger form is also false. This being so, why should the conception of divinity which, as we have already stated, is only the idea of our larger self not be real and alive—only life should be inspired in them by extending the boundary of our life-consciousness. Then again if the Supreme Being, in His differentiated nature, be the aggregate of all cosmic existences, each individual existence is but a point or viewpoint within it, and each, from its own *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda* nature,

has a vision of the whole from its own *locus standi*, which is but its world. Thus there are so many worlds of ideas within the greater world of one Creative Idea. The Universal Creative Idea is there to give all these particular ideas system, order, and unity. The particulars are like Leibnitz's monads and the universal is like the Monad of monads. If the Universal be real why should not the partial views thereof from particular standpoints be also relatively real? Hence the Hindu view of deities is not quite a fiction as it is sometimes supposed to be. But perhaps we digress. What is our point here is this, that the individual viewing the whole from his own standpoint sees the reflection of his own life in the projected greater life of the universe and tries to realize it. This greater or purer vision of himself, untrammelled by any worldly obscurity, which rises up before his mind's eye is his deity and the effort to realize it is his *puja*. As by meditating on this ideal self, one can transcend one's physical or psychical disabilities and the narrowness that is attendant in one's worldly life, the Hindus believe that by repeated *puja* exercises they may have their minds chastened, and may also be lifted up one day to the purer region of idealism. As the gods and goddesses are but the modes of expression of the Supreme Being, by using them as stepping stones, they hope to reach God in the long run. Had not the Pure Being been uppermost in his thought Vyasa would never have uttered his famous apology for trying to meditate on the Lord as with a form and for singing praise of Him in words. Yet he had to do both, because practical necessity in the province of spiritual advance-

ment demanded this of him.

This, then, is the path cut out by the Hindus for the spiritual guidance of their numerous votaries who are in different stages of mental development, and herein also lies the justification of their psycho-metaphysical polytheistic conception. They could not be satisfied with the usual prayer programme of the other religious sects which, as a practical measure, did not seem to them quite enough for effecting a true spiritual progress. Hence the elaborate formulation of a great many *puja* exercises according to the varying needs of the different classes of votaries was deemed necessary. Their highest daily prayer, *gayatri*, which is nothing but an invocation of divine light for awakening metaphysical vision, when compared with the well-known prayers of other religions, may also show wherein the Hindus differ from these people in their spiritual outlook. But this peculiar outlook has been systematically misunderstood, partly owing to the intricacy of the subject itself and partly owing to the general apathy towards spirituality in these days of materialism. It is undeniably true that, owing to its very ancient nature, Hinduism has not been able to keep its meaning always clear and that being often over-burdened, as in the present, with many unmeaning and useless practices, it has been in many cases more or less mechanical; yet the defect is due to a lamentable forgetfulness of the true aim, and to a general want of enlightened guidance. Notwithstanding all these, its truth cannot be denied, and the need of its teaching has never been more keenly felt than now.

'Never forget the glory of human nature! We are the greatest God that ever was or ever will be. Christs and Buddhas are but waves on the boundless ocean which *I am*.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

An Introduction to the Study of the Upanishads (I) by Swami Nikhilananda is from the author's forthcoming book *The Upanishads* to be shortly published in the USA by Harper & Brothers. The book will be complete in five volumes and will contain, besides a General Introduction, the translation of the original text of the major Upanishads with a running commentary giving the substance of Shankara's *bhashya* on them all. The present article is the first of a series of three from the general introduction of the book and will be found very helpful by those who are in need of some clear general ideas before proceeding to a detailed study of the particular Upanishads.

The present issue contains the two speeches, one by the Indian Premier Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the other by Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, delivered at the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday at New Delhi on 20 March 1949. They are models of clarity in thought and expression, and deserve to be taken to heart by all who long for a happy, united, and glorious India standing as a light to the world which does not now know which way to turn to avoid the destruction with which the naked pursuit of power threatens it. . . .

Sri Dhirendranath Mukherji explains in *The Philosophical Outlook of Popular Hinduism* the metaphysical basis on which the practice of worship in India rests. Worship is a means of approach to the Ideal that is one to all, but presents myriads of forms to different worshippers. Such forms are not imaginary in the sense the word is used, but real entities related to the mental development of individual worshippers. Because this metaphysical basis is not often known and the real object of worship missed, Hinduism has long been a victim of general ignorance which describes it as polytheistic.

THE SECULAR DEMOCRATIC STATE ?

