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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

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No. 5



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:o:—

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Belur Math, 1931

As Mahapurushji started talking about the need of *japa* to his attendant at about 3 a.m. one night, the latter said with great hesitation : 'I cannot concentrate my mind for long in *japa* and meditation. Whenever I sit for meditation, I find that all kinds of thought come crowding to the mind and disturb it. But when engaged in your service or in other duties, I notice that the remembrance of God comes more easily, and I find pleasure in it as well. On the contrary, when I sit for meditation or *japa*, the mind seems to become rebellious. Fighting thus with the mind, I suffer from a loss of mental composure, and I soon leave my seat. It is a new trouble ; I did not have it before. This has got hold of me for some time, particularly from the time I began serving you.'

Hearing of this restlessness of the attendant's mind, Mahapurushji kept quiet for a time, and then added slowly : 'Yes, some minds are rebellious like that, but there is a way for bringing even such a mind under

control. Even such a restless mind can be trained gradually and made to concentrate on God. Do not begin meditating or making *japa* as soon as you sit down on your seat. First, start with a calm prayer to the Master. The Master is *samādhi* incarnate. If you can pray to him sincerely and think of him, the mind will become concentrated. Pray thus : "O Lord, make my mind calm ; fill me with peace." Pray like this for some time, and then think of the *samādhi* of the Master. The picture that you see of him is that of the state of very high *samādhi*. Ordinary people cannot comprehend the meaning of this picture. Then, sit quietly and watch the wanderings of the mind ; notice where it goes. You are not the mind forsooth ; the mind is yours. You are separate from the mind ; you are the Self itself. Sit quietly, watching the ramblings of the mind, like a witness. After such wanderings for a time, the mind will get tired ; then take hold of it and make it think of the Master. Whenever the mind wants to escape, catch

hold of it and make it meditate on the Master. If you go on trying continuously like this, the mind will gradually become calm. Then repeat God's name with intense devotion, and meditate on Him. Do as I have told you for some days, and you will find that the mind has come under your control. But one thing I tell you, that is, you have to do this daily and regularly and with sincere steadfastness.'

'Inferring from the state of my mind,' said the attendant, 'I think I cannot have much of spiritual practices. My only hope is your blessing.'

'There is no lack of blessing, my son,' said Mahapurushji with great affection. 'You have renounced everything and made the Master the be-all and end-all of your lives; if blessings are not showered on you, then on whom should they be? But along with that, you, too, must be up and doing. For this is what the Master said: "The breeze of compassion is blowing there all the time; it is for you to unfurl your sail." This unfurling of the sail is self-exertion. One must make the sincerest effort and exert oneself—especially when engaged in a good work—in spiritual exercises. One has to put forth a lion's strength for securing the knowledge of the Self. Nothing can be achieved without diligence and self-exertion. Once you unfurl your sail, it will be filled with the breeze of compassion, as a matter of course. One must have diligence so long as one has the notion of ego. Why have you become monks and why have you cut off all family ties? It is all for the realization of God. It is as a result of the merit earned in your previous lives, and out of the grace of God, that you have entered this Order of the Master and found shelter under him; especially, it is the Master who has arranged for your stay in close proximity with us. Nothing can be more regrettable if, even after getting all these facilities, you should miss the chief aim of life. Make your mind very strong. With his name on your lips—who is the saviour of all

sinners—you have started to cross this ocean of the world; now it will not do to be disconcerted by the sight of a rather high wave and take your hand off the rudder. These are but the terrors conjured up by the cosmic Māyā. With these, She tests the sincerity of the aspirants. When such things cannot disturb the aspirant's mind, when he remains uncompromising in his determination, like the Mount Sumeru, in spite of such disturbances, then the great Mother becomes propitious and opens the gate of liberation.

'In the *Candī*, it is stated: "It is She Herself who becomes the cause of people's liberation, when She is favourably disposed." Have you not read in the life of Buddha what kind of terrors She presented before Buddha himself in the form of Māra? But Buddha remained in his seat with unflinching determination, and he made the resolve: "May my body shrivel up on this very seat; may my skin, bones, and flesh be reduced to nothing; but my body shall not move away from here without attaining that enlightenment which seldom comes to a man during innumerable births." What a strong resolution it was! At long last, Mother became propitious. She opened the door of *nirvāna*, and Buddha had his wish fulfilled. He became Buddha, the enlightened One. The same thing occurred in the life of the Master as well. That is why I say, my son, that you should be up and doing; engage yourself in spiritual practices with firm determination. It will not do to give up *japa* and meditation under the simple excuse that your mind does not settle down to these. Look at our own lives. The life of each one of the Master's disciples is an ideal of strenuous spiritual endeavour. Just consider what hard struggles had to be gone through by Maharaj, Hari Maharaj, Yogin Maharaj—each one of them. And yet they had untold blessings from the Master, who was none other than the incarnation for this age. He had the power to grant the knowledge of Brahman by his mere wish and he could merge one into *samādhi* by a

single touch; yet, what hard spiritual practices he made us go through! When God is favourable, the path of spiritual practices itself becomes easy; all the obstacles get removed. God looks at one's heart; He takes note of one's sincerity. He reveals Himself whenever one supplicates Him with earnestness and tears in the eyes. This revelation of Himself out of pity is His grace. He is ever free and independent. Can He be under the dictates of any man's spiritual practices that He should reveal Himself as the result of a certain amount of *japa*, or a certain period of meditation, or a certain measure of voluntary hardship? It cannot be so. Spiritual practices actually mean a hankering for Him alone—a longing for Him alone by discarding this world, forgetting all thoughts of name and fame, physical comfort, and even one's own existence, and having no anxiety about lives here or hereafter, or about anything else. God will reveal Himself out of His mercy to one who will want Him in such a way. Man can see Him, just because He condescends to reveal Himself out of His infinite mercy; this is His grace. Had He not revealed Himself out of His mercy, how could man ever see Him? Not only does He love His devotees, but He is also an ocean of compassion.'

'Our only hope is that we have been blessed by you', said the attendant. 'You will certainly do whatever conduces to our real good. Now that you have granted shelter for once, you can never deny us.'

The Master is a great lover of those who take shelter in him', said Mahapurushji. 'He protects those who take refuge in him. One has no fear of getting drowned in this sea of the world if the Master takes one by the hand even for once only. In the *Candī*, it is stated: "People who have been granted shelter by you have no danger or fear; for those who take refuge in you become themselves the refuge for others." Hold on to the Master with all your being; he will snap the bondage of this world. Those who

have taken refuge in the Master believing him to be the only resort, those who have been taken under our care, should entertain no doubt about liberation; they will have it as a matter of course. That is our responsibility, and we shall see to its fulfilment. There can be no doubt that the Master will lead everyone by the hand at the last moment. But spiritual practices are not meant for the sake of mere liberation. Realize God through spiritual practices even in this life, and be free even while in this body. Call on Him with the utmost earnestness; repeat His name with all sincerity; and get absorbed in Him through and through. Then you will enjoy the bliss that belongs to one who is free even while in this body. Besides, the organization set up by Swamiji has a meaning of its own. He has entrusted a very heavy responsibility to each one who has found his place in this Order. Each monk and each *brahmacārin* here has to mould his life of renunciation and spiritual practices in such an ideal way as to make each life a fit instrument for the propagation of the holy life that the Master led, so that the whole world may come to know this holy Order of his, nay, it may recognize the Master through each member of this Order. Swamiji's dictum has been, "For one's own salvation and for the good of the world". Then will real good be done to this world when the liberal and universal message of the Master will be propagated everywhere. And that task he has entrusted to this whole Order.'

Talking about the life of a monk, Mahapurushji said one day: 'A monk must leave his bed very early: he should not sleep after 3 or 4 a.m. Why should a monk sleep after that? We have seen the Master waking up at 3 a.m. and repeating the names of God. A monk should bathe early and engage himself in meditation and concentration of mind after the bath. He should not sit for his meal just after the bath. Eating just after the bath is a practice followed by ordinary people. Why should the monk

also behave that way? His demeanour, his talk, and every other thing should be different; they should all be simple and sincere, charming and divine. Why should a monk have money? He must depend entirely on God. The Master is there to look after him. A monk should have everything neat and clean about him; but that does not mean that he should be luxurious. Those who tread the path of renunciation can ill afford to be luxurious. A monk should not eat much at night. The Master would say: "One's night meal should be very light." A monk should not neglect learning; he should read the scriptures. He should maintain good health. He should be sweet in his talks, and simple and gentle in his behaviour. He should keep himself away from lust and lucre for ever, and should not even come in touch with these.'

Belur Math, March 4, 1932

As Mahapurushji was not in good health, he could not always deal with his correspondence personally. In the afternoon, an attendant was reading his letters to him, and he was listening to them with full attention. A devotee had written a pitiable letter expressing the sorrows of his heart thus: 'I am having great restlessness of mind. I am following my spiritual practices ardently; but that does not bring any peace. Kindly let me know how I can have His mercy, how I can have His vision, and how I can have peace of mind. It is my strongest belief that, if you take pity on me, God will also become merciful, and my life on this earth will be fulfilled,' and so on. Hearing all this, Mahapurushji said: 'Ah, these people have a real longing. They will be blessed. There is only one way out, and that is faith. If one has the sincerest faith that the Master is the incarnation for this age, that he is none other than God Himself, and that one has been blessed by one of his sons, then one need have nothing more to worry—one has already reached the goal of life. One must have full

faith in his avatārahōod. It is the Master himself who sits in my heart as the *guru* and blesses the devotees. Write to him: "Weep, my son, weep. I know of no other method but weeping. Weep with the prayer: 'O Lord, be merciful to me, reveal yourself to me, grant me your vision.' Pray and weep for ever more. The more you weep for him, the more will he be revealed in your heart. Weep with intense love, weep with the utmost longing." We heard the Master sing:

"Hari, the day is over and evening has come ;
do please take me across.
I have known that you are the one who can
ferry me across, and hence do I call on you.
I have heard that you ferry to the other shore
even those who have no fare to pay ;
I am a poor beggar, without a single copper
in hand.
Hence do I call on you."

'It is he alone who can take us across. If he does not ferry us out of his own mercy, how can any mortal ever cross this sea of the world? Master, you are limitless, you are immeasurably deep. Who can ever know you? Nobody can find your limits. Be kind to me. Reveal your true nature just a little out of your own compassion; and then alone will people's bondage fall off for ever.'

Another devotee had wanted to know the process of the *kundalini's* way up the six plexuses. Mahapurushji said in that connection: 'Write to him that he has no need of knowing all that. "Weep, only weep; weep piteously like a simple boy with all earnestness and pray: 'Master, do grant me faith and devotion; protect me, Mother, and free me from this bondage of *māyā* that you have spread around me.' To tell you the truth, my son, I know this much alone. Weep in the name of Mother, my son, weep. Lie down at Her feet, take refuge in Her, and weep. She will certainly take pity. I, too, pray that you may progress in life and advance rapidly in your spiritual endeavour.'" Then, looking at the attendant, he added: 'Did you not say

that he has some defect? I care little for all that; I do not want to know what one did in one's past life. Let the dead past bury its dead. Now that he has come here and taken refuge under the Master, everything will be forgiven, and he will be saved. The

Master has the power to undo everything. It is no small matter that he has taken refuge in the *avatāra* of this age. He could not have done this unless he had sufficient merit to his credit. The Master will certainly save him.'

SOCIAL REFORM

Was Swami Vivekananda a social reformer? The answer is both 'Yes' and 'No'. To understand such a paradox, we have to study his message in greater detail. The contradiction was presented by Swamiji himself, and he himself showed how to resolve it. Speaking in Madras, soon after his first return from the West, he said: 'To the reformers, I will point out that I am a greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only little bits. I want root-and-branch reform. Where we differ is in the method. Theirs is the method of destruction; mine is that of construction. I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth' (*Complete Works*, Vol. III. p. 213). In another characteristic passage, he clearly shows where he and his method differ from others, though the aim is the same in either case: 'I fully agree with the educated classes in India that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this. We have not done badly in the past; certainly not. Our society is not *bad*, but good; only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, not from bad to good, but from truth to higher truth, from good to better, best' (*C.W.*, Vol. IV. pp. 371-72). He would always proceed with blessings on his lips and not curses.

In fact, any movement for reform needs three prerequisites—a feeling of true love for, nay, an identification through love with, those whom one would reform; an intelligent plan

of work; and a selfless motive behind the undertaking: 'If you wish to be a true reformer, three things are necessary. The first is to feel. Do you really feel for your brothers? Do you really feel that there is so much misery in the world, so much ignorance and superstition? Do you really feel that men are your brothers? Does this idea come into your whole being? Does it run with your blood? Does it tingle in your veins? Does it course through every nerve and filament of your body? Are you full of that idea of sympathy? If you are, that is only the first step. You must think next if you have found any remedy. The old ideas may be all superstition, but in and round those masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth. Have you discovered the means by which to keep that gold alone, without any of the dross? If you have done that, that is only the second step. One more thing is necessary. What is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of gold, by thirst for fame or power?' (*ibid.*, pp. 158-59).

Judged by all the three standards, Swami Vivekananda stands head and shoulders above all others in the field of social reform. He might not have the fanfaronade of others; he might not have attacked social institutions and customs with quixotic zeal; and he might not have founded reform societies for abusing others, rather than pointing out the way; still, he spent his whole life for the advancement of the Indian society. He dealt with

the fundamentals that could cure its diseases and lead to better health; he loved the Indian society with all his heart; and, in return, he wanted nothing for himself. We cannot afford to cite illustrations with regard to this from his life in this short discussion; nor need we do that here; for these are now well-known facts of history.

Swami Vivekananda found that the Indian social reformers suffered from two main drawbacks. They took their inspiration and cue from the West and they laid the blame for India's drawbacks at the door of religion. The result was that their plans were ill conceived and their zeal misdirected, so that the great reform movements of the latter part of the nineteenth century either failed miserably or fell far short of the bright promises they made. 'The reformers simply play into the hands of Europeans and pander to their vanity' (*C.W.*, Vol. V. p. 223); 'Where is the motive power of his work?—in a few patronizing pats from the English people. His schemes of reforms, his vehement vituperations against the evils of certain social customs have, as the mainspring, some European patronage' (*C.W.*, Vol. III. p. 151). 'I am sorry to say that most of our modern reform-movements have been inconsiderate imitations of Western means and methods of work; and that surely will not do for India' (*ibid.*, p. 195). He decried this as altogether a wrong approach. There were orthodoxy, superstition, out-moded ways of life, and many other social evils, which made advancement, and even a decent economic and political life, impossible in this modern world of competitive progress. But it would not do to try to change society overnight at the dictates of the West. 'We have to find our way between the Scylla of old superstitious orthodoxy and the Charybdis of materialism—of Europeanism, of soullessness, of the so-called reform—which has penetrated to the foundation of Western progress. ∴ In the first place, we cannot become Westerns; therefore imitating the Westerns is useless.

