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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Chicago,

November 15, 1894.

DEAR DIWANJI SAHEB,

I here received your kind note. So very kind of you to remember me even here, I have not seen your Narayan Hemchandra. He is not in America I believe. I have seen many strange sights and grand things. I am glad that there is a good chance of your coming over to Europe. Avail of it by any means. The fact of our isolation from all the other nations of the world is the cause of our degeneration and its only remedy is getting back into the current of the rest of the world. Motion is the sign of life. America is a grand country. It is a paradise of the poor and women. There is almost no poor in the country and nowhere else in the world women are so free, so educated, so cultured. They are everything in society.

This is a great lesson. The Sannyâsi has not lost a bit of his Sannyâsiship, even his mode of living. And in this most hospitable country, every home is open to me. The Lord who guides me in India, would He not guide me here? and He has.

You may not understand why a Sannyâsi should be in America, but it was necessary. Because the only claim you have to be recognized by the world is your religion, and good specimen of our religious men are required to be sent abroad, to give other nations an idea that India is not dead.

Some representative men must come out of India and go to all the nations of the earth to show at least that you are not savages. You may not feel the necessity of it from your Indian home but believe me, much depends upon that

for your nation. And a Sannyâsi who has no idea of doing good to his fellows is a brute, not a Sannyâsi.

I am neither a sight-seeing nor an idle traveller, but you will see, if you live to see and bless me all your life.

Mr. Dwivedi's papers were too big for the Parliament, and they had to be cut short.

I spoke at the Parliament of Religions and with what effect I may quote to you from a few newspapers and magazines ready at hand. I need not be self-conceited, but to you in confidence I am bound to say, because of your love, that no Hindu made such an impression in America and if my coming has done nothing, it has done this that Americans have come to know that India even today produces men at whose feet even the most civilized nations may learn lessons of religion and morality. Don't you think, that is enough say for the Hindu nation sending over here their Sannyâsi? You would hear the details from Virchand Gandhi.

These I quote from the journals :—"But eloquent as were many of the brief speeches, no one expressed as well the spirit of the Parliament (of religions) and its limitations as the Hindu monk. I copy his address in full but I can only suggest its effect upon the audience, for he is an orator by Divine right and his strong intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich rhythmical utterance he gave them." (Here the speech is quoted in extenso). *New York Critique*.

"His culture, his eloquence and his fascinating personality has given us a new idea of Hindu civilization. His fine intelligent face and his deep musical voice prepossessing one at once in his favour has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has become familiar to us. He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusion with the greatest art, the most convincing sincerity and rising often to rich inspiring eloquence." *The Same*

"Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation." *Herald* (The greatest paper here)

I cease from quoting more lest you think me conceited but this was necessary to you who have become nearly frogs in the well and would not see how the world is going on elsewhere? I do not mean you personally, my noble friend, but our nation in general.

I am the same here as in India, only here in this highly cultured land there is an appreciation, a sympathy which our ignorant fools never dream of. There our people grudge us monks a crumb of bread, here they are ready to pay one thousand rupees a lecture and remain grateful for the instructions for ever.

I am appreciated by these strangers more than I was ever in India. I can, if I will, live here all my life in the greatest luxury, but I am a Sannyâsi and "India with all thy faults I love thee still." So I am coming back after some months, and go on sowing the seeds of religion and progress from city to city as I was doing so long, although amongst a people who know not what appreciation and gratefulness is.

I am ashamed of my own nation when I compare their beggarly, selfish, unappreciative, ignorant ungratefulness with the help, hospitality, sympathy and respect which the Americans have shown to me, a representative of a foreign religion. Therefore come out of the country, see others and compare.

Now after these quotations do you think it was worthwhile to send a Sannyâsi to America?

Please do not publish it. I hate notoriety in the same manner as I did in India.

I am doing the Lord's work and wherever He leads I follow. मूकं करोति वाचालं —He who makes the dumb eloquent and the lame cross a mountain, He will help me. I do not care for human help. He is ready to help me in India, in America, in the North Pole, if He thinks fit. If He does not, none else can help me. Glory unto the Lord for ever and ever.