Our approach to the problem set by the above caption must now be different from what it has been. Recently, there have appeared three pronouncements, in different contexts, which are hope-inspiring.

In connection with Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, it has been said in a leading article in a local paper :

'It will be a bad day for our politics, and even worse for our religion, if there is any section of our people, however small, which believes that political and even religious aims can be achieved by murder. Resort to violence is the very negation of law. In politics, it is a repudiation of the basic principle of democracy. To have recourse to it in the name of religion is an outrage on religion itself. In the higher reaches of Hindu thought, philosophers like Shankara took the doctrine of divinity in man one stage higher to assert the identity of the Human Soul with the Divine Spirit. All through history, India has prided herself on the catholicity of her outlook which enabled her to retain within the Hindu fold every school of religious thought from Advaita to atheism. Those who seek to introduce the element of fanaticism in our culture are doing violence to everything for which India has always stood, its genius, tradition, culture, and civilisation.'

In the course of a message to the convenor of the Conference on Culture, Religion, and Morals, to be held in Lucknow, our Prime Minister said :

'... I cannot speak about religion because that word has so many meanings in different minds and the kind of religion we see about us in every country is more of a husk and a ritual than anything having a real content. Because of this present-

day aspect of religion I have not felt attracted to it though I have little doubt that in its wider and deeper conception, it can be something of great value to life. But that conception is so far removed from what religion is thought to be today by most persons that to use the word may very well produce a wrong impression in many people's minds.... There is a danger, however, that we may lose ourselves in vague and metaphysical generalizations, which, though seeming to embody high truths, do not help us very much in our daily tasks. It may be necessary to survey a wide field in order to get a true perspective. But that may also lead us into a dense forest of ideals and problems and not help us to understand clearly the duty of the moment. There is always a tendency for majority of us to seek escapism in high ideals and fine phrases and not trouble to relate them to the business of life as it is today....'

Soon after, speaking on the banks of the Meshvi, the Prime Minister declared :

'The secular character of the Indian State must be maintained at all costs. This did not mean they are to be irrelegious or a nation of atheists. Secular State only meant that every individual in it was free to profess any faith he chose and no disability would rest on him by reason of his faith.'

This, however, is only a re-affirmation of one of the Fundamental Rights proposed in the Constitution which reads :

'... Subject to public order, morality and health, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion ; every religious denomination will have the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, to manage its own affairs in matters of religion....' But the question remains why should the Governments of the Union, at the Centre, and of the 'States' as such, repudiate all responsibility for foster-

ing the religions of their subjects especially when in connection with the controversy over provincial languages the Government allow mixed populations, in contiguous areas to be taught, in the schools, not only the language of the province wherein the students happen to reside, but also their mother tongues? The importance of providing the young generation with a catholic religious background seems not to have been realized in spite of the examples of Russia and Germany. What is clearly indicated is that the Government should create a body of men which would advise on the sort of religious instruction to be imparted in the schools to all those who profess nominally different faiths which essentially are one, so as to bring up a generation which will not tolerate 'a divorce between the cultural and moral standards and the business of life,' nor allow 'cultural values to progressively lose their significance and fade away' giving place 'to vulgarity, petty-mindedness and an absence of any conception of obligations and duties.' Obligations and duties, thought in the present day to be ethical commandments, really derive from Religion, being aspects of the Brotherhood of Man on which Mahatma Gandhi insisted as the one Truth, which to him, with its implication of non-violence, was God.

But apart from the teachings of religions professed in India—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, Guru Nanak's creed, etc. let us cast a glance at what the thinkers, our favourite authors of the West, have said on the subject of Religion.

Burke, the author of *Reflections on the French Revolution* and of *Sublime and the Beautiful* says :

'We know and we feel inwardly that religion is the basis of civil society and the source of all good and all comforts.... All persons possessing any portion of power ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust ; and that they are to account for their conduct

in that trust to the one great Master, Author and Founder of society....'

Or take Disraeli :

'The most powerful principle which governs man is the religious principle.... A wise government, allying itself with religion, would as it were consecrate society and sanctify the State.... Society has a soul as well as a body... The spiritual nature of man is stronger than codes or constitutions. No government can endure which does not recognize that for its foundation, and no legislation last which does not flow from that fountain. The principle may develop itself in manifold forms, in the shape of many creeds and many churches. But the principle is divine. As time is divided into day and night, so religion rests upon the Providence of God and the responsibility of man.'