Suppose you can imitate the Westerns, that moment you will die, you will have no more life in you. In the second place, it is impossible' (*ibid.*, p. 172). His conclusion was: 'I do not, therefore, want any reformation. My ideal is growth, expansion, development on national lines' (*ibid.*, p. 195). Given the choice between orthodoxy and Westernization, he would vote for the former.

The other mistake of the modern Indian reformers was that they could not distinguish between spirituality and social forms. Rules for human conduct are derived from two sources—the eternal relation of man with God, and his life amidst local environments, spirit of the age, social conditions of the period, and so forth. The Vedas stand for the eternal truths, and Smṛtis for the varying adjustments. Properly speaking, religion has to do with the former, and social laws and regulations with the latter. But orthodoxy mixes up the two, and the unthinking reformer falls foul of religion itself. Orthodoxy makes the mistake of curbing social growth in the name of spiritual well-being; and reformers blunder by attempts at overthrowing religion in the name of progress. The path lies in between the two: 'The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow. All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of holding religion accountable for all the horrors of priestcraft and degeneration, and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure; and what was the result? Failure' (*C.W.*, Vol. V. p. 22). It was fortunate for us that they failed. But people are not always so lucky, as the history of Russia shows. Here lies the danger, of which both blind orthodoxy and rash reform must beware.

II

We referred to Swamiji's preference for social growth and evolution, rather than violent reform or destruction. This followed from his fundamental conviction that liberty

is the first condition of growth and that the tyranny of the minority, constituted by the privileged few of the higher castes, is the worst kind of oppression. If the Hindu society were to become really vigorous and progressive, it must be the result of an acute need felt and a definite goal visualized by the Hindu population as a whole. They must not be dictated to by a small minority, however intelligent and well-intentioned it might be. And he was convinced that there could be no social reform without spiritual reform first, by which latter term he meant a better understanding and a more honest practice of the essentials of Hinduism, rather than sticking to its outer forms which were the excrescences of centuries: 'Who told you that I want social reform? Not I. Preach the Lord—say neither good nor bad about the superstitions and diets' (*C.W.*, Vol. V. p. 74); 'My experience comes to this, that it is rather wise to avoid all sorts of fanatical reforms. This world is slowly going on; let it go slowly' (*ibid.*, p. 243).

India was never in want of true reformers. Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Caitanya, and other saints were great workers in the field of social uplift. They were constructive in their methods, and built according to the needs and circumstances of their times. The Buddhists, however, were destructive in their methods, and they were thrown out of India. The progress of the Indian people had been towards the realization of the Vedāntic ideals, and whenever any reforming sect or religion rejected that ideal, it was smashed into nothing. To make any reform real, lasting, and spontaneous, the masses must have more faith in themselves. The imitative reform movements of the nineteenth century really created a vacuum by depriving the masses of their faith in the traditional line of growth based on spirituality, and supplying nothing creative to capture their soul. For a truly effective reform, the masses had to know that in them lay dormant the infinite goodness and strength of the Self, waiting for a new

awakening. The success of other nations lay in this rousing of the divinity of their masses. In India, too, all social movements would have to be preceded by a spiritual reawakening through proper education. In fact, education was the panacea he discovered—an education that was closely associated with the spiritual temperament of our nation and was yet willing to assimilate new ideas from others.

Two methods of approach have been perfected in the East and the West. In the East, all progressive movements are based on spirituality; in the West, on social freedom, political freedom, economic freedom, etc. 'The East wants every bit of social power through spirituality. Thus it was that the modern reformers saw no way to reform but by first crushing out the religion of India. They tried and they failed. Why? Because few of them ever studied their own religion. . . . I claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the Hindu society, and that this state of society exists not on account of religion, but because religion has not been applied to society as it should have been' (*ibid.*, pp. 47-48).

In India, the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity were freely applied in matters spiritual, and so spirituality grew. But society was denied these in the name of religion, and so society stagnated, degenerated, and even disintegrated. 'Your ancestors gave every liberty to the soul, and religion grew. They put the body under every bondage, and society did not grow' (*ibid.*, p. 47). It will not do to blame religion for such a sorry state of affairs, though people entrenched in their inherited rights and privileges might have crippled society in the name of religion. Hence his direction was: 'Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion"' (*ibid.*, p. 29). It will not do either to allow a religious hierarchy to dictate to society how it shall behave or to segregate social problems entirely from spiritual influence; nor will it do to look to the West for our social regenera-

tion. We should rather start from a better appreciation of the Indian spiritual values, and then allow a better scope for the actual manifestation of these truths in society. For instance, our Vedānta teaches the equality of all; but, in practice, we adhere to untouchability and such other diabolical customs. The Upaniṣads teach strength, but we weaken ourselves by camouflaging our lethargy as the highest spiritual poise. The Self has no sex, but we forge all sorts of bondages on our women just because they are not men. The Swami's considered conclusion, therefore, was: 'So, every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our Upaniṣads ... must be brought out from the books. ... Everyone must know of them' (*C.W.*, Vol. III. p. 221); 'Religion for a long time has come to be static in India. What we want is to make it dynamic' (*ibid.*, p. 383).

But religion must keep itself within the proper bounds of merely inspiring progress; it must not lend support to the privileged few to arrogate to themselves the right of dictating to society: 'The Hindu must ... keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow' (*C.W.*, Vol. V. p. 22). What is needed is not any dictation from a strong minority but a strong spiritual upsurge all around. Given that inner inspiration for betterment, the masses can be trusted to look after themselves without jeopardizing their invaluable national heritage. When we first need is to force a sanction: 'First educate the nation, create your legislative body. ... First create the power, the sanction from which the law will spring' (*C.W.*, Vol. III. p. 246).

The terrible mistake was to allow the religiously-minded vested interest to interfere in social matters, at the same time that, when any question of social reform was

raised, this strong minority argued that social reform is not the business of religion. But Swamiji argued: 'True, what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that religion has no right to become a social law-giver' (*C.W.*, Vol. IV. p. 358). Social laws are created by economic conditions, though in India they took shape under the sanction of spirituality. So 'Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds, and everything would come right' (*ibid.*).

We are now in a position to appreciate what Swamiji meant by root-and-branch reform. It required a painstaking study of the relevant facts, diligent effort for finding a solution, and persistence in carrying out the programme with a loving heart, self-sacrifice, and earnestness for promoting self-exertion. For radical reform deals with fundamentals. We have to rebuild from the very basis itself: 'You must go down to the basis of the thing, to the very root of the fire there, and let it burn upwards and make an Indian nation. And the solution of the problem is not so easy, as it is a big and a vast one. Be not in a hurry; this problem has been known several hundred years' (*C.W.*, Vol. III. p. 216).

III

Swamiji avoided being involved in specific questions of reform or being identified with any reform movement, just because this belief in radical reform could not be linked up with temporary palliatives. Rather than be deflected from this by the allurements of immediate success in any popular social reform, he worked at the fundamentals, knowing it for certain that the result in his case would be long in coming, though it would be more enduring. All the same, he lived at a period when India was fast changing; nay, he himself was showing the direction and accelerating the rate of change; and hence he could not ignore the concrete problems which agitated contemporary

minds and which were forcibly brought to his attention by his own friends and disciples. He had to voice his reaction willy-nilly.

Caste was such a problem. It might well be a social institution, as Swamiji rightly held; but it had wide repercussions on the political, economic, and even spiritual planes as well. The problem had to be faced squarely. Still, Swamiji had the same answer. No fanatical reform would rectify the position. Caste might be a hindrance to progress in its present form, but in its essential form of social differences according to merit, it was present in all societies, though masquerading there under different names. If hereditary caste had its drawbacks, it did not imply that social stratification based on merit had them equally. Besides, difference was ingrained in the nature of men; and a remedy was not as easy as some people thought. What could a saint do under such circumstances?

He could advise patience, perseverance, and progressive spiritualization of society. And that is exactly what Swami Vivekananda did. Said he: 'I must frankly tell you that I am neither a caste-breaker nor a mere social reformer. I have nothing to do directly with your castes. . . . Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why you should hate another man or another caste. It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedāntic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the universe' (*ibid.*, p. 194). Yet, since man differed from man, society has to conform to this natural distinction. So he had to distinguish between real caste-based on merit and hereditary caste. Against real caste, he had no complaint: 'Now the original idea of *jāti* was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, . . . his *jāti*, his caste. . . . Then what was the cause of India's downfall?—the giving up of this idea of caste. . . . Any crystallized custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (*jāti*) from having its

full sway.' 'The present caste is not the real *jāti*, but a hindrance to its progress' (C.W., Vol. IV. p. 372).

Against untouchability, however, Swamiji was more outspoken. He could not bear the very mention of the word, and in life he rejected it altogether. It was all a parody of the theory of social stratification and a prostitution of religion. Can man degrade his brother man and himself escape degradation? In the Middle Ages, the higher castes ostracized some of their countrymen, and the result was the downfall of all of them. This abominable custom had therefore got to go—the sooner, the better. There could be no ifs and buts, no false cry of spirituality in danger.

The questions of the uplift of the women and the masses have been dealt with in our earlier editorials. So we need not revert to them here.

The problem of food also need not detain us long, for Swamiji would solve it on rational and hygienic grounds, rather than on the spiritual, though he admitted that particular kinds of food did help spiritual progress. In contemporary society, however, the actual needs of spirituality had been confused with social norms and local customs, so that the problem itself often appeared artificial. Talking about society as a whole, and leaving aside the exceptional spiritual aspirants who could in any case take care of themselves, Swamiji advised the masses to pay more heed to health and hygiene in resolving their doubts about food than to the spiritual requirements. Apart from such a rational approach, all theories of food becoming polluted by touch, sight, etc. had no meaning for the generality of our countrymen.

IV

The problem relating to marriage, like other problems, had to be solved after studying the past history of India, the economic conditions that modified her institutions, and the needs of a higher spiritual life that moulded her

attitude at every turn. The Swami opined that, in arranging matrimonial alliances, as also in many other matters, the Hindu society was socialistic. As compared with the Western freedom in the selection of husband and wife, he upheld the Indian ideal: 'Marriage is not for sense-enjoyment, but to perpetuate the race. This is the Indian conception of marriage. By the producing of children, you are contributing to, and you are responsible for, the future good or evil of society. Hence society has the right to dictate whom you shall marry and whom you shall not' (*ibid.*, p. 477). He raised the question to the spiritual level when he exhorted: 'Forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for self-pleasure. ... Forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar' (*ibid.*, p. 480). He also noted during his European travels, that the freedom in marriage differed from country to country; in some places, the restrictions conformed even to Indian standards, so that there was no sense in blindly following any particular country, however advanced it might be politically or economically.

In spite of all his appreciation, however, of the old Indian way of life, he could not tolerate child-marriage. He derided the idea thus: "'Oh, how sweet is child-marriage! ... Can there be anything but love between husband and wife in such a marriage!'"—such is the whine going round nowadays. ... The truth is that, in this country, parents and relatives can ruthlessly sacrifice the best interests of their children and others for their own selfish ends, to save themselves by a compromise to society' (*ibid.*, p. 491). He knew and could not deny that child-marriage was partly motivated by the need of preserving the spiritual purity of the race. Still his clear direction was: 'You must abolish child-marriage' (*C.W.*, Vol. VI. p. 113). He hated the very custom: 'I have a strong hatred for child-marriage. ... I would hate myself if I help such a diabolical custom

directly or indirectly' (*C.W.*, Vol. VIII. p. 365).

About inter-caste marriage and inter-provincial marriage, Swamiji was equally clear in his opinion, though he was cautious in his approach. He held that the present-day restrictions about inter-dining and inter-marriage were without precedence. Again, the further restrictions imposed among the Bengali Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas, who keep their marriage relationships confined within limited subsections of those castes, are injurious to national growth and vigour: 'Reforms we should have in many ways; who will be so foolish as to deny it? There is, for example, a good reason for inter-marriage in India, in the absence of which the race is becoming physically weaker day by day' (*C.W.*, Vol. V. p. 334). The reader may ask whether Swamiji meant inter-provincial marriage or inter-caste marriage. Swamiji himself makes this clear by saying: 'It is the inter-marriage between people of the same religion that I advocate.' But he added: 'The time is yet very long in coming when marriages of that kind will be widely possible. Besides, it is not judicious now to go in for that all of a sudden.' Then he refers to the irrationality of forbidding inter-marriage between sub-castes, and points out: 'Don't you see how in our society marriage, being restricted for several hundred years within the same subdivisions of each caste, has come to such a pass nowadays as virtually to mean marital alliance between cousins and near relations; and how, for this very reason, the race is getting deteriorated physically?' (*ibid.*, p. 340).

About widow remarriage, he adopted a non-committal attitude, partly because here he dealt mostly with grown-up adults who could choose for themselves if they were given the proper education. And being a votary of freedom and believing in spontaneous growth, he would leave them to decide for themselves. Besides, this problem was not so universal, as some reformers wrongly believed, nor was

it essentially bound up with the regeneration of the nation. Furthermore, here, more than anywhere else, the problem was bound up with the spiritual attitude of the Hindu race. His utterances and writings accordingly ran like this: 'With ... education, women will solve their own problems' (*ibid.*, p. 342).

The Roman Catholics and the Hindus, holding marriage sacred and inviolate, have produced great chaste men and women of immense power' (*ibid.*, p. 179). 'I have yet to see a nation whose fate is determined by the number of husbands their widows get' (*ibid.*, p. 224). He also explained that widow remarriage was often settled according to the relative strength of men and women in society. Thus in the Hindu society 'widow marriage takes place among the lower classes', because the women are fewer among them; but 'among the higher classes, the number of women is greater than that of men', so that widow marriage is not encouraged. He knew that this entailed a hardship on many. The solution he found was in the free choice to be made by educated women themselves.

The question of divorce did not confront the contemporary society; and Swamiji was not called upon to express his view on the matter. All the same, he was a true Hindu honouring Sītā and others, and upholding the ideal of chastity. One can, therefore, safely conclude that he would have preferred the inviolability of marriage, though perchance he would condone exceptional cases out of his natural large-heartedness and sympathy for the suffering.

We have dealt with quite a number of social problems to indicate the way Swamiji's mind worked. He worked at fundamentals, but he had no real quarrel with the reformers, though, often enough, he castigated them for their shortsightedness, fanaticism, and other drawbacks. In appreciation of them he said: 'Glory unto those noble and unselfish souls who have struggled and failed in their misdirected attempts. Those galvanic shocks of reformatory zeal were necessary to rouse the sleeping leviathan' (*C.W.*, Vol. IV. p. 347). A truly progressive mind such as Swamiji's could not think otherwise.