Yours with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

A STUDY IN MYSTICISM

BY THE EDITOR

I

Mystics of all ages and countries make various attempts to express the ultimate Reality, although they are fully aware that It is inexpressible. The fundamental principle of the highest form of mysticism is one of ineffability. The human language is inadequate to express the Reality, because It cannot be described in terms of the intellectual categories of language. Besides, the subject-object identity of the highest mystic experience makes any description impossible. Sri Ramakrishna in one of his manifold mystic experiences observes: "Something rises with a tingling sensation from the feet to the head. So long as it does not reach the brain I remain conscious, but the moment it does so, I am dead to the outside world. Even the functions of the eyes and the ears come to stop, and speech is out of the question. Who should speak? The very distinction

between 'I' and 'Thou' vanishes. Sometimes I think I shall tell you everything about what I see and feel when that mysterious power rises up through the spinal column. When it has come up to this, or even this (pointing to the heart or the throat), it is possible to speak, which I do. But the moment it has gone above this (pointing to the throat), somebody stops my mouth, as it were, and I am adrift. I make up my mind to relate to you what I feel when the Kundalini goes beyond the throat, but as I think over it, up goes the mind at a bound, and there is an end of the matter!"

Many a time did Sri Ramakrishna attempt to describe this state, but failed every time. One day he was determined to tell and went on until the power reached the throat. Then pointing to the sixth centre, opposite to the junction of the eyebrows, he said, "When the mind reaches this point,

one catches a vision of the Supreme Soul and falls into Samâdhi. Only a thin, transparent veil intervenes between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. He then sees like this—," and as he attempted to explain it in detail he fell into Samâdhi. When his mind came down a little he tried again, and again he was immersed in Samâdhi. After repeated fruitless attempts he said with tears in his eyes, "Well, I sincerely wish to tell you everything, but Mother won't let me do so. She gags me!"

Although mystics have universally declared the ineffability of the Reality, they have left rather profuse accounts of the experiences gathered by them in the course of their journey to the goal of life. These experiences and observations made by the mystics of various religions, countries, and temperaments, have aroused a philosophical interest in mysticism, which is in these days at a stage of vigorous growth and popularity among philosophers and seekers after Truth. Hence arises the need of defining the term, mysticism, and of assigning its proper place in the realm of religion. According to Goethe, mysticism is the scholastic of the heart, the dialectic of the feelings. Some describe it, in the language of Plotinus, as the flight of the alone to the Alone. Some distinguish it from philosophy in the sense that the former is an approach to the Reality through life and experience, while the latter is an approach through thinking. The author of *Studies in Mystical Religion* defines it as the type of religion which puts the emphasis on the immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the divine presence. It is, according to him, religion in its most acute, intense, and living stage. The mystic is regarded as a person of spiritual genius which a philosopher

may not necessarily be. The mystic draws his inspiration from the depths of his being, while a philosopher approaches the Reality out of the demand of rational thinking. The intellectual quest about the Reality, according to E. Underhill, leads us down one of the three blind alleys: firstly, to an acceptance of the symbolic world of appearance as the real; secondly, to the elaboration of a theory—also of necessity symbolic—which, beautiful in itself, cannot help us to attain the Absolute which it describes; and thirdly, to a hopeless but strictly logical scepticism. Says Wildon Carr: "We are not pure intellects . . . around our conceptional and logical thought there remains a vague, nebulous Somewhat, the substance at whose expense the luminous nucleus we call the intellect is formed."

The mystic solves the problem of the Reality in terms of life, not in terms of philosophy. He wants to make a permanent adjustment of his being to the universal life that exists in the Reality. He is a great discoverer in the realm of the Reality and exerts all his faculties and vitality for the end. Untold sufferings and difficulties he patiently bears in his gradual ascent towards the Reality. The stories of the lives of mystics offer us a history of the race of adventurers who having transcended the sense-world hungered for the Absolute and in the long run knew It and found union with It. The contact with the Absolute has been variously experienced and described in varied expressions by the mystics all over the world.

True mysticism has nothing to do with supernatural or miraculous powers. It does not seek after worldly gains, command over people, and the attainment of advantages through means undiscoverable by reason. Hence, true mysticism should be sharply distin-

guished from all forms of magic and self-seeking. All true mystics have been men of intense self-sacrifice and moral greatness, and models of simplicity and unworldliness. They have been those rare souls whose love and kindness knew no geographical and racial limits. The mystics form themselves into a kindred and uncommon class of men, although they may happen to belong to different races, religions, countries, and ages. "All mystics," says Saint-Martin, "speak the same language, for they come from the same country."