It follows that there can be no genuine statesmanship which is not founded upon a religious view of the basis of civil obligations and there can be no true religion where the basis of civil obligations is treated as purely secular. Religion must not be regarded as an individual's personal affair, simply as a private fad, like having a hot water bottle in bed, a legitimate idiosyncrasy : but must be recognized as a vital force which has important consequences for a man's neighbours. The secular organization of the community in the State cannot be regarded as self-sufficient and no wise secular government can hope for the permanence of its institutions by adopting an attitude of indifference to religious truths, even if it be driven to adopt an attitude of impartiality between a number of different, but basically similar, creeds. The necessity of religion in a secular society is demonstrated by three independent propositions :

First : Religion, that is the recognition of the spiritual brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God, is the sole philosophical justification for any sort of morality between man and man.

Second : Religion provides the moral basis of culture, without which man is unable to live at peace with his neighbour.

Third : Religion is the great governing wheel on the engine of human passion without which no passion, no love, no moral or political principle is valid or even legitimate.

It has to be realized that religion and secular life, originally united in the nation, remain united in the institution of the family, the foundation alike of the secular and religious life. It is the business of the State to foster and support family life, but the core and centre of family life is its religious consciousness.

The history of the past two generations affords ample proof of what is here urged. There is, for every careful and unbiassed analytic mind, a close connection between the two main movements of thought and practice during this period : first, the movement of human thought all over the world towards a materialistic or positive view of the universe and away from a religious or even idealistic philosophy ; second the real and very obvious retrogression from the humanism of the nineteenth century towards the abominations, the cruelties, and inhumanities of the present age. There can be no doubt that of the various political revolutions which have taken place since the turn of the century the majority have been anti-religious and that in the democracies where the same forces are at work in a free society the movement has taken the form of the worship of Mammon and Venus ; in the dictatorships, that of Moloch or of Mars. In the unthinking multitude these movements have succeeded to the extent of creating indifference ; in organized minorities they have actually produced active hostility to religion and all that is spiritual.

These then are two of the characteristics of our time : a retrogression from humanity and a conscious abandonment of religion. Therefore, our political faith has to be linked to the ultimate view of reality, and not

divorced from it. There is no hope for the world unless men can come to regard themselves as members of a common brotherhood. But the brotherhood of man is philosophically meaningless and practically unattainable except in the light of the universal fatherhood of God. To talk of a brotherhood transcending the bonds of physical fraternal relationship presupposes a kind of manhood inconsistent with materialistic philosophy. The denial of the fatherhood of God is the root from which spring quite naturally the heresies which have affected mankind in our time, the doctrine of race and of class, the worship of the State, the philosophy of dialectical materialism, or the more pragmatic and not less popular creeds of get-rich-quick or all-is-fair-in-love-and-war. Our duty towards our neighbours, outside the bounds of enlightened self-interest, begins at the moment when we realize the utter worthlessness of self in the sight of the Father of us all. Neither of the two commandments can be practised separately, for the love of God does not exist in the man who does not love his brother and the love of man is impossible except in the grace and understanding bestowed by faith in and love of God.

It is a foreshadowing of the Divine Will that the human mind in general is at present orientated in the right direction. Everyone is talking of 'One World' and the brotherhood of man. For India, the ancient home of

spirituality, where was born Advaita, where were revealed the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, now is the time to give effect to its pristine faith. Signs are not wanting that in some quarters stress is being laid upon a beginning to be made, e.g. in the insistence upon making the study of Sanskrit compulsory. The Government should accept this idea and relate it to the suggestion already made, namely, the constitution of a body of carefully selected men from enlightened spiritual organizations to frame a comprehensive programme which will have for its object the inculcation, by stages, of the grand Truths of essential Religion like God is Truth, Service is Dharma, and how all ethical injunctions follow from the performance of one's duty. This theme is capable of detailed enlargement and the writer's hope is that it will be taken up, pursued and elaborated by earnest and keen men, much better qualified for the task than he is.

What, however, seems essential at the present stage is that having, through its constitution, assured the citizens of India equality of rights in every conceivable respect, our Government should adopt the policy of providing them with a catholic religious background, so that a strong and united Indian society can be built up on a basis of moral integrity and spiritual unity.

KAILASH NARAYAN HAKSAR

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

EMERSON: A CONSPECTUS—VOL. I. COMPILED BY MADHAVA RAMA. Published by C. V. Krishna Bros., Trivandrum. Pp. 549.