THE APPEAL OF VEDĀNTA TO MODERN MAN

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

India is noted for her long cultural history, unbroken for over five thousand years. During this impressive long career, she has experienced life in all its aspects. This has invested her culture with a rare quality of richness, variety, and maturity, characterized by a broad *Weltanschauung*, or world-view, and a deep religious and spiritual outlook.

What is that religion or philosophy—for both are inextricably connected from the Indian point of view—which has comprehended and sustained every aspect of her culture and life? India herself has given no particular name to this religion or philosophy,

though she has evolved and fostered, in later ages, a large number of cults and creeds, bearing specific names and forms. The terms 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' were coined by people outside India, especially the ancient Iranians, to designate the people and religion of the country (India) to the east of the river Sindhu (Indus). The term 'India' itself is a Greek and modern Western derivation from the older Iranian term 'Hind'. Indian thinkers themselves called their religion by the general, but significant, term '*sanātana-dharma*', 'Eternal Religion'. We can study the central features of this *sanātana-dharma*

in the Upaniṣads, or the Vedānta, which are the closing portions of the Vedic literature. It is not a set creed or dogma that is set forth in these Upaniṣads; in them, we are in the presence of that earnest passion in the search for truth in nature, life, and experience, characteristic of all true science; and fearlessness pervades that search and the announcement of the insights gained. A dispassionate and intelligent study of the way ancient India raised this enduring structure of religion, as well as the nature and content of that religion, with its limitless and all-comprehending spirituality, can be a very rewarding intellectual and spiritual discipline to men and women today.

The Vedic age of ancient Indian history was drawing to a close. The atmosphere was charged with a mood of questioning and enquiry; the spirit of freedom was in the air. The interest of the Indian mind was shifting from the study of the external world to the study of the internal world. The study of external physical nature could not give conclusive answers to the pressing problems of thought—the nature of the universe, of man, and of his destiny. Perhaps, the study of man, it was felt, might help to unravel the mystery of existence; at least, it offered a new and mysterious field of investigation. This phenomenon in the history of ancient India is paralleled by a similar interest in the subject of man and in his inner life evinced by thinkers in the modern age. The inner world, constituted by the mind of man with its facts of consciousness, the moral sense, the feeling of individuality, logical and rational powers, the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, and a vague sense of deathlessness and survival, offered a challenge to the gifted thinkers of the day; and they accepted this challenge and wrestled with it, individually and in groups, with a persistence and objectivity rare in the history of philosophic thought. The impressive record of these endeavours and the truths and insights gained therefrom has been preserved for humanity in the immortal

literature, the Upaniṣads. Since they contain the quintessence of the philosophy of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads are also known as the Vedānta.

The Vedānta is the product of a fearless quest of truth by minds which were 'undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or critics to appease', as Max Müller terms it (*Three Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy*, p. 39). And the search was thoroughly objective and detached: free from the moods and predilections of personality, thought forged ahead step by step under the stimulus of a passion for truth and in a perfect atmosphere of freedom; diverse facts of the world of internal nature were noted and classified; theories were advanced, challenged, subjected to verification, and, finally, accepted or rejected, unhampered by fear of authority or love of dogma; accepted beliefs were questioned, sometimes ridiculed, often rejected without a tear; and there emerged the beautiful edifice of thought known as the Vedānta, impersonal in approach, and therefore universal in spirit, whose rationality and spirituality have made it a synthesis of philosophy, religion, and ethics in one.

This was the fruit of the intellectual and spiritual ferment that swept over a portion of India at that time—the region comprised in modern Eastern Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Western Bihar. The best minds of the age were involved in it, sages and kings, men, women, and youths. The Upaniṣads give us a picture of a dynamic age: an arresting procession of students and teachers in quest of truth and wisdom; an impressive record of their dialogues in small groups and large assemblies; a flight, now and then, into the regions of the sublime, caught in snatches of vigorous and graceful poetry and in an array of beautiful metaphors and telling imageries. These varied features of the Upaniṣads invest them with the beauty and charm of enduring literature and the loftiness and vigour of a live philosophy.

The *ṛṣis* or sages of the Upaniṣads discover-

ed the laws that govern the inner world, much as physical scientists discover the laws of external physical nature. The laws, or the facts which they seek to explain, are not 'created' by the scientists; they are as beginningless as the universe itself, but they were unknown to man till he gave himself a discipline in detachment, objectivity, and precision, born of a passion for truth, which constitutes the scientific mind and temper. The scientist is but the 'discoverer' of the laws of nature; and knowledge of these laws enables him to control the forces and workings of nature. Indian thought accords the same position to these sages, who discovered the spiritual truths recorded in the Vedas, aided by minds sharpened by intellectual, moral, and spiritual discipline.

'By the Vedas no books are meant', says Swami Vivekananda, in his address to the Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago in 1893. 'They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws, discovered by different persons at different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul, and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forget them.'

'The discoverers of these laws are called *r̥sis*, and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I. pp. 4-5).

This *r̥sihood*, this capacity to discover spiritual truths, is not the monopoly of India. In fact, Indian thought holds that it is a universal phenomenon. The Vedānta holds that it is this very effort and its culmination that constitute religion. Religion is *anubhava*, realization, and not a matter of mere belief in, or conformity to, a creed or dogma. The Vedānta has taught India to recognize in non-

Indian sages, like Christ, or Lao Tse, or St. Francis, or Eckhart, authentic expressions of man's highest spiritual experience. One of the enduring fruits of Vedānta has been peace and harmony, tolerance and acceptance.

This flows from its teaching of the non-duality of the ultimate Reality and the possibility of different approaches to It. The *R̥g-veda* gave eloquent expression to this great idea in its famous line: '*Ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti*—Truth is one, sages call it by various names.' This sentiment was taken up and amplified by every subsequent teacher of Indian thought—from Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*, through Buddha and Aśoka, Śaṅkara and Akbar, down to Sri Ramakrishna in our own age, until it has become the most distinguishing mark of the Indian religious and cultural outlook.

Another important teaching of the Vedānta is the innate divinity of man. To the purified vision of the Vedāntic sages, man appeared as divinity struggling for expression through the psycho-physical organism. Purity, knowledge, and freedom are his essential nature. 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you', assures Jesus. The story of evolution is the story of the manifestation of this divinity, through suitable changes in the environment and in the organism. This evolution is thwarted or helped by adverse or favourable natural conditions in the early stages, and by social and personal factors in the later ones. The spirit in man, in the course of evolution, overcomes all obstacles to its free expression, making for civilization, culture, and, finally, spiritual enlightenment. Christs and Buddhas represent the final goal of this long process of evolution.

And that introduces us to the third significant idea of Vedānta that the goal of life is spiritual realization, the fullest manifestation of the Divine within, in life and conduct. Food and clothing, shelter and security, power and knowledge, politics and society, are not ends in themselves, says the Vedānta. They are but the means for the fullest devel-

opment of man, the complete manifestation of the perfection already in him, which is the end. The exhortation of Jesus expresses this idea and this hope: 'Be ye therefore perfect even as the Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

The Vedānta views the life of man in its wholeness. Its theme is Man—Man in search of fullness of truth, beauty, and goodness. Part of this search is in the external world; but the most significant part of this search lies in the internal world. The first gives social welfare, through the applications of the physical and social sciences; the second gives spiritual freedom, through the disciplines of morality and religion. There can be no conflict between the two, the secular and the sacred, as they only refer to two different stages in the growth of the *same* individual. And the Vedānta emphasizes this idea of growth, development, and realization as the central characteristic of life at all levels—physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. Its absence constitutes stagnation and death at every level. Hence its constant refrain is: 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached' (*Vide Katha Upaniṣad*, III. 14).

The Vedānta arose out of the literature of the Upaniṣads. At a later age, it found its best and most dynamic expression, as a comprehensive spirituality, through Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the *Gītā*. Still later, it found another significant development, as the spirituality of renunciation and compassion, in the great Buddha. Twelve hundred years later still appeared the brilliant philosopher Śaṅkara, in whom the Vedānta achieved its most rational formulation, with the widest intellectual sweep. And in our own time, the Vedānta found two dynamic representatives in Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, who, in the last century, gathered up all the past developments of this ancient thought to produce a sweeping synthesis of all human thought, by joining to it the dynamic affirmations of modern scientific and social thought as well. In spite of its hoary antiquity, the Vedānta has remained young and dynamic in every epoch of history. But its most fascinating story is only just opening up, and in the context of modern world conditions created by science and technology, its appeal to the modern man in all parts of the globe is irresistible.

HEGEL, BRADLEY, AND ŚAṅKARA ON THE ABSOLUTE

BY SRI M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

Śaṅkara's doctrine of Nirguṇa Brahman is often misunderstood as a mere blank, hardly distinguishable from the *sarvam śūnyam* of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism. To avoid such misunderstanding, and to arrive at a proper appreciation of Śaṅkara's metaphysics, it may be useful to consider it against the speculations of Hegel and Bradley regarding the Absolute. For the best way of doing justice to a great thinker is to study him in relation to others who have grappled with the same problem on more or less

identical lines. Śaṅkara's metaphysics is broadly idealistic in character, and it is bound to prove both interesting and instructive to compare his thought with the speculations of some great European idealists, like Plato, Plotinus, Kant, Hegel, and Bradley. These thinkers, though they belong to different ages and to different climes, still exhibit a fundamental similarity in their outlook and modes of thinking. Some of them are, of course, more daring than others. For instance, though Bradley makes a great advance on the

thought of Hegel, he yet falls short of the highest truth, owing to certain intellectual preoccupations. And if there are reasons to be dissatisfied with both Hegel and Bradley, and if the deficiencies of their doctrines are effectively got over in Śāṅkara's conception of Brahman, then, *ipso facto*, the latter will be on much stronger ground than otherwise.

VIEWS OF HEGEL AND BRADLEY

Hegel arrives at his conception of the Absolute by working out the implications of inference. Inference is a process of reasoning in which we proceed from what is given to what is not given, from premises to conclusion, from what we know to what we do not know. For the conclusion that we draw from the premises, we claim both novelty and necessity. If the conclusion does not tell us something new, something that we did not know before, then inference fails of its purpose. Inference justifies itself only when the conclusion to which it leads is a useful addition to our knowledge. But merely because it is novel, it does not follow that it is something mental or subjective, something imported from without. On the other hand, it is the inevitable conclusion from the given data. It is only a case of bringing to light what was already implicit in the premises. There is not, however, any conflict between novelty and necessity. J. S. Mill supposed that the two features were mutually exclusive, but Hegel and others of his way of thinking do not see any contradiction. A conclusion may be logically drawn from the data, and yet it may be novel in the sense that it calls our attention to the hidden implications of the facts, when they are grouped into a system. These implications very often amount to a new revelation. At all events, the process serves to clarify and set forth in clear light what we were, perhaps, aware of in a vague and indistinct manner. Inference is thus based on the perception of the inner relations of facts. It is because our knowledge hangs

together as a system that we are able to draw conclusions from given premises. If order and relation were foreign to the world, if facts did not hang together, if relations were extraneous to the structure of reality, then every fact would stand in isolation, and inference, which is rooted in the relatedness of things, would become impossible. The ultimate presupposition of inference is that our knowledge is capable of being organized into a system.

Systematization of knowledge admits of several degrees. Herbert Spencer has said that popular knowledge is least systematized, scientific knowledge partially systematized, and philosophical knowledge completely systematized. This is, however, an overstatement, so far as the first and the third are concerned. Even at the popular level, our knowledge is not completely lacking in order and coherence. On the other hand, our notions exhibit some connections, and we proceed to draw conclusions from them, just because they cohere together. At the scientific level, we arrive at a deeper insight into the relatedness of facts, and it is this insight that makes new discoveries possible. The history of the sciences is replete with instances of new discoveries arising from working out certain facts to their logical conclusion. Philosophical knowledge is said to be completely systematized, but this is more an ideal than an accomplished fact. One can never be sure that all relevant facts and all genuine experiences have been taken into account and integrated into a system. The existing systems of philosophy, no doubt, fall short of the ideal, but they provide a wider scope for inference than mere scientific knowledge. Partial systems are subsumed in more comprehensive systems and these latter, in their turn, are included in still more comprehensive systems. At length, an infinite, all-inclusive system must be reached. At all events, we must posit it as the logical goal of our endeavours. Such an all-inclusive system must have a central unity. No category other

than the Spirit can function as the all-pervasive identity. This supreme Spirit is Hegel's Absolute. It is a relational system, which is also thoroughly rational. There is nothing that cannot be rationalized in it. All that we have to do is to take things in their proper perspective. Everything has its meaning in its proper place. The Real, therefore, is the rational, and the rational is the Real. Edward Caird supports this view and says that the linking up of differences round a central identity is the essential character of thought. The reality that thought demands is an identity-in-difference. The Hegelian Absolute is the most complete realization of the principle of identity-in-difference.

But Bradley is not satisfied with such a conceptual Absolute. Thought is always discursive, in the sense that it implies a reference to something other than the object that is thought of. To know anything is to take it in relation to other things. If the Absolute is brought within the sphere of discursive thought, then we would have to conceive it in relation to other things. But this is impossible, as there is nothing outside the Absolute. Bradley, therefore, wants to lift the Absolute beyond the rational sphere. What is beyond relations must necessarily go beyond reason; Bradley's Absolute is supra-relational, and therefore supra-rational. He finds in feeling the pattern of unity that he is looking for. It is not, however, the feeling that belongs to the pre-relational level. Knowledge begins as a feeling-mass, but it cannot rest there for long. Thought is bound to supervene and disrupt the unity of feeling. This is analysis or differentiation. Later, thought will put together the component parts, and, at this stage, we reach the judgement. It is the product of the synthetic activity of thought that is known as integration. From abstract unity, thought proceeds, through differentiation and integration, to concrete unity. But it is open to question whether we reach the original unity at the

stage of judgement. In a logical judgement, things are, no doubt, presented in relation, but their difference is not less evident. We are, for example, aware of the difference between the knower and the known, as also the difference between the substance and its attributes. Unless we transcend the sense of these differences, we cannot be said to have attained the state of the original unity. 'Thought essentially consists', writes Bradley, 'in the separation of the "what" from the "that".' 'It indirectly endeavours to restore the broken whole. There is still a difference unremoved between subject and predicate, a difference which, while it persists, shows a failure of thought, but which, if removed, would wholly destroy the special essence of thinking.' The remedy of this difficulty does not lie in trying to exclude thought and remain at the level of pre-relational feeling. 'Thought is bound to assert itself, and break up the feeling-mass into its component parts. The remedy, therefore, consists in going beyond thought to the level of intuition. At this level, the dualism of subject and object, as also of substance and attribute, is bound to be transcended. In the absence of the sense of dualism, there is nothing from which thought can draw sustenance. Thought is therefore said to commit suicide at this stage. It is in this supra-rational intuition that Bradley finds the unity that he is in search of.