II

The end which mystics set before them on their pilgrimage is the conscious union which the living Absolute. The types of expression which the mystics adopt to articulate their knowledge appear to denote mutually opposed ideas of metaphysical doctrine. In the *Rig-Veda* X. 164. 46 we find a Vedic seer proclaiming that the Reality is one, though It is called by various names. One of the most noted hymns (*Rig-Veda* X. 129) runs as follows :

"Then there was neither Aught nor Naught,
no air nor sky beyond.
What covered all? Where rested all?
In watery gulf profound?
Nor death was then, nor deathlessness,
nor change of night and day.
That one breathed calmly, self-sustained;
naught else beyond it lay.
Gloom hid in gloom existed first—
one sea eluding view.
The one a void in chaos wrapt, by
inward fervour grew."

Since the human language cannot get beyond the world of experience to which our ideas and conceptions are limited, it is but natural that the seer

of the hymn reckoned the Absolute as neither Aught nor Naught. Another expression is found in a verse of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* :

"Not-being was this in the beginning;
From it being arose.
Self-fashioned indeed out of itself,
Therefore is it named 'well-fashioned'."

The descriptions of the Absolute offered by the Upanishadic seers are, in many cases, given in the form of a number of negatives. The same method was adopted by Plotinus in his description of the mystic vision. It was a state in which there was no movement, no emotion, no desire, no reason or any thought, no concern with the beautiful, no self-presence before the gods, and, finally, no vision. These negations should not be construed as a meaningless or nihilistic condition. Because, the highest form of mysticism can hardly be put in terms of the categories of intellect.

The Vedic seers gave the name of the ineffable state as the *Âtman* or the Self which was described by them as Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss. Then they realized the *Âtman* as the Manifested and the Unmanifested, the Expressible and the Inexpressible, the Founded and the Foundationless, the Consciousness and the Unconsciousness, the Real and the Unreal, the Formed and the Unformed, the Mortal and the Immortal, the Abiding and the Fleeting, and so forth.

The Buddhists could not say what exists at the state of *Nirvâna* for they denied the existence of the Self as described by the Hindus. In truth, the Self is as ineffable as the state of *Nirvâna*. "But still state was rightfully called immortal and blissful," says Prof. Dasgupta, "because it was looked upon by the Buddhists as the end of all their sufferings, the goal of all

their spiritual strivings, and the culmination of spiritual perfection. What is especially emphasized, from the negative point of view, is that it is absolutely non-logical in its nature. It has no describable essence. The mysticism of the Buddhist consists in a belief in this essenceless state of Nirvâna as the state of ultimate perfection and ultimate extinction, to be realized by the complete extinction of desires and the supra-intellectual wisdom of the yoga practice."

The silence of Buddha about the ultimate Reality has been misinterpreted and his philosophy has been labelled as atheism. This is all due to the fact that the state of Nirvâna is unfathomable for ordinary comprehension.

The Absolute has again been described by the mystics of all ages and countries as Perfect Love, Heavenly Melody, and Infinite Sweetness. They experience a source of unearthly love, music, and joy in their union with the Supreme and this union is conscious, personal, and complete. The fire of love for the Supreme burns in these mystics so intensely that they forget their own selves and lose their personalities in ecstatic trances. They believe that the Supreme is their saviour and the controller of their bodies and minds. They trust that He is the only Person on whom only they may entirely depend in this mortal and evanescent world. They sing, laugh, dance, and weep for Him and no amount of sufferings is unbearable for them to have the union of their Beloved. Lord Krishna says in the *Gîtâ*: "But those who worship Me, resigning all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single-minded devotion,—to these whose mind is set on Me, verily I become ere long, O, son of Prithâ, the

Saviour out of the ocean of the mortal world."

Richard Rolle of Hampole, the father of English mysticism, gives a beautiful description of his inward experience which discerns a state of joyous and awakened love for the Supreme: "Song I call, when in a plenteous soul the sweetness of eternal love with burning is taken, and thought into song is turned, and the mind into full sweet sound is changed." Chaitanya says: "O Lord, when, in taking Thy name, with tears of joy my eyes will overflow, words will be choked in my mouth, and all the hairs of my body will stand erect thrilled with joy? In the state of separation from the Lord, even the twinkling of the eye seems to me a cycle, copious tears flow from my eyes like unto the rainy season, and all the world appears to me a void." In a different language we find Kabir expressing his intoxication for God:

"He who knoweth not himself is mad;
When one knoweth himself he
knoweth the one God.

He who is not intoxicated with divine
love in this human birth shall never
be so.