Emerson needs no introduction to the literary world. Inheriting all that is best in Western culture he was at the same time deeply influenced by Oriental, especially Indian, thought, into which he showed a keen insight. As a result of this confluence there flowed forth from him a new stream of ideas at once deep, liberal, and broad. He is one of the few pioneers, who, along with Thoreau and others, interpreted early in the nineteenth

century Eastern thought to the West and brought about a ferment in its ideas. He adopted as his motto *Ex Oriente Lux*—Light from the East. He did much to bring the East and the West closer.

Though Emerson is not regarded as a philosopher in the formal sense of the term, his whole outlook was philosophic. To quote from the able introduction to the book by Charles Albert Hanger, Jr., 'His preoccupation was to see life as a whole, and in its universal setting.' He impressed his personality on whatever passed through him: 'Without the disadvantages so often associated

with religious or philosophical eclecticism, Emerson's genial spirit found itself equally at home in Socrates, in Gotama Buddha, in Jesus, in the *Koran* or in the *Upanishads*; for the Sage of Concord in spiritual matters was self-reliant, and a lamp unto himself: ... Social institutions, and the policy of nations, were to be judged, in his view, on the basis of how far they fostered or hindered the unfolding of the high destiny he believed possible for man. ... The flowering of the best talents everywhere, and in all their variety; happiness in the Good Life for all men, was what he called for. Mutual respect, good will, and tolerance, being sets of conditions favouring the realization of this goal. ... His appeal is always to the positive element in us, to the Higher Self, which, in the last analysis of Emerson's thought, is the Self of God working in the world.'

There is no wonder that such a personality should inspire people all over the world. The author has drunk deep at the fountain of Emerson for over forty years. The entire work, of which this is the first volume and which will be complete in four parts, aims to arrange topically all the various writings of Emerson, with biographical, critical, and other data concerning him. The book is the result of several years of study and labour and presents Emerson under interesting heads. It will be of value to the students of Emerson as it brings together his essential thought in a compact manner as also extracts from other works on Emerson, to all of which references have been given in the footnotes.

INDIAN CAVALCADE. BY BHABANI BHATTACHARYA. *Nalanda Publications, Post Box No. 1353, Bombay. Pp. 261. Price Rs. 6/12.*

Indian Cavalcade is a collection of historical sketches contributed by the author from time to time to several periodicals in India. He has selected certain prominent personalities and events of history as his themes and cast them in the form of a number of short stories without deviating from facts. He bases his accounts upon authentic works, and, where there are different versions of the same incident, he mentions them all and tries to be impartial. He is unprejudiced in his selection and objective in his portrayal.

The subjects are not confined to kings and emperors and 'historical' events alone, but embrace accounts of social and religious leaders, and thus the author falls in line with the modern conception of history which takes into account all movements which affect and mould the life and culture of a people—political, economic, social and cultural. In these sketches the author brings into play his abilities as a first-rate story-writer. Though this is no book on history, it will certainly acquaint the general reader with some of the important men and events of the past in India from the time of Vikramaditya

to the present day, though, as the author writes, 'some essential link in the material - had to be left out on copyright grounds, so that there are odd blanks in the panoramic picture.'

The book makes very interesting reading, though at times one feels that there is an abrupt passing over of an event. The book will provide light stimulating reading to the public.

INTRODUCING INDIA—PART I. JOINT EDITORS—K. N. BAGCHI AND W. G. GRIFFITHS. *Published by The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. Pp. 171.*

This book is a collection of sixteen lectures delivered under the auspices of the Society by a number of eminent scholars, Indian and European, for the benefit of the foreign soldiers who came to India during the last war. The lectures deal with several aspects of Indian life and culture. They include, among others, *Temples of India* by Sir Norman Edgley, *The Gods and Goddesses of India* by J. N. Bannerjee, *Dawn of Law in Ancient India* by R. B. Pal, *The People of India* by W.G. Griffiths, *Art in Gandhara* by E. Dickinson, *Travels of Marco Polo* by L.R. Fawcus, *Bengal as Clive Found It* by R. C. Majumdar, *Hill Tribes of Assam* by C.S. Mullan, and *Impact of War Upon the Industries of India* by G.W. Tyson.

The book contains several illustrations and maps which add to its usefulness.

The Society has done a good service to the country by publishing these lectures embodying latest researches in the subjects dealt with. They will certainly be helpful in 'introducing India' to a wider public. We hope the next Part will come out soon.