But Bradley does not consistently stick to this view. In other places, he speaks of the Absolute as an all-inclusive system. Hegel's Absolute is a purely rational system, which excludes feeling and will. A purely intellectual order is bound to confront an 'other', in the shape of feeling and will. 'The delights and pains of the flesh, the agonies and raptures of the soul'—these genuine experiences cannot be left out of the Absolute. He writes: 'It (Absolute) should be experience entire, containing all elements in harmony. Every flame of passion would still burn in the Absolute, unquenched and

unabridged, a note absorbed in the harmony of its higher bliss.' The Real must contain all elements in harmony. 'Reality is not the sum of things. It is the unity in which all things coming together are transmuted.' But Bradley confesses that he is unable to explain how the synthesis takes place. In Book I of his *Appearance and Reality*, he examines 'a number of ways regarding Reality', such as substance and attribute, space and time, causality, the meaning of Self, things-in-themselves, etc. He dismisses all these conceptions as so many appearances. He defines appearance as 'that which, taken as it stands, proves inconsistent with itself and, for this reason, cannot be true of the real. But he thinks that the appearances exist, and therefore must belong to Reality. 'To deny its existence, or to divorce it from Reality, is out of the question. For it has a positive character which is an indubitable fact and, however much the fact may be pronounced appearance, it can have no place in which to live except Reality. And Reality set on one side, and apart from all appearance, would assuredly be nothing.' 'Hence, what is certain is that, in some way, these inseparables are joined.' And, again, he observes: 'Whatever is rejected as an appearance is, for that very reason, no mere non-entity. It cannot bodily be shelved and merely got rid of, and therefore, since it must fall somewhere, it must belong to Reality.'

It is clear from these quotations that there are internal relations within the Absolute, though external relations are excluded from it. Bradley seems to think that a synthesis of internal relations and non-relational unity can somehow be effected, though he does not indicate how exactly the two can be reconciled. Mediacy is one thing, and immediacy quite another. The immediacy of feeling is non-relational, integral experience. It excludes relations of every sort, external and internal, and even organic. This is what Śāṅkara means when he maintains that Brahman excludes *sajātīya*, *vijātīya*, and

svagata bhedas. Bradley's attempt to include internal distinctions somehow in the unity of the Absolute seems to be an impossible task. There is, therefore, no question of integrating the appearance with the Absolute. If they are integrated and assimilated in the Absolute, they will become elements in its being. The appearances may be transmuted, but still they will remain as elements. The Absolute will then become the centre, round which all the appearances gather and take their proper places. It will then cease to be non-relational. Bradley's Absolute will be hardly different from Hegel's.

The truth of the matter is that Bradley is in two minds. When the logician in him prevails, he speaks of the concrete Absolute, which is an all-inclusive Individual. This is the Īśvara of the Vedānta. When, however, the mystical mood is on him, he feels that the Absolute must transcend all relations, including the internal. His mind is wavering between these two conceptions. The former standpoint looks upon Reality as an object, what, in Vedānta, is known as '*idaṁ pratyaya*', and seeks to study it from outside by the scientific methods of description and explanation. The latter identifies Reality with the inmost self of man, what, in the terminology of Vedānta, is known as '*ahaṁ pratyaya*'. The self is to be known by personal acquaintance, communion, and realization. This essential difference between the two standpoints has not been clearly grasped by Bradley. The whole edifice of Advaita metaphysics is reared on the foundation of the internal self, which is an indubitable reality. Śāṅkara's Advaita is therefore known as *ātmādvaita*, as distinct from *sattādvaita*. The Ātman is the ultimate rock of certitude. It is the surest foundation for any system of metaphysics. In its ultimate essence, it is pure Consciousness, which does not admit of any kind of difference. One can doubt anything else, but not one's own self. Any attempt to doubt or deny it will only place it

on a more secure footing than ever before. Bradley himself writes in one place: 'It is only that which, for thought, is compulsory and irresistible—only that which thought must assert in attempting to deny it—which is a valid foundation for metaphysical truth.'

If Bradley had realized that the two standpoints are contradictory, he would not have left them side by side, as he has done in his book. He would, then, have subordinated the logical to the intuitional. So long as we rely solely on reason as our guide, the 'main miracles' of which Bradley speaks are bound to defy solution. We would never know 'why there are appearances, why they are of such various kinds, and what transformation they undergo in the Absolute. The explanation of these miracles is bound to remain beyond the competence of thought. Seeking to come to grips with Reality exclusively through the intellect is bound to prove elusive and land us in contradictions. Bradley's attempt is a supreme example of the failure of discursive thought to unravel the mystery of existence. A different conception of the Absolute, and a different method of approach, will alone carry us to the goal.

ŚĀṆKARA'S VIEW—A FULFILLMENT

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have examined the conceptions of the Absolute held by two eminent Western thinkers, Hegel and Bradley, and shown that they are ridden with an inner contradiction. Before proceeding to expound Śāṅkara's view, we may state that it is not only the most widely known school of Indian thought (*prasiddha*), but also, what is more important, the doctrine that has the fullest support of all the relevant canons of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa-siddha*). The revealed text (Śruti), reasoning (*yukti*), and our higher experiences (*anubhava*) are all clearly in its favour. The term 'Śruti' refers to the Vedas, including the Upaniṣads. It is quite possible to show that even the earlier portions of the Vedas, viz. the Mantras, definitely incline to Śāṅkara's concep-

tion of the Absolute. The *Nāsadīya-sūkta*, to take but one example, probes into the origin of the world, and asks wistfully: 'Did it spring from existence or non-existence? Who can tell the truth about it? The gods had not then been born, and hence there is no use looking to them for light in regard to this matter. Can at least the Lord in heaven enlighten us on this profound mystery? It is doubtful whether even He knows the truth about it.' This poem, which has been called the 'Hymn of Creation', is remarkable for giving expression to the sense of mystery that surrounds the important question relating to the ultimate origin of the world. It is also remarkable for the impersonal terms in which it refers to the highest Reality. It is called 'That One' (*tadekam*). It simply existed, and nothing further could be said about it. It could not be described in terms of existence or non-existence, death or deathlessness, darkness or light. The poem emphasizes the essential incomprehensibility of the ultimate Reality. It therefore comes very close to the conception of the Absolute in Advaita Vedānta, and hence Śāṅkara makes frequent references to it. In his commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtra*, II. 1.6, he makes a reference to this hymn in support of his contention that Brahman cannot be known either by perception or by inference. In his commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtra*, II. 4.8, he again quotes a few lines from this famous poem to show that the '*tadekam*' simply existed, and, though it is said to have breathed, it should not be taken literally, since there was no air to breathe.

Without pursuing further the inquiry into the trend and import of the Saṁhitā portion of the Vedas, we may turn our attention to the Upaniṣads and ascertain their significance. The classical Upaniṣads are undoubtedly the stronghold of Śāṅkara. They state, in clear and unambiguous terms, the important notions which later took definite philosophical shape in the writings of Śāṅkara. Even George Thibaut, who thinks that there

is a rift between the *Vedānta-Sūtra* and Śaṅkara's commentary thereon, has to admit that Śaṅkara's philosophy finds full support in the Upaniṣads, and is in perfect harmony with them. Yājñavalkya's discourses in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, especially those addressed to Maitreyī and King Janaka, lend full support to Śaṅkara's conception that the Absolute is strictly One without a second, that it is beyond mind, thought, and speech, that it is incapable of definition in positive terms, that it can be described only in negative terms, and that it is utterly unclassifiable. In its essential nature, it is pure Consciousness. The finite self (*jīva*) is non-different from Brahman. The world, with all its diversity and change, is not a real creation, but only a projection of *māyā*. It will disappear when we rise to Brahman-intuition, even as the objects that we perceive in the state of dream prove to be false when we come to the waking state. A lower experience suffers contradiction when we waken to a higher experience. The Brahman-consciousness is the only experience that remains uncontradicted for ever. It is neither subject nor object, but beyond both. It cannot be brought under any of the categories of understanding. The *Chāndogya*, another important classical Upaniṣad, reinforces these notions, especially in chapters VI to VIII. The essential identity of the *jīva* with Brahman is affirmed in the explicit statement '*Tat-tvam-asi*', which is repeated nine times in Uddālaka's instruction to Śvetaketu. In many indirect ways also, the view that the *jīva* is non-different from Brahman is taught in the minor Upaniṣads. Yama's teaching to Naciketas in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* centres round this point. We may add that the negative statements relating to Brahman are far too many to be lightly dismissed. They cannot be satisfactorily explained in terms of the cosmic Absolute. To do so would mean twisting and torturing them. The concept of *māyā* is the necessary logical complement of the doctrine of Nirguṇa Brahman. It is

implicit in the Upaniṣads, especially in the teachings of Yājñavalkya. That the highest Reality is not given in perception; that we have to dive deep to discover it; that it has to be drawn out like the rind from the reed; that we have to get at it by mercilessly eliminating everything that is in the nature of an adventitious adjunct—these are taught in one form or another in the *Kaṭha*, *Taittirīya*, *Chāndogya*, and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads*. The adjuncts that have to be rejected are simply superimpositions arising from *māyā*. Paul Deussen confirms this view about the import of the Upaniṣads.

Reasoning (*yukti*) may appear to lend support only to the doctrine of the cosmic Absolute (Saguṇa Brahman), but fuller examination will reveal the contradictions inherent in it. The conceptions of the Absolute held by Hegel and Bradley centre round the principle of identity-in-difference. This category, no doubt, serves a very useful purpose in everyday life, as well as in explaining phenomena at the scientific level. But that is no justification for extending it to the trans-empirical sphere also. Just as the ordinary language that we find useful in carrying on our daily transactions proves hopelessly inadequate when we rise to the higher levels of aesthetic or religious experience, even so the categories like time and space, substance and attribute, cause and effect, as also identity-in-difference, are valid only in the empirical sphere, and have no application to what lies beyond the realm of diversity and dualism. Merely because the concept of identity-in-difference is given in experience, and is very much in use in the practical concerns of life, it does not follow that there is any justification for carrying it beyond its proper sphere. The philosopher is under no obligation to accept the current coins of empirical usage. He will never relinquish his right to re-examine the concepts that are in everyday use. If, in extending them beyond their proper sphere, they break down, or reveal inner contradictions, then the philos-

opher has no alternative but to reject them.

Let us now take up the examination of the concept of identity-in-difference. Śaṅkara refers to this notion in his *Sūtra-bhāṣya* and illustrates it by the example of the ocean, which remains the same, though waves, ripples, and foam appear on its surface; he also gives the example of the tree, which, retaining its identity, is diversified into branches, twigs, foliage, flowers, and fruits. In his commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtra*, I. 1.4, he refers to what is called *parināmi-nitya*, and distinguishes it from *kūṭastha-nitya*. That which retains its identity in and through the many changes that come on it is *parināmi-nitya*, while that which never undergoes any change and remains immutable is *kūṭastha-nitya*. His Brahman is of the latter type, and not of the former. The concept of *parināmi-nitya* has found influential support both among European and Indian thinkers. We have referred to Hegel and Bradley as the leading exponents of this conception. Among Indian thinkers, two require special mention—Bhartrprapañca, belonging to the pre-Śaṅkara period, and Rāmānuja, belonging to the post-Śaṅkara period. Bhartrprapañca's views come in for very detailed examination in Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. We may now set forth the line of his criticism, with such modifications and additions as are necessary to suit the modern taste.

It is difficult to see how one and the same object can both be identical with itself and different from itself at the same time. Thought refuses to reconcile itself to a flat contradiction. Identity and difference are mutually exclusive qualities, and obviously they cannot be predicated of the same object at the same time. If it is the one, it cannot be the other. We have therefore to choose between them. Either we maintain that an object always remains identical with itself or goes on changing from moment to moment. Both alternatives are unacceptable. To choose the former alternative means that we

shut our eyes to the fact of change. The world is in a state of flux, and nothing remains the same for any length of time. The fact of 'becoming' was emphasized by Heraclitus, in ancient Greece, and by Buddha, in our own country. The latter reduced everything to a 'series'. He spoke of mind and matter in terms of ever-changing aspects. But at this rate, there will be no permanent element at all, either in the world of matter or in the world of mind. In the absence of an identical element in the world of matter, we cannot account for the fact of recognition; and in the absence of a similar identical element in the world of mind, it will be difficult to explain the fact of self-identity. We not only recognize objects in the external world, but also know ourselves to be the same individuals, in spite of all the vicissitudes through which we have passed.

Here is, therefore, a first class *debacle*. Identity and difference can no more be affirmed of the same object than honesty and dishonesty of the same individual at the same time. The example that Śaṅkara gives is *sthiti* and *gati*; one and the same object cannot be both stationary and moving at the same time. If it is the one, then it cannot be the other. There is no middle ground between the two.

To get over the difficulty, we may recognize parts or aspects in the object, and affirm identity of one part or aspect and difference or change of another part or aspect. But we do not get over the difficulty. It only presents itself in another form. What exactly is the relation between the two parts or aspects? If it is a separable relation (*samyoga*), then the two parts or aspects will fall apart, and there will be no question of identity and difference inhering in the same object. A separable or external relation can be terminated at any moment, and, strictly speaking, it is no relationship at all. It presents other difficulties also, which it is not necessary to enter into in the present context. If, on the other hand, the relationship is in-

separable (*samavāya*), then the two parts or aspects being so organically and intimately connected, any change in one of them is bound to be reflected in the other. In the human body, there are several limbs, and all of them are vitally related. Hence a pain in one part or limb is felt all over the body, and a sympathetic fever sets in. In an organism, one part or aspect cannot undergo any change, leaving the others intact. The process of change will affect all alike, and it will be no longer open to us to speak of permanence in the midst of change, or identity in the midst of differences. We are again face to face with the same dilemma. Either an object always remains the same, never changing at all, or it goes on changing from moment to moment, and nothing permanent remains. Bare identity was sought to be asserted by the equational logicians, but without any success. Bare difference was asserted by the empiricists, specially David Hume. But T. H. Green asked the very pertinent question: 'How can a series be aware of itself as a series?' Unless there is a witness-consciousness (*sākṣi-caitanya*), we cannot connect the passing events and understand what they mean.

What, then, is the relationship between this witness-consciousness and the passing events that it lights up and connects? We may say that the former is the subject, and the latter the object. The events that are presented to the subject go on changing from time to time, but the subject itself remains constant. It would be wrong to think that, when nothing is presented, consciousness also lapses. The experience of deep and dreamless sleep shows that, though nothing is presented by the mind, consciousness does not go out. That it was present even in dreamless sleep is clear from the reminiscent experience of the next morning. We exclaim that we slept well and did not see anything. When we pass beyond the state of profound sleep and reach the fourth state known as *turīya*, every trace of

'nescience' disappears, and the *sākṣi-caitanya* shines in all its pristine glory. It is the light that never fails. When it is disengaged from all its material appurtenances, it shines in its own right. That is the *bhūmā* of which the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* speaks.

It is so unique that, when one rises to identity with it, one becomes speechless. The only way of interpreting it is by silence. Nothing that the human mind can think of can be affirmed of it. In one of his minor poems, known as *Daśaślokī*, Śaṅkara says that he is pure Consciousness, not identifiable with the elements, with castes or orders of life, with men or gods, with holy places or waters, with any of the schools of philosophy, with the state of waking or dreaming, with teacher or taught, etc. This absolute Consciousness is what Śaṅkara calls Nirguṇa Brahman.

It is the element of identity running through all the states of our experience, waking, dream, dreamless sleep, *turīya*, and *turīyātīta*. These experiences are extraneous to it. They are in the nature of superimpositions on consciousness, even as the snake is a superimposition on the rope. The rope and the snake do not belong to the same order of reality. The snake is seen by one individual, and that for a brief moment. When light is brought, the snake disappears and only the rope remains. The rope did not become the snake. The rope remained a rope all the time, but it somehow appeared to the belated traveller as the snake. The snake is therefore an appearance and not a modification, not even a manifestation of the rope. The snake belongs to a lower order of reality, since it disappears completely when light is brought. But the rope does not similarly disappear. It is the same to the same individual at different times, and the same to different individuals at the same time. The rope, therefore, belongs to a higher order of reality. The relation between the rope and the snake, therefore, is not identity-in-difference, but identity with an

appearance of difference. This is Śaṅkara's solution of the difficulty. So long as we treat both identity and difference as having the same ontological status, we cannot get over the difficulty. In point of fact, the two aspects do not have the same ontological status. An experience which suffers contradiction in the wake of a higher experience surely stands lower than the other. Even the experience of our waking moments are contradicted when we rise to *brahma-sākṣātkāra*, or direct and immediate experience of the highest Reality. The world of diversity and change has therefore to be relegated to a lower plane. But *brahma-sākṣātkāra* never suffers any contradiction. It is pure consciousness, and it is impossible to conceive that consciousness can be contradicted by anything else. 'The knower's function of knowing can never be lost, because it is immortal', says Yājñavalkya in the course of his instruction to King Janaka. The relation between Brahman and the world is one of identity with the appearance of difference. The world is not dismissed as a figment of imagination. It is not altogether denied. Only it is consigned to a lower ontological plane.

Śaṅkara recognizes three orders of reality—the phenomenal (*prātibhāsika*), the empirical (*vyāvahārika*), and the transcendental (*pāramārthika*). These three are not independent orders of reality. Strictly speaking, there is only one order—the transcendental. Owing to the limitations of our knowing apparatus, it appears as the empirical. The One, viewed through our intellect and sense-organs, appears as the world of diversity and change. Through the operation of a further limitation, the empirical order of reality appears as the phenomenal. Illusions and dream-objects belong to the lowest order of reality. The physical world of matter and force, which is the scene of all our activities, belongs to the next higher order of reality, known as the *vyāvahārika*. Just as dreams and illusions are sublated when we come to the waking state, or when the light is brought, even so, the world that we perceive in the waking condition will appear unreal when we attain absolute Consciousness. This is the meaning of the statement: *Brahma satyam jaganmithyā* (Brahman alone is real, the universe is unreal). *Mithyā* does not, however, mean absolute unreality, but what is relatively unreal.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(A BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY TRIBUTE)

BY DR. JACQUES ALBERT CUTTAT

It was in Argentina, twenty years ago, that I happened to read, for the first time, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda. I read it from the first to the last line, with growing attention, growing recollection, feeling drawn, as it were, into increasingly deeper spheres of my consciousness. How could I, a Westerner, brought up in Christianity and Western logic, living at the opposite extreme of the globe over fifty

years after Ramakrishna's death, experience the biōgraphy of this humble, poor, and God-intoxicated Bengali, who 'had not read books', as the encounter with somebody whom I recognized without knowing him, with somebody who was nearer to my soul than my friends around me, and who seemed to know me better than myself?

This raises the question of how certain mortal beings are able to survive indefinitely

among human posterity, i.e., to keep their living presence, and even increase it after their death, throughout generations. With the great German philosopher Max Scheler, let us explore this problem by distinguishing between three main types of bygone personalities that remain permanently present to history: the *hero*, the *genius* and the *saint*. All the three differ from other mortals, or from physical causes of history, in that they did not give, once for all, an impulse to facts with certain historical repercussions; the hero (who includes great political leaders), the genius, and the saint (in the broad sense, including all founders of religions or great religious movements) continue to *make history*, as if they were alive; the personality, for instance, of Aśoka, or Kālidāsa, or Lord Buddha continues to grow and develop, and will only be fully achieved at the very end of history itself. However, they survive in very different ways, which are often erroneously confused. In order to see this difference—and to disclose the unique mode of survival of the saint—let us ask: *What* is it that outlives in each case?

The *hero* survives through his *deeds*, through some outstanding, glorious, and widely notorious acts by which he has enabled his people or country to repel an aggressor, to win independence, to conquer national unity, or to take a decisive step towards social progress. Whether these brilliant, unique performances are recorded with historical accuracy or magnified by legend, it is always the permanent memory of these deeds which perpetuates the figure of the hero. The *genius* on his part, remains present by some *work* of universal value, some literary or artistic masterpiece, some revolutionary scientific discovery. His person outlives his time, thanks to the fact that this creative work remains embodied in stone, on paper, or in sounds, and only thanks to this material vehicle. What survives in the *saints*, however, is basically different. Most of them never performed spectacular deeds,

remained almost unknown during their life except to a few disciples, most of them never wrote nor invented any masterpiece, as was precisely the case of Sri Ramakrishna, whose life was recorded by others and who 'could hardly write his own name'. Sanctity is a masterpiece carved and written in a stuff made of the body, the mind, and the will of the saint himself.

Thus, we are drawn to the conclusion that what survives in the saint—and in him alone—is the saint himself, his very *person* as such. Between Christian saints and the corresponding saints in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, there are, undoubtedly, essential differences; we should see and like these differences, for 'gardens are different, only deserts are alike'. Today, however, I am not concerned with these spiritual contrasts, but with their common ground; and what Ramakrishna Paramahansa shares with all saints is that he remains personally present to all generations, through his personal perfection, through his unique inner countenance, through his spiritual, mental, and physical transparency to God, which made him transparent to himself and to others. The private life of a hero or genius is not relevant to their survival, what matters is only their deeds or works; a great Western philosophical genius, whose private life was very imperfect, when asked by one of his students how he could disclose such lofty ethical horizons and lead a dissolute life, could reasonably answer: 'Did you ever see a signpost walking on the way to which it points?' *Not so the saint*. He shows the way just by going it; and therefore, those who keep him alive through the ages are not admirers or spectators, but followers, disciples, people who continue to meet him from person to person, and who perpetuate his life by reproducing it from inside. Let me quote here the words in which Mazoomdar, one of the Brahma leaders who used to visit Sri Ramakrishna, describes him: a child-like tenderness, a profound visible humbleness, an unspeakable sweetness of

expression, and a smile that I have seen on no other face that I can remember.

Because it aims at this personal presence of the Master to future generations, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* is not a compendium of general teachings, but a huge collection of anecdotes, i.e., of episodes showing, again and again, new facets of his inexhaustible, mystical plasticity. And because the Divine is antithetic, i.e. beyond human alternatives, most of these apparently simple anecdotes enclose a tremendous paradox. Thus, when the great Advaitin ascetic Totapuri flew into a rage by seeing a servant lighting his tobacco with a coal from the sacred fire, Ramakrishna rocked with laughter and said: 'What a shame! you are explaining to me the exclusive reality of Brahman and the illusoriness of the world; yet, now you have so far forgotten yourself as to be about to beat a man in a fit of passion. The power of Māyā is indeed inscrutable.' And soon after, Totapuri experienced the omnipresence of the Divine Mother. The stage actor Girish, who wanted to follow the Master, declared himself unable to give up alcohol, and to submit to spiritual discipline. Ramakrishna shows him the way out by another startling paradox, which discloses at the same time how penetrating the Master's personal presence could be. 'All right,' he said to Girish, 'give me the power of attorney.' 'Henceforth I assume responsibility for you. You need not do anything.' He sends back home, to their household, admirers who want to leave the world. To disciples who repeat the very orthodox formula, 'I am Brahman', he says: 'Stop that idle talk!' To those who want to realize Brahman only as impersonal or only as personal, he explains that the Personal and the Impersonal are distinct but not different, indeed, a perplexing antinomy for a traditional Hindu. Most of Ramakrishna's replies are apparent contradictions of this kind; they are at once disconcerting and convincing, totally unexpected and, yet, mysteriously familiar. This, I think, explains

more precisely *why and how the saint survives* in us. We live mostly in some peripheric or mediocre strata of our soul, where we remain one-sighted, and this is why we are shocked by the saint who speaks from his depth to our own pre-conscious depth. But at the same time, we feel that this depth is more real and more truly ourselves than our ordinary consciousness, and therefore, some inner voice in us irresistibly says 'yes' to the saint, when he puzzles our worldly ego. There lies the secret of the saint's perennial survival: they have realized God's infinite antinomies to such an extent that their words and example draw us constantly away from the periphery towards that permanent centre of our person, which Christians call the *image of God*, and which India calls *Ātman*. Their mere presence, even long after their death, silently unfolds our inner life. They are the living mirrors of our invisible, eternally blissful, incommunicably personal reality. Their surviving presence, being much more independent of time and space, is more penetrating, more universal, and more permanent than that of the hero or of the genius; it transcends the wisdom of the wise, and is still accessible to the simple-minded, it touches the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the Easterners and the Westerners, at a point where, by the greatest of all paradoxes, all *commune* by that which is most *incommunicable* in each of us. The saints are the salt of the earth.

Some will object that this spiritual approach is gradually decreasing under the impact of science and technology. To this, I answer that no material progress can change the fact that real happiness is only to be found in man's ultimate depth. Now, as man will always be irresistibly attracted by real happiness, and as all conquests of the outer space do not bring him one step nearer to the source of this happiness within himself, the day may be nearer than it seems when the very progress of science will produce a boomerang-reaction, reach a point

from which we turn back again from the outer space towards the infinitely more real 'heaven within us'. Not only religious practices, science also, when detached from spirituality, can become a superstition; a superstition in the proper sense of a 'superimposition' (*adhyāsa*), i.e. of superimposing the outer to the inner, the accidental to the essential, the evanescent to the permanent. The gathering here, tonight, of so many Indians around Sri Ramakrishna, this gathering of 'real India' is proof enough for me that the pendulum of modern civilization, sooner or later, is ready to swing backwards and inwards, enriched by new horizons, towards those eternal divine values which make life worthy to be lived, and which, far from disdaining scientific and

social achievements, reveal their higher meaning and endow them with spiritual flavour.

Between matter and spirit, there will always be a tension. The meaning of this tension is not the absorption of one of its poles by the other, but the subordination of matter to spirit. The Ramakrishna movement has inaugurated in India a new way of reconciling meditation with action, inner liberation with spiritual duties towards the other as other. And this new form of *sādhana* shows clearly that the Master is, today, not only remembered and celebrated like an eminent ancestor, but is really alive, personally present, and still acting and inspiring you from the depth of your hearts.

SARVODAYA

BY PROFESSOR SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKHERJI

Johannesburg railway station in the Transvaal, in South Africa, was astir one afternoon in 1903. The Johannesburg-Durban train was about to leave. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a young Indian lawyer of the Johannesburg bar in his early thirties, was travelling to Durban by the train. The weekly *Indian Opinion*, the spokesman of the Indian settlers in South Africa, which he had been publishing for some time from Durban, the capital of Natal, had run into financial difficulties. Gandhi was travelling to Durban to solve the financial problems of the paper. H. S. L. Polak, Assistant Editor of the *Transvaal Critic*, a friend and admirer of Gandhi, came to the station to see off Gandhi, shortly before the departure of the train. He gave to the latter a copy of John Ruskin's *Unto This Last: Four Essays on the First Principles of Political Economy*.

The train steamed off at the scheduled hour. The journey was a long one, the train being due at Durban in the following afternoon. Gandhi settled down in his berth, and opened the book Polak had given him. He was soon absorbed in reading, and could not leave the book before he had read it from cover to cover. What he read stirred him to the depths of his being. Ruskin declares in his book: 'Riches are a power like that of electricity, acting through inequalities or negation of itself. The force of the guinea you have in your pocket depends wholly on the default of the guinea in your neighbour's pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you.' To a poor man out of employment for a long time, a guinea in his neighbour's pocket is much more formidable than it would have been if he were not poor and unemployed. Ruskin concludes: 'What is

really desired under the name of riches is, essentially, power over men' (*Vide* Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* [Jonathan Cape Edition], pp. 83-84). He suggests that man should not run after greater and higher fortune. Simpler pleasure and deeper felicity should be his objective, instead. Ruskin further emphasizes that the same thing cannot be had by more than one man at one and the same time. So luxuries are not to be thought of, before the poorest of the poor has, at least, enough to keep him alive. A great era in the history of man will dawn when freedom from want becomes a reality in the life of each and every individual. Freedom from want will usher in the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Gandhi heard an echo of his own thought in Ruskin's. He believed, like Ruskin, that the socio-economic organization that guarantees the well-being of all—the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak—is the only one worth striving for. What is good for all must also be good for each and everyone individually.

Unto This Last gave finishing touches to another idea that had been taking shape in Gandhi's mind. It convinced him that, apparent difference between the work of a labourer and that of a lawyer notwithstanding, there is no fundamental difference between the two. The earning of a living is the object of both. Ruskin asserts that the middle class serves the society and the motherland with the pen, the lancet, and the sword. The labourer, on the other hand, serves the society and the motherland with his spade. Ruskin, let us note, did not believe that every kind of labour has the same value. The idea is not to be found anywhere in his writings. On the contrary, he stresses the impossibility of human equality. He holds that the conscience of the wealthy, and that alone, can save the under-privileged. 'Hardships of inequality', he believes, can be alleviated by a successful appeal to the conscience of the God-fearing. Gandhi's idea of

trusteeship may owe its origin to this belief of Ruskin's.