MARATHI

HRIDAYA BOL. BY NIVEDITA R. VINEET. *Published by Ramachandra Vineet, 'Devotion' Writer Street, Dharwar, Pp. 98. Price Re. 1/8.*

Hridaya Bol is a collection of songs composed by the authoress. The songs express many good ideas and noble sentiments. As such they have an educative value. The language is simple and expressive.

VIJHANARI AUG. BY RAMESH MANTRI. *Published by R. R. Mantri, 1285, Mangalwar, Kolhapur. Pp. 88. Price Re. 1/8.*

This is a book of short sketches on the various circumstances in life that we come across. It is a candid reflection on the thoughts, ideals, and aspirations that we cherish in the start of life, and on what becomes of them as we advance in age, and also about things happening around us. The author is very critical and somewhat pessimistic, but very sincere, clear, and forceful.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE EIGHTYSEVENTH BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

FUNCTION AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION LIBRARY, PURI

The eightyseventh Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mission Library, Puri, from the 21st to 24th of January last in accordance with a grand programme. It commenced on the 21st morning with *chandipath*, *homa*, and prayers etc. and was terminated with Daridra-Narayana Seva in the evening. The splendid contributions of the local Maths towards this function were notable. With the worshipping of Lord Mahabir and Ramanama Sankirtan, the programme of the 22nd began. An elocution competition was held among the college students on 'The Life of Swamiji.' Shri Satkari Hota of Puri College (3rd Year student) got the first prize. On the 23rd there was a sports competition among school boys and girls, in which about 200 competitors from 9 different schools participated. Shrimati P. K. Das, wife of the District Magistrate, distributed the prizes among the successful competitors. On the 24th morning, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Orissa, Shri H. K. Mahatab, laid the foundation stone of the proposed extension of this Library. The report of the library showed that it contained about 6000 books and on an average about a hundred people used the Library daily. The Reading Room section received 58 periodicals.

A public meeting was held under the presidentship of the Hon'ble Minister that evening to pay homage to Swami Vivekananda. More than a thousand people assembled in the adjoining premises of the Library. Principal Girija Sankar Roy, Prof. Dharma Rao, Mr. Sukanta Rao, Pt. Basudev Mishra and Shri Lokanath Misra, M.L.C., delivered lectures on the Life and Work of Swami Vivekananda. The President, in his speech mentioned the influence of Swamiji on his own life and said that all the Congress workers were, more or less, influenced by the principles and ideals of Swami Vivekananda. With a vote of thanks by Rai Bahadur Umacharan Das the meeting concluded.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA AND RAMAKRISHNA MATH, CONTAI, WEST BENGAL

REPORT FOR 1941 TO 1947

The Sevashrama was started in 1913 in pursuance of the ideal of service laid down by the great Swami Vivekananda. The following is a report of its activities from 1941 to 1947.

The activities fall mainly under three heads: (1) Preaching, (2) Educational, and (3) Service of the poor.

(1) *Preaching*: During the period under review the members of the Sevashrama conducted classes, gave

lectures and magic-lantern talks on various religious and cultural topics and on hygiene in different parts of the sub-division. Altogether there were 100 lectures and 548 classes during the period, which were well-attended.

(2) *Educational*:

(a) *Students' Homes*: Two Students' Homes were conducted by the Sevashrama to provide the necessary atmosphere for developing character, one in the compound of the Ashrama and the other in the Vidyalaya at Manasadwip. There were 11 students in the former, of whom 5 were free, 5 half-free and 1 paying; and 3 in the latter, all paying.

(b) *Library & Reading Room*: The Ashrama conducts a free Library & Reading Room for the public. It had 1815 books in 1947 and was receiving 9 monthly magazines and one daily paper. During the period under review 11460 books were issued.

(c) *Vidyalaya*: The Sevashrama has been conducting one High School, two Upper Primary Schools—one for boys and one for girls—in Manasadwip, a border island of Sundarbans in the 24 Parganas. It has also been conducting two Upper-Primary Schools for boys and girls in Belda village 4 miles north of Contai town. The strength in these 5 schools during 1947 was 117, 98, 36, 67 and 49 respectively. The schools have developed by stages in response to the growing needs of the people. The financial condition of the schools is not sound, and hence they need the generous help from the public for proper development.

(3) *Service of the Poor*:

(a) *Free Dispensary*: The dispensary is a great help even to the people of distant localities. During the period under review 18088 cases were treated, and quinine was distributed to 3443 cases.