Gandhi learnt from *Unto This Last* another lesson, which had never been contemplated by Ruskin. He concluded, from what he had read in the book, that the only ideal life is that of the labourer, the cultivator, and the artisan. The idea never occurred to him before. It opened up new horizons to him.

Gandhi had been for some time a seeker of truth, of which he had had only partial and indistinct glimpses. *Unto This Last* revealed to him fully what he had been searching for. He was profoundly moved. Speaking of Ruskin's influence on him, Gandhi declared, nearly half a century later, in October 1946: 'That book (*Unto This Last*) marked the turning-point in my life.'

Gandhi was awake for a long time, after he had finished Ruskin's great book. He ruminated upon what he had read. At last, he fell asleep. When he awoke, he had already made up his mind 'to reduce these principles (i.e. those of *Unto This Last* as interpreted by him) to practice'. The revolutionary idea of 'Sarvodaya' was born anew on that memorable morning.

'Sarvodaya', the caption chosen by Gandhi for his Gujarati translation of *Unto This Last*, means 'the good of all'. 'The good of all', according to Gandhi, really means 'the greatest good of all'. The utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham, which aims at the greatest good of the greatest number to the greatest extent, has some similarity with the idea of Sarvodaya. But in reality, they stand poles apart, their similarity notwithstanding. The utilitarian, whose object is to secure the greatest good of the *greatest number* (*not of all*) will not hesitate to sacrifice the minority for the sake of the majority, if necessary. Sarvodaya, on the other hand, aims at universal good. It is based on the principle that life is one and indivisible. All we see around us is the manifestation of the same life in various shapes and forms, Ignorance obstructs our vision. To rip the veil of igno-

rance, to realize our identity with the universe, and to be in harmony with the whole creation are the fulfilment of the individual life.

Utilitarians will have recourse to any means to achieve their object of the greatest good of the greatest number. In their opinion, the end justifies the means. They argue that nothing under the sun can be good for all. Under the circumstances, if a particular measure is beneficial to many, but harmful to a few, it must be enforced. But Sarvodaya, Gandhi asserts, can be achieved only through pure means, through truth and non-violence. A true follower of Sarvodaya, who is necessarily a votary of truth and non-violence as well, 'will strive for the greatest good of all, and die in the attempt to realize the ideal. ... The greatest good of all invariably includes the greatest good of the greatest number, and therefore he and the utilitarian will converge at many points in their career, but there does come a time when they must part company, and even work in opposite directions. The utilitarian, to be logical, will never sacrifice himself. The absolutist (i.e. the follower of Sarvodaya and non-violence) will even sacrifice himself' (quoted by Gopinath Dhawan in *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 53-54).

Modern democracies, based on the utilitarian principle of the greatest good of the greatest number, cannot, according to Gandhi, deliver the goods. Their maxim, 'the rule of the majority', is but the utilitarian doctrine applied to political life. As such, they cannot lead to the full emancipation of the human personality. Sarvodaya alone can achieve this. It alone can make the ideal of four freedoms—freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom from ignorance, and freedom of conscience and opinion—a reality in the life of every human being. That way, perhaps, lies the salvation of the world, and of humanity. Coexistence is today very much on the lips of political leaders. But an honourable, enduring, and just coexistence will remain a chimera, unless based

on Sarvodaya principles, which alone can create the atmosphere for genuine coexistence.

Coexistence, it may be noted here, has been the quest of India through the long centuries of her chequered history. 'Let all of us be happy' (*Sarve nah sukhinah santu*) was the prayer of the Indian sages. That is why crusades, jihads, and courts of inquisition are unknown in the history of India.

What will a Sarvodaya society be like? A country where the Sarvodaya ideal has become a reality, says Gandhi, will be free 'from all thralldom and patronage—political and otherwise'. It will be a country 'in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice; (a country) in which there shall be no high class and no low class of people; (a country) in which all communities shall live in harmony. There can be no room in such (a country) for the curse of untouchability or intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since (such a country) will be at peace with the rest of the world, neither exploiting nor being exploited, (there will be) the smallest army imaginable. All interests, not in conflict with the interest of the dumb millions will be respected, whether foreign or indigenous' (quoted by D. G. Tendulkar, in *Mahatma*, Vol. III, p. 141).

But is it not a Utopia? We can't say. The building up of a socio-political edifice outlined above presupposes moral perfection of each and every member of the body-politic. 'This world of ours', says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 'is not the natural home for perfection, which, Gandhi felt in his best moments, was not a moralist's fad. It may be something of an illusion, but it is often by such illusion(s) that man rises to greatness' (Hiren Mukherjee, *Gandhiji: A Study*, p. 209).

The ideal, at any rate, is worth striving for. Quick results are not to be expected. To quote Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: 'The mills of

the gods grind slowly in the making of history, and zealous reformers must meet with defeat, if they attempt to save the world in their own generation by forcing on it their favourite programme. Human nature cannot be hurried' (*The Hindu View of Life*, p. 50).

THE INDIAN CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY AND ITS BEARING ON EDUCATION

BY SRI RAM DATT SHARMA

It is a historical fact that democracy is not a foreign plant to the Indian soil. We had peculiarly Indian democratic institutions and attitudes, many centuries earlier than the dawn of the Christian era. But the present structure of democracy, undoubtedly, has its origin in the West.

IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY

(a) *Dignity of the Individual*: Democracy believes in the essential dignity of the individual, which rises from the faith that every individual should be treated as an end, irrespective of sex, colour, caste, religion, heredity, or economic condition. Every individual should have the right to develop his capacities, whereby not only the individual, but the society will also be benefited.

(b) *Equality*: Every citizen should have an equal opportunity for living a full life and exercising his powers. It means equality in opportunities for work and absence of all class-distinctions.

(c) *Freedom or Liberty*: Democracy stands for freedom of every member of the community to achieve responsible manhood and womanhood, freedom to develop to the fullest extent possible all the powers he or she possesses. Democracy stands for freedom to think for oneself and, as far as possible, to judge issues and questions for oneself.

emanated from the Infinite. 'As all human beings have emanated from the absolute Being, they are evidently entitled to complete equality among themselves in a social milieu, which itself is divinely ordained with a divine purpose.'¹ According to this doctrine, Brahman is both the efficient and the material cause of the world, creator and creation, doer and the deed. From Brahman, individual souls emanate, as innumerable sparks issue from a blazing fire.² 'The omnipotent, omniscient, sentient cause of the universe is *ānanda-maya* (essential happiness). He is the brilliant golden Person seen within the solar orb and the human eye. He is the ethereal element (*ākāśa*) from which all things proceed and to which all return. He is the breath (*prāṇa*) in which all beings merge, into which they all rise. He is the light (*jyotis*) which shines in the heaven, and in all places high and low throughout the world and within the human person.'³

If this is the concept of Brahman, it becomes clear to us that all inequalities and baseness should disappear. When all have emanated from the same Absolute and when there is an incessant urge in every being to merge itself again in the Absolute, then no artificial separation can exist. Everyone has the divine essence in him. To hate anybody is to hate God who resides in him. This has

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

(a) *Concept of Brahman*: According to the Hindu philosophy, this universe has

¹ R. P. Singh, 'The Democratic Way of Life and Its Educational Implications', *Shiksha*, Vol. IX. January 1957, p. 138.

² C. Manning, *The Story of Indian Philosophy*, p. 86.

³ *Ibid.*

been very aptly explained in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*: 'Yājñavalkya said: "A husband is loved, not because you love the husband, but because you love (in him) the divine spirit (Ātman or the Self). A wife is loved, not because we love the wife, but because we love (in her) the divine spirit. . . . This spirit it is which we love, when we seem to love wealth, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, the world, the gods, all beings, this universe."'⁴ Thus, if we wish to establish the principle of equality, it must be founded on this philosophical principle that all are holy, all are equal, and all are divine.

(b) *Development of Spirit as a Basis of the Dignity of the Individual*: The dignity of human personality is given a very important place in democracy. Human personality is too sacred to be demolished and disintegrated into mere fragments of soulless man. A philosophy of individuality is the only philosophy that can serve as a sure and safe foundation for democracy. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in one of his recent speeches, said: "The dignity of the individual, the sacredness of human personality, is the fundamental principle of democracy. . . . The world is becoming anonymous, and the individual is getting lost in it. But life is manifested in the individual. Truth is revealed to the individual. It is the individual who learns and suffers, who knows joy and sorrow, forgiveness and love. The whole history of human progress centres round individuals, those prophets and heroes, those poets and artists, those pioneers and explorers who took responsibility for their insights into goodness, truth, and beauty."⁵ According to Rabindranath Tagore: "If this individuality be demolished, then, though no material be lost, not an atom destroyed, the creative joy which was crystallized therein is gone. We are absolutely bankrupt, if we are deprived

of this speciality, this individuality which is the only thing we can call our own, and which, if lost, is also a loss to the whole world."⁶

In this complicated industrial and technological civilization of today, human personality has been disrupted. We shall have to regain it. Let us find out its basis in our own philosophy.

According to our philosophy, the Ātman and the Paramātman are the same. The individual soul is a spark of God. The divine essence sustains this body and the universe. There is an incessant effort on the part of the Ātman to be one with Brahman, from whom it appears to be separated. The Advaita philosophy describes the Self as Brahman Itself, and the Self is not an appearance like the objective universe.

In early Buddhism, this God-in-man is known as Ātman, neither body, nor mind, but spirit. 'It, however, represented to him not man as he is, but as what he might or ought to be. In other words, it stood for the ideal self, to realize which there is an innate urge in man. His foremost task in life, accordingly, is to act in response to it; and the result of so acting, viz. the "waning out" of his lower nature, of the lust and hate in him, is all that is meant by liberation or *nirvāṇa*. . . . It is not the annihilation of the self, but only the extinguishing of selfhood in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Early Buddhism is thus a gospel of hope."⁷

Diverse may be the interpretations of the Ātman in different scriptures, but the sacredness of human personality is recognized by all. The main task before democracy is to elevate the spirit of the individual. Indian philosophy teaches that man must rise above worldliness which binds him with *māyā*, which is the result of *avidyā* or ignorance. True happiness lies not in ignorance, but in rising above it. As long as we do not bring

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁵ Quoted by P. S. Naidu, 'Democracy and Individuality', *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXVI, April 1961, p.171.

⁶ C. Manning, *The Story of Indian Philosophy*, p.2.

⁷ M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p.73.

about this fundamental change in our attitude, the structural and the constitutional changes will not bring about the moral redemption and transformation of man. This moral renaissance cannot be brought about by imposing ethical laws on the citizens. Democracy must develop these inherent personal qualities and creative essence in every citizen. The *laissez-faire* theory of politics should give way to the doctrine of renunciation, according to the Jaina philosophy. Our leaders should be those who are eager to renounce worldly pleasures, and not those who hanker after them.

(c) *Freedom and the Concept of the Highest Goal*: There is so much cry about freedom in the democratic world, but the tragedy is that nobody feels for others. Mighty wars are fought for preserving one's own freedom by suppressing the freedom of others. Then, is freedom really an illusion? It will remain an illusion as long as there is no common goal. If freedom is merely the freedom of the individual to pursue and reach without hindrance the goal of his own propensities and sentiments, then there will be chaos in society, which would consist of individuals competing with one another, each one pursuing a goal which is bound to lead to conflict with another. So it is said that freedom should be exercised in the pursuit of a common goal; rather, society should itself prescribe a common end for all its members. Good life, good society, self-realization, etc. have been held up as common ends, in relation to which freedom is to be exercised.⁸ Let us, then, search for that common goal which was sought by our ancient sages.

The goal of life for every Hindu is to attain true selfhood in Brahman, or self-realization, or *mokṣa*. All the systems of Indian philosophy agree that bondage is due to ignorance. By attaining full enlightenment, the true goal of life is achieved. It means that freedom is to be found in the realization

of the true nature of the Self, and not in the outer world or external environment.

When self-realization becomes the goal of life, 'Then, in the very process of attaining it, all desires will be consumed, all lower freedom will be abolished, and true freedom will be attained. True freedom is freedom from slavery to our desires, to the propensities and sentiments which have objects of this world as their goals. The *jīvanmukta* is the only true person, as he is identical with other *jīvas*. His actions, even when he is in this world (but not of it) and moves in it, are completely free. Since the individuals have also merged themselves in Brahman, their behavioural lines (pertaining to this world) will all radiate from a single focus, and will be divergent. There will be no crossings between the lines; yet they will be united in their common purpose or goal.'⁹

Thus we may conclude this part by saying that a combination of true knowledge, true faith, and true conduct—in psychological terminology, integration of cognition, affection, and conation—in pursuance of a common goal (which can only be the goal of self-realization) is the only way out for achieving true freedom.

(d) *Justice and the Theory of Karma*: Justice has remained only a legal term. Any inhuman and unjust act can find legal support, and then it becomes just. Had it not been so, why should there be wars which are certainly not just? Why should a handful of persons enjoy wealth, while millions starve? Why should a particular class lord over the downtrodden? Still, all these unjust acts are tolerated, justified, and rationalized in the democracies of the world.

Democracy is essentially a moral philosophy. Legal procedures cannot bring justice, unless people accept justice from within.

The doctrine of *karma* presents a satisfactory solution to this problem. 'The *Karma*-doctrine is grounded in moral view

⁸ P. S. Naidu, 'The Content of Freedom', *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LX, October 1955, p.405.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.406.

of the universe, and therefore commits man to the obligations of a truly moral life, which it is the first duty of man, as a thinking and self-conscious being, to sedulously pursue. In other words, the doctrine presupposes the possibility of moral growth; and the rewards and punishments, which it signifies, are not therefore ends in themselves, but only the means to bring about such growth. They are, thus, really more than retributive; they also constitute a discipline of natural consequences to educate man morally. If so, the conclusion to be drawn from it is that freedom to choose between alternative ways of acting is not merely compatible with, but is actually demanded by, the law of *karma*.¹⁰

Every deed of ours leads to two results. First, its direct result is that of pleasure or pain in this life or in the life to come; and secondly, it establishes a tendency to repeat the same deed in future. These tendencies are directly under our control, and our moral progress depends wholly upon the success with which we direct and regulate them as they tend to express themselves in action. 'Thus, by adopting the betterment of one's own nature as the goal of all endeavour, one may grow indifferent to what happens in the present as the inevitable result of past *karma*.'¹¹ This is the teaching of the *Gītā*.

(e) *Preservation of Cultural Values*: The administration of any country cannot function in a vacuum. The cultural values pervade the whole social life of the nation. This does not mean that we should cling to our cultural traditions whether they are good or bad. Culture postulates the organic growth of human reason. When we are able to discriminate between noble and ignoble, between good and evil, we are said to have acquired culture. The difference between civilization and culture is that the former is limited to amassing of external instruments and artefacts, while the latter refers

to inner growth of personality. 'Democracy is a guarantee to culture in another sense also. The existence of political democracy is the bulwark for the preservation of the integrity of the diverse and distinct traditions of the various ethnic and cultural groups. Democracy is opposed to political dictation in the fields of spirit and culture.'¹²

(f) *Place of Religion in Democracy*: India breathes in religion, because religion is the very basis of Indian character. The present scientific civilization is leading to destruction, because it is not based on the foundations of religion. It can be used for creative purposes if its basis is made religious.

Unless democracy is woven with the threads of morality, it will be impossible to achieve its political ideals.

All human beings are related to one another. The interests of one do not necessarily conflict with those of another. Our selfish motives will continue to be instrumental in spoiling democracy unless we accept the lofty doctrine of renunciation (*aparigraha*). We shall continue to be guided by emotion until we accept the Vedāntic principle to become rational. The principles of truth and non-violence should be the basis of our democracy. Leaders who have the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty can lead the nation to real democracy. This is possible only by instilling the spirit of religion into our people. Democracy must transcend the limits of political field, and it must truly become a way of life.

RELATION OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY WITH EDUCATION

(a) *Principle of Equality and Education*: Education is the expression of human culture. The whole philosophy of human race is reflected in its education. In order to achieve the desired ends and values, the national pattern of education should be based on the Indian concept of democracy.

¹⁰ M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p.49.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.50.

¹² V. P. Varma, 'Culture and Democracy', *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXI, August 1956, p.341.

The principle of democracy is fundamentally the principle of equality expressed in political terms. According to the Indian concept, three types of equality, viz. equality of opportunity, social equality, and spiritual equality, can be achieved if our educational pattern is based on our national concept of democracy. The concept of Brahman, as a basis of equality, should be made clear through education.

(b) *Principle of Freedom and Education*: Spiritual freedom which includes material freedom in its orbit, can be achieved through education. The motto of education for this purpose should be: 'Sā vidyā yā vimuktaye' (that is knowledge which confers freedom). On the principle that the greater includes the lesser, national freedom or material independence is included in the spiritual. The knowledge gained in the educational institutions must therefore, at least, teach the way and lead to such freedom.

(c) *Principle of Individuality and Education*: The main task of democracy is to elevate the spirit of the individual. Education should help the individual to realize the divine in him. 'Fear is completely shed when one can say that one is Brahman, and then real freedom is attained. In no other country, and in no other culture, has individuality been raised to this lofty height. A democracy built on a cultural foundation, in which individuality is realized in this sense, will never fail.'¹³

To fulfil this aim, education must be changed. 'A beginning may be made by taking these simple steps for reasserting the individuality of the learner. ... It should be quite easy to incorporate into this assembly-hour a short period of silent meditation. Every small child may be taught to be silent for a few minutes. During this interval, pupils should be taught to look into themselves; ... each child should be taught to say silently within himself: "I am an

individual; I am a child of God; God cares for me as an individual child of His." ... Then, in the course of the day, specially in the boarding houses and hostels, where community life is much in evidence, the boarders should be taught to withdraw from the group or community and seek solitude and silence for at least half an hour. Just as we have the study hour, the games period, etc., there should be a period of solitude and silence. ... Once in the session, a retreat should be arranged. ... A well-organized retreat with the proper type of teacher-leaders will produce wonderful results. The sole aim of the retreat should be to help pupils realize the divinity within them and, realizing it, realize their individuality.'¹⁴

APPRAISAL OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

(a) *Democracy*: There is nothing in our present democracy which can stand the acid test of the foundations of democracy discussed above. Like all other democracies of the world, we have failed to imbibe the true spirit of democracy. Democracy has not transcended the field of politics. Although our Constitution has safeguarded the freedom of different religions, it has not taken positive steps to instil into our people a love for the universal principles of morality. Personal aspirations and selfish motives have pervaded all the strata of society. The question arises as to why it is so. The reply is that, unfortunately, the present structure of democracy in free India has its origin in the West, where people have lost faith in democracy. Had it been based on the Indian concept of democracy, the moral standard of our people would have been, no doubt, high.

(b) *Educational Pattern*: In the same way, our present educational pattern is a second-hand copy of the Western educational pattern, which is based on a materialistic philosophy and outlook. Hence, it is not in tune with our cultural heritage, and is not

¹³ P. S. Naidu, 'Democracy and Individuality', *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXVI. April 1961, p. 174.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

based on our philosophy; and so, it is not national in the true sense.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing paragraphs, the Indian concept of democracy has been discussed in the light of Indian philosophy, and some changes in the present educational pattern

have been suggested. If these simple suggestions are carried out steadily and with conviction, the result will be that a new type of young men and women will come into being, who will be competent to build up a new democracy which will be true to the Indian concept discussed above.

CHARACTER-BUILDING ROLE OF EDUCATION

BY SRI KAILAS CHANDRA KAR

In the opinion of Toynbee, if all human beings were exact replicas of one standard pattern, like the standardized parts of some mass-produced machine, mankind's view of reality would be rather narrowly limited. Fortunately, our human plight is not so bad as that, because the uniformity of human nature is relieved by the variety of human personalities. Each personality has something in it that is unique, and, I may add, the process that leads to the development of that personality goes by the name of education.

Nature is to be viewed in her two aspects—non-human nature and human nature. Non-human nature can be subjugated by human force, and, on the whole, she has yielded to man like a docile sheep. But human nature has shown itself refractory and recalcitrant to human control. When man tries to coerce human nature, he defeats his own purpose; for, far from cowing it, coercion merely stimulates its obstinacy, rebelliousness, and animosity. In the matter of dealing with the child, this has to be taken into account, and the range of the responsibility of education is thus considerably widened. Education, as the term implies, aims at the development or rearing up of the dormant faculties of the child; but even so, it may turn the child into a monster and not into the man so much needed by the society. In order that the child may grow up to be a balanced personality and healthy citizen according to accepted standards, the scope of

education has to be widened with provisions and safeguards for the proper channelling of the human nature inherent in the child.

But the system of education, as it stands at present, has practically no scope to acquit itself satisfactorily of this added responsibility, and this accounts for all the trouble rampant in the world today.

Social peace and happiness depend on the character of individual members of the society; and character, in its turn, means human nature in its moral and regulated aspect. If the aim of education is to prepare the pupil for life, the proper channelling of his nature, in other words, positive training in regulated and moral behaviour that constitutes character, should find a definite place in the educational system, instead of being left to be precariously acquired by him as an incidental by-product of the machinery of education. To that end, experience suggests the following practical measures.

1. A religio-philosophic code of common acceptance may be compiled and taught along with life-sketches of selected great men of all times and climes as a subject of compulsory study in lieu of some other less important subject. Development of faculties alone cannot make for balanced personality without food for the spirit as well. The remark of the Mudaliar Commission in this connection may aptly be quoted here: "There is little doubt that the whole purpose of education is not fulfilled unless certain

definite moral principles are inculcated in the minds of the youths of the country.' Things repeated often are less likely to be forgotten, and so the effort in this regard should be made obligatory on a commonly accepted standard as suggested.

2. The schools should be placed in a position to provide adequate facilities to their pupils for group games, sports, and other co-curricular activities. This prevents the mentality of the students from flowing through unhealthy channels, and, besides imparting physical culture, provides them with scope for training in disciplined citizenship and development of the *esprit de corps*, as well as the master sentiment of self-regard that lays the foundation for character. But a large number of town schools have no playground. This problem of the town schools needs an immediate survey of the situation for a solution. As it is not practicable to provide every such school with a playground of its own, as a practical step, the State governments may requisition certain areas of land on the outskirts of each town, to be used by the students of the urban schools jointly or by turns.

3. Students should be given ample opportunity of seeing wholesome and instructive pictures; for things acted before their eyes are more thrilling and impressive to them than those taught in the class. It is not, however, possible to equip all the schools with their own projectors to demonstrate such films; but the owners of cinema halls may be made to do the thing if the government makes it a condition precedent for the issue of their licences.

4. Close teacher-pupil contact should be made possible to promote discipline among students and to place them in a better position to imbibe the good traits of the teacher's character. This is essential to prevent the students from being carried away by outside influences. For this purpose, the teacher-pupil ratio should not be higher than

1 : 25, though it may lead to a doubling of the expenditure.

In this connection, I should like to stress upon the establishment of residential schools at suitable places and students' homes under proper supervision for joint residence of the pupils of those urban schools which have no hostel attached to them.

5. The service conditions of the teachers should be so improved as to attract to the teacher's job the best stuff available for public service. To confess an unpleasant truth, under prevailing conditions, barring a few honourable exceptions, only those who are failures in other more lucrative spheres of life take to teaching as the last resort, and they, too, cannot devote themselves wholeheartedly to their job, as they have to dissipate their energy outside school in eking out their pittance in a desperate attempt to conform to social standards and keep up appearances as their position demands. A situation like this is quite untenable, and cannot be allowed to continue without disastrous consequences.

6. Provision should be made for a certain amount of training in guardianship not only through the press and platform, but also through the active agency of municipalities or Gram Panchayats as the case may be. Guardians' meetings called by headmasters are often thinly attended and are not very useful in this respect. It is my sad experience that the majority of the guardians are not vigilant in respect of the conduct of their wards, who are left to grow up and do as they like. So the effect of the pupil's five hours' training at school is practically nullified during his nineteen hours' stay at home. But in order that education may be effective, the home of the pupil should be regarded as an extension of the school, and both should function in unison. Extensive and rigorous propaganda in this respect is extremely necessary.

THAT IS WRITING HISTORY

BY PRINCIPAL B. S. MATHUR

Rabindranath is a poet of reality. He has tremendous vision and imagination, but he always wants to be a wanderer in the world of realities. He writes :

I am restless. I am athirst for far-away things.

My soul goes out in a longing to touch the skirt of the dim distance.

O Great Beyond, O keen call of thy flute !

What a great yearning is here ! There is a desire for far away things. There is beauty seen in the distance. Reality, it looks, is not magnificent. It does not seem to catch our imagination. There is something in the distance, and that is beautiful, and that is captivating. The heart is keen on the possession of that Beyond. There is music in the distance, and that music is penetrating, and that gives us joy unspeakable. Rabindranath is describing what actually happens in life. But he is not satisfied. He wants to be a realist, and he wants to see what is beautiful, what is sweet, and what is magnificent in the reality, in the world we live in. Here is a sage, a man who has seen life and who wants us to face life. He is a poet, and he wants us to find matter for our poetry which is to delight us in the life we live in. He does not want us to be blind to the Beyond, to far away things ; but certainly he does not want that we should be unhappy in our life. He is a thinker who initiates us into the reality of life. He therefore continues :

I forget, I ever forget, that I have no wings to fly,

That I am bound in this spot evermore.

You are not to take him literally. Look at the spirit behind his words of wisdom and experience. He is not dismissing imagination that we have, but certainly he does not want us to be altogether and evermore dominated

by pure imagination. He is for a synthesis. Imagination is essential in life. Imagination can enable us to go ahead in our fulfilment, in the realization of our dreams, in the manifestation of our divinity in our deeds, dreams, and ideas. But this imagination must combine with realism. We are never to forget reality. We have our life here and on earth. Let us live it the way our imagination wants us to live. The accent is upon action, upon the present. Never, for a moment, think that Tagore is unmindful of the future. The present is to pass into the future. Concentrate on the present, make it good, glorious, and noble. The result is what you desire—a bright and ever-smiling future, a future that is just fulfilment of your heart's desire, your innermost longings to be noble, virtuous and essentially manly, full of courage and go.

This is Tagore's philosophy of life. This is how he is 'bound in this spot evermore'.

I see a parallel between Tagore and Omar Khayyam. Read these lines :

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and
with me,

The Quarrel of the Universe let be :

And, in some corner of the Hubbub couch,
Make Game of that which makes as much
of Thee.

Pure speculation, which philosophy seems to consist in, is shunned. The emphasis is on action, on the present, indeed, on the great realization. And that realization is of man himself. He is here with a mission. He has a personality. He stands for something that is individual and that is captivating. That man must realize in his present life. That is the game he is to be interested in. This is Omar Khayyam singing in his care-free fashion. Tagore has the same philosophy, same way of life to recommend. He wants

to forget the wings. He is, of necessity, concerned with the spot, with the present.

One cannot, for a moment, think that Tagore is shunning 'wings' or imagination. He is a poet; and he deals with and in imagination. He wants to see poetry in real life. He wants to make it beautiful, sweet, and glorious. He wants to find poetry in the prose of life. That is his aim.

Tagore persists in his thinking :

I am eager and wakeful, I am a stranger
in a strange land,
Thy breath come to me whispering an
impossible hope.
Thy tongue is known to my heart as its
very own.
O Far-to-see, O the keen call of thy flute !

We have a penetrating picture of a dreamy existence. This picture is beautifully painted by the poet, and we seem to be lost, admiring the poetry of the picture, its essence—the fiction of life that so takes us, so captivates us. But Tagore cannot dismiss reality. He may look like banishing philosophy, but he cannot banish reality. He does not want to be a 'stranger in a strange land'. He wants to understand life and its complications. He loves to be in a familiar land of reality. He has hopes but he can never entertain an impossible hope. He cannot yield to ravishing music, although he loves music. He may be aware of the keenness of the call of the Far-to-see; its music might enslave him for moments, but it cannot blind him to reality. Tagore wants penetration into reality. He does not want to be shut in his own house. Tagore wants man to be eager, careful, and wakeful.

Man is keen on perfection. If he is so keen and if he wants to be successful in his mission to be perfect, he is to be always aware of his limitations, of his defects. That awareness must be in plenty, because that alone is the road we are to travel to reach the goal.

Tagore fastens on this idea :

I forget, I ever forget, that I know not the
way, that I have the winged horse.

Real knowledge, which is wisdom born of experience, is in ample evidence in Tagore. He is anxious to go the way he must be happy and comfortable. He knows that there is darkness about him in great intensity. He wants lights there. Like John Milton, he seems to sing :

... what in me is dark illumine; what is
low raise and support.

Indeed, the poet has a great burden. He is to raise and support. The aim is a revolution, an effective reformation. The great problem of perfection is here. Man has to be perfect and so darkness must go. This is the great aim where Tagore, Milton, and Omar Khayyam agree. We have also to agree here. That way there is joy, there is glory and fulfilment.