(b) *Relief Work*: With Contai as headquarters 3 centres were opened at Khejuri, Haludvadi, and Majhurchak to afford relief to the sufferers in the cyclone of 1942. Four groups were accommodated in the Ashrama buildings, and were supplied with provisions. The workers of the Sevashrama with the help of the boys of the Students' Home constructed many huts and cleared and purified the waters of nearly 2000 ponds.

Ramakrishna Math: The Math celebrated the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other religious prophets. Talks, lectures and music were held on the occasions. The boys of the local schools and colleges also took part. Every year about 2000 poor people were fed on the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Sevashrama requires funds for repair of the kitchen and other buildings that suffered in the cyclone of 1942 and also for putting up buildings for office and

living quarters of workers. It also requires funds to extend its activities and to provide facilities in the Students' Homes for college and other students, many of whom are seeking admission into them. It appeals to the generous public to contribute liberally to enable the Sevashrama to carry on its work of service of humanity. Any contributions will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Contai, District Medinipur, West Bengal.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE
OF SEATTLE, U.S.A.

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 1947—SEPTEMBER 1948

The year has been one of considerable progress with an appreciable increase in membership and attendance on Sundays, which is a clear indication of the bright future ahead of us.

During the year under review a lot of improvements have been made on the house. The entire third floor, including the bathroom, has been repainted and redecorated. This floor will now provide rooms for at least three prospective monks who would like to live a life of renunciation and dedication. The most important work done during the past fiscal year was the renovation of the basement recreation room. A new red cement floor has been put in, the walls and ceiling have been papered and the woodwork painted. It has been furnished with a beautiful rug, floor lamps and pictures of the Holy Ones and views of Indian temples, as well as an altar, making it an ideal place for meditation and worship.

As usual, Swami Vividishananda gave a public lecture every Sunday morning, discussing the theory and practice of Vedanta, and he conducted study classes every Tuesday and Friday evening. On Tuesdays he took up the study of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and on Fridays a meditation class was conducted followed by a discourse on Shankara's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*. The Tuesday classes were open to the public, but the Friday classes were held for members and students.

The usual celebrations were held throughout the year, the important ones being the worship of the Divine Mother Durga and the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Lord Buddha, as well as the celebrations of Christmas and Easter. On Sri Ramakrishna's birthday the basement recreation room was dedicated to Swami Brahmananda and a statue of the Swami was installed. Swami Devatmananda of Portland came for the Ramakrishna

birthday celebration, and he spoke one Sunday on Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings. He also spoke at the special dinner held in connection with the celebration. Dr. Helling, Minister of the Truth Center, Tacoma, Washington, also was a guest speaker at this dinner. In connection with the Buddha celebration we had a special dinner and Swami Vividishananda and Dr. Helling were the speakers.

During the past year the Swami was invited to speak before different groups. He spoke twice at the Truth Center in Tacoma, Washington, the subjects of his lectures being 'Truth is One' and 'Mahatma Gandhi'. Dr. Helling, who invited the Swami to speak at the Truth Center, has been deeply interested in Indian philosophy and religion for many years. In fact, he had the privilege of meeting Swami Vivekananda in Detroit as a little boy, when Swamiji was a guest of his parents. Dr. Helling has many times expressed great admiration for Swami Vivekananda and his teachings.

The following is a letter written by the Secretary of the Junto Study Group in appreciation of the talk the Swami gave before their members:

'I wish to convey to you once again the thanks of the members of the Junto Study Group, their husbands, friends, and myself for the memorable experience you afforded us by coming to our last meeting. The ideas you brought us have stimulated our thinking to a wider appreciation of religions other than our own and especially to the beauty and wisdom of your faith. We feel it a great honour to have made your acquaintance, and we were happy to meet the guests who accompanied you.'

During the year a group of boys and girls interested in the study of Comparative Religion and human relations attended our services. The following is a letter of appreciation from the Chairman of the group:

'Our visit to your church made the perfect finish for our study program on human relations, and on behalf of the group who made the trip I would like to thank you for your hospitality. We all need to be introduced to experiences which may be different from our own. I feel that the experience was quite valuable to us all, and that our horizons have been considerably broadened. Thank you again for your valuable contribution to our program.'

During the year, in addition to Swami Devatmananda we had three other visiting Swamis: Swami Yatiswarananda of Philadelphia, Swami Akhilananda of Boston and Swami Ghanananda of India. All of them gave inspiring talks before large audiences.

Secretary