So man has to go fully armed with his knowledge and ignorance. He may be restless; he may be athirst for far away things, but he has never to forget his limitations, that he is a bundle of weaknesses which he has to resolve in the light of his knowledge, imagination, and vision. He is to be aware of the dim distance, and he is not to lose sight of the great Beyond, but never he is to abandon reality, the earth he stands upon. He has to stand, and he has to accept the challenge of time. That is progress, and he can get near it if he is prepared to face the hard facts of life. Tagore would say: 'Concentrate on work, on work, on the living present that is life, life for perfection, for the realization of the great principle of life, the eternal principle of joy, the eternal quest in which man is to be engaged.'

We may not get what we desire; we may get what we do not desire. But achievement is certain. That is man's destiny, and that destiny is through resolution of difficulties—that is writing history!

That is the path, the path of realization

man has to follow in his adventure on earth ; in this adventure, there is unmistakable manifestation of divinity that resides in man. That way man can rise to every inch of his personality.

That is how Rabindranath visualizes man's future ; that way man can write history, can make his dreams and visions concrete, and can live in joy, comfort, and fulfilment.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

In his article on 'The Appeal of Vedānta to Modern Man', Swami Ranganathananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, describes the salient features of the Vedānta in relation to modern science and its impact on mankind, and says that its appeal to modern man is irresistible.

his article how the concept of 'Sarvodaya', the welfare of all, arose in Mahatma Gandhi's mind, and contrasts the main principles of the Sarvodaya ideal with the utilitarian doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. He points out how it is the Sarvodaya ideal alone that can lead to the full emancipation of the human personality. ...

In his article on 'Hegel, Bradley, and Śāṅkara on the Absolute', Sri M. K. Venkatarama Iyer, M.A., formerly Professor of Philosophy, Annamalai University, Madras State, makes a comparative study of the views of these three great thinkers regarding the nature of the highest Reality, and shows how the views of Hegel and Bradley are ridden with inner contradictions. It is in Śāṅkara alone that we find a complete and most satisfying view of the Absolute. ...

In the article on 'The Indian Concept of Democracy and Its Bearing on Education', Sri Ram Datt Sharma, M.A., B.Ed., Senior Teacher of Hindi, Government Higher Secondary School, Bharatpur, Rajasthan, discusses the Indian concept of democracy in the light of Indian philosophy, and offers some suggestions for the modification of the present educational pattern according to that concept. ...

Dr. Jacques Albert Cuttat is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary for Switzerland in India, New Delhi. 'Sri Ramakrishna (A Birthday Anniversary Tribute)' is the text of his address given on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, observed at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on the 11th March 1962. ...

Sri Kailas Chandra Kar, B.A., B.T., offers some very practical hints, in his article on 'Character-building Role of Education', for the better training of the children, so that they may become truly useful members of society. ...

Professor Sudhansu Bimal Mookerji, M.A., of the Department of Letters, Gadjah Mada University, Jogjakarta, Indonesia, relates in

Poets are considered to be dreamy people having no touch with reality. But Principal B. S. Mathur, M.A., of M. M. H. College, Ghaziabad, shows in his article 'That Is Writing History' that Rabindranath Tagore, like Omar Khayyam and Milton, was no mere visionary. In fact, he wanted to make life itself more beautiful and full of wisdom.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE SCIENCE OF PHILOSOPHY. BY FRANCK E. LAZOWICK. *Published by Philosophical Library, New York-16. Pages 329. Price \$6.*

To force philosophy, which is essentially concerned with values, into the rigid, mechanistic, and deterministic mould of science, which is contemptuous and destructive of values, is to do violence to the former. And, on the top of this, the author declares that neither the scientific method, nor systematic thinking will be enough for the new science of philosophy. What is needed is a 'set of ultimates—dimensions, principles—a philosophic periodic table, including all the "Elements"—and nothing but the elements—a set of rubrics, a table of all real categories of Reality (with the sub-genres of each) and none else but them' (p. vii). Even one who has lived in the challenging regions of metaphysics for a fairly long time will get a little puzzled on reading this. But to confront a beginner in philosophy, with a book opening in this manner, is to scare the poor student stiff, and out of his wits.

Philosophy, in our country at least, is the concern of every citizen. As the Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* rightly points out (p. 196 of the issue of the journal for April 1961), 'even the most ordinary peasant, with no pretensions to higher learning, and carrying on the humble duties of his simple vocation, was keenly interested in matters religious and philosophical, and at times, could throw valuable light on questions of abstruse philosophical nature'. This observation is eminently true in our country, and should be made to come true in other countries as well. Philosophy should become the concern of the common man. If this laudable aim is to be achieved, then, the medium of communication in philosophy will have to be simplified. The reviewer has always held it as a charge against the philosopher that he tends to make even simple ideas and principles appear formidable and repelling. As an example, let us take just one sentence at random from the book under review:

'God, as *Vue D'ensemble* Eternal—who sees or reflects the All and the Each (part) simultaneously—reckons with all material—spiritual reality in its parts and individual entities, and as a whole, judging, or being the Ultimate-Judgement of, individual beings as to their several merits (merits considered segmentally and integrally); which means, He judges and/or is the authentic order and degree possessed of Beauty, Wisdom, Faith, etc., and displayed by (and inseparable from) any given individual and his total moral worth vis-a-vis the Absolute and the evolutionary process leading to its emergence' (p. 197).

This is just *one* sentence, and is intended to tell us

something about God! Need we be surprised if the young student of philosophy approaching the subject timidly takes fright at this sentence and quickly takes to his heels?

The pity of it is that the author wants to convey ideas which are very valuable, and in a sense, very simple in essence. In fact, the author wants to demonstrate that the seven values—faith, wisdom, might, justice, freedom, love, and beauty, and the human institutions that have grown around them, should constitute the supporting framework for philosophy. This is a simple and straightforward task and could have been carried out in a very simple manner. But, by the time one has finished reading the book—and, it requires unusual physical and mental stamina to do so—one feels dazed. It is suggested that 'an abstract, precis, summary, digest, substance, be appended, attached, affixed, to this volume, written in simple, easy, not-difficult, intelligible, understandable style for the benefit of the beginner, novice, freshman, commencing student of philosophy'. Do these strings of needlessly repetitive terms cause amazement and annoyance? Well, the book under review is full of such strings. The diction of Carlyle is simplicity itself by the side of the style of this book.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

SOCRATES AND THE ANIMALS. BY DR. ELENA QUARELLI. TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY DR. KATHLEEN SPEIGHT. *Published by Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London. Pages 160+xvi. Price 12s. 6d.*

The original writer, a poet-philosopher and a Roman Catholic, has brought out a daring book that does not always see eye to eye with the views of the Church. Her thesis is that the 'brute beasts', far from being soulless, as the Church would have us believe, are endowed with souls that demand our respect and attention no less than the human soul. She proceeds cautiously like a research scholar. She says in her Introduction: 'I was interested in the field of dialectics and in treating the subject from the standpoint of the Western tradition of classical metaphysics. I hope I have reached sound conclusions.' The translator, also an erudite scholar, agrees with her when she says: 'Dottoressa Quarelli ... approaches her subject with praiseworthy objectivity and lack of prejudice, and ... searches for truth by means of exhaustive enquiry and careful, cautious criticism. In seeking to establish the immaterial nature of the souls of the animals, her investigations range over a wide field: from Plato and Aristotle, the Bible, the Church Fathers, to modern zoologists

and investigators of animal psychology, such as Maeterlinck, Jean H. Fabre, and Julian Huxley.'

The book is divided into thirteen chapters, some of which are very interesting. Beginning with Socrates, the author discusses the gradual development of the Western idea about the nature of the human soul. (As a matter of fact, it was Pythagoras who first speculated on the transmigration of the soul, he himself being indebted to the *theriputtas* for his ideas.) After metaphysically analyzing the functions of the human mind and intellect, and comparing notes, Dr. Quarelli finds many things, such as feeling, memory, intelligence, etc., common between human beings and lower animals (even some insects)—the difference lying in the degree of manifestation. Following the same set of arguments that goes to propound the theory of metempsychosis with regard to man, she makes bold to suggest with conviction that the same holds good in the case of lower animals as well. In other words, the 'brute beast' which feels no less pain or pleasure than human beings has a soul, too, a distinct ethereal entity with all the possibility of reaching perfection in the long run.

This is no news to the average Indian. Only he will disagree with the view that the animal and human souls move in water-tight compartments in their outward journey (cf. p. 28). Once we accept transmigration (that is, the theory of reincarnation and law of *karma*), we cannot logically escape looking upon both as set on the same path of progression and regression. The soul's progress is not necessarily one of uninterrupted upward motion. There may be downward curves as well. The same soul may pass through the human and then through an animal body (or even lower manifestations) and *vice versa*, according to *karma*. But then this is not the real self; this is the *jivātman* which gets final release from the shackles of birth and death, after realizing its identity with the supreme Ātman. Naturally, according to the Hindu view, instead of condescendingly harbouring compassion for lower animals, one regards them as integral parts in the scheme of nature. This attitude prompts the Hindu to hold some of the animals in high esteem.

However, all lovers of animals will welcome the book. Those who cannot subscribe to her views *in toto* may very well leave out the last two chapters. Her account of the study of animal behaviour—sometimes humorous—is really absorbing. She rightly condemns vivisection and other forms of cruelty to them. Appending an index at the end would have enhanced the value of the book, whose printing and get-up are excellent.

SWAMI SATYAGHANANANDA

SREE NARAYANA ASHRAM SILVER JUBILEE SOUVENIR (1936-61). Published by Sri Narayana

Ashram Vyavasthapak Samiti, Bajwada, Khatri Pol, Baroda. Pages 136+160. Price not mentioned.

This Ashrama is situated at Kela in the interior part of the Himalayas, on the route to Kailas. The volume is meant to celebrate the completion of 25 years of its useful existence, though Swami Narayana, its founder, has passed away. The Bapu Mahavidyalaya, which has since been taken over by the Government, in the district of Pithoragarh, is a valuable contribution of this Ashrama to this mountainous region, starved of educational facilities.

Besides describing the Ashrama and its activities, and the life of its founder, the Souvenir under review is enriched by quotations from the sayings of great seers and sages as well as from various scriptures and great books of the world. The section in Devanāgarī provides a fine selection of passages of spiritual value, and *bhajanas* in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, and Sanskrit are really very good. The volume is nicely got-up and printed.

S. S.

SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION. BY GEORGE SIMMEL. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY CURT ROSENTHAL. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. Pages 76. Price \$ 3.75.

Religion, according to George Simmel, a German philosopher, is not a pure trans-empirical something; on the contrary, religious relation is essentially a form of social relation, nursed and fed by the milk of social life.

The concept of social unity finds its finest culmination in religion. Religious ideas seek to bring together and unify apparently different elements, and in this work of unification, it lives and realizes its own value and significance.

The interpretation of religion as an expression of social unity is, indeed, in harmony with the spirit of modern civilization and culture. We are gradually becoming conscious of the need to recognize and act as if the world were a single social unit.

Against the above background, the presentation of *Sociology of Religion* in English will help a good deal in creating such psycho-social conditions as will be conducive to the emergence of a world culture and a world state.

The views of Simmel have been presented in lucid language, and Mr. Rosenthal has done a good job of the translation. This would serve the cause of the English-knowing people of the present generation—a generation that has been labouring untiringly to achieve a world unity.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

MANIKANA. EDITED WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND NOTES BY E. R. SREEKRISHNA SARMA. Published by Adyar Library and Research Centre, Adyar, Madras-20. 1960. Pages xliii+149. Price not mentioned.

Gaṅgeśa's *Tattva-cintāmaṇi* showed the parting of the ways in the history of the Nyāya system of philosophy. With this work, there emerges the new or modern (*navya*) school of Nyāya philosophy. Handy compilations of the basic tenets of the older Nyāya system are available; and their many commentators have made the reader's task comparatively easier, even though an intelligent reader can proceed with the classics of the school. But in the new school of Nyāya thought, the tendency to be exact and precise introduced many new terms and concepts; and an acquaintance with these

is necessary if one were to take up the works of the new school. Such a need is fulfilled to some extent by the present work *Manikana*, a *navya-nyāya* manual. In four chapters, the author, who remains anonymous, explains the four ways of knowing—perception, inference, analogy, and verbal testimony. The exposition is lucid, and it is so bewitching that even a beginner would be tempted to take up the original *Maṇi* of Gaṅgeśa.

The editor has also given a faithful translation of the text and added valuable notes at the end. The introduction explains some of the technical terms.

Words like probanshood, probandumhood, and subjecthood make a bizarre effect while reading. Mr. Ingalls has tried to overcome the use of such words.

The book is a valuable one to all serious students of *navya-nyāya*.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA
SHYAMALATAL, U.P

REPORT FROM JANUARY 1960 TO MARCH 1961

This Sevashrama is a charitable dispensary and hospital, forming part of the Vivekananda Ashrama, which was founded in 1914 in the eastern part of the Kumaon Hills, and is situated 16 miles from the nearest railway station of Tanakpur. The hospital, which serves the medical needs of the hill people of the surrounding areas, has completed over 46 years of useful service. There is an indoor department with 12 beds, where 182 patients were treated during the period under review. In the outdoor department, the number of patients treated was 9,067, of which 7,636 were new and 1,431 repeated cases.

The Sevashrama has a veterinary department, where 1,882 new cases and 320 repeated cases were treated in the outdoor section, and five in the indoor section. Since it was started in 1939, the veterinary department has treated in all 59,078 animals.

Urgent Needs: With the constant increase in the number of patients, the need for more number of beds is being felt. For adding four more beds, and to furnish the hospital with up-to-date medical appliances, a sum of Rs. 25,000 is urgently needed. Besides, a permanent fund of Rs. 50,000 for the hospital, and Rs. 25,000 for the veterinary department, is also needed for the upkeep and general expenses.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE

REPORT FOR 1959 AND 1960.

Library and Reading Room: Number of books in the library: 1959: 4,252; 1960: 4,353. Number of books issued: 1959: 1,342; 1960: 1,236; Number of dailies in the reading room: 6; number of journals: 66. Total attendance: 1,660.

Cultural Activities: Weekly scriptural classes were conducted, and interviews were given to visitors and spiritual aspirants. Besides these, lectures were delivered in various parts of Singapore, Malaya, and the neighbouring countries.

Celebrations: As usual, special celebrations to mark the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, and others were conducted. Festivals like *navarātri* and Christmas Eve were also observed.

Educational Activities:

School: The Vivekananda Tamil School and the Sarada Devi Tamil School had, respectively, a strength of 147 and 157 in 1959, and 154 and 160 in 1960.

Night Classes for Adults: There were two classes, one in English, and another in Tamil. Total enrolment in 1959: 60; in 1960: 54.

Boys' Home: The Home, which maintains orphans or very poor boys, had a strength of 50 in 1959 and 57 in 1960.