Saith Kabir, I am dyed with the dye
of God."

Then, again, Mirâbai who had the 'Spiritual Marriage' like that of St. Catherine or of St. Teresa proclaims:

"I laugh when I behold my Beloved;
people think I weep.

I have planted the vine of love and
irrigated it again and again with the
water of tears,

I have cast away my fear of the
world, what can anyone do to me?
Mirâ's love for her God is fixed, come
what may."

Here is another expression of a Hindu saint, Rui Dâs:

"I am a sacrifice to Thee, O God;
 Why art Thou silent?
 For many births have I been separated
 from Thee, O God;
 This birth is on Thine own account.
 Saith Rui Dâs, putting my hopes in
 Thee, I live; it is long since I have
 seen Thee."

Jalalu'd Din, the Persian mystic, sings
 in the following manner :

"While the thought of the Beloved
 fills our hearts
 All our work is to do Him service and
 spend life for Him.
 Wherever He kindles His destructive
 torch,
 Myriads of lovers' souls are burnt
 therewith.
 The lovers who dwell within the
 sanctuary
 Are moths burnt with the torch of
 the Beloved's face,
 O heart, hasten thither ! for God will
 shine upon you,
 And seem to you a sweet garden
 instead of a terror."

III

One characteristic, common to all these mystics, is that they transform themselves into Perfect Love, and sacrifice their own selves so much that they feel their identity with Him in some form or other. These mystics very often use various kinds of symbolic languages in their mystical expressions. Their experiences sometimes come in the forms of visions, voices, and supernatural favours. The mystics who happen to be musicians, poets, painters, artists, and the like give vent to their visions in terms of their favourite arts. Besides, in the case of the mystics who are not artists in the ordinary sense, there often come to them some sorts of symbolic language to articulate

their knowledge of the Supreme. Richard Rolle used to express his mystic visions in terms of music. St. Catherine of Genoa like Hindu Yogins and mystics made use of the abstract conceptions of fire and light. Some Christian saints see the visions of Jesus and Mary, while some of the Hindu saints feel the living presence of the Deities they love. Mystics, as a rule, cannot wholly do away with symbols in order to articulate their experiences. Of course, there are mystics, in all religions and countries, who remain silent and do not or cannot express what they have experienced. In this connection E. Underhill observes : "The greatest mystics, however—Ruysbroeck, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa herself in her later stages—distinguish clearly between the indicable Reality which they perceive and the image under which they describe it. Again and again they tell us with Dionysius and Eckhart, that the Object of their contemplation 'hath no image': or with St. John of the Cross that 'the soul can never attain to the height of the divine union, so far as it is possible in this life, through the medium of any forms or figures.' Therefore the attempt which has sometimes been made to identify mysticism with such forms and figures—with visions, voices, and 'supernatural favours'—is clearly wrong." The visions, figures, voices, and supernatural favours do come to the mystics at certain stages of their spiritual development. These things we find abundantly in the lives of mystics in all countries and more or less in all religions. Except in cases of hallucination and self-delusion the visions, figures, voices, and supernatural favours have been found to transform the lives of many seekers after Truth and to give impetus to mystics in their gradual approach to the

highest form of mystic experience. There are grades of mystic development and therefore the mystic experiences in the shape of genuine divine visions, voices, figures, and supernatural favours do come within the scope of mysticism. Of course, the various forms of magic and occultism should be sharply distinguished from all forms of mysticism. A true mystic always desires more and more of the love and knowledge of God without paying attention to any supernatural phenomena. It is true that in the lives of the mystics supernatural phenomena sometimes occur, although they do never seek after them. They never make too much of them, rather the occurrences make them more humble and grateful to the Supreme who appears before them out of His infinite mercy in the forms of visions, special figures, and voices. True, they hate like filth all sorts of psychic powers and consider them to be hindrances to their high aspirations. But sometimes these events occur in their lives, which go to show the working of the Divine Will. The *Gītā* says : "Persons who, meditating on Me as non-separate, worship Me in all beings, to them thus ever jealously engaged, I carry what they lack and preserve what they already have." In the stories of the lives of mystics it is not unoften found that they get visions of many future circumstances having great significance for and bearing upon their spiritual life. Sometimes they have their unselfish desires fulfilled through supernatural agencies. Ordinary people, ignorant as they are of the workings of the Divine Will, take the extraordinary events in the lives of the mystics for so many miracles performed by themselves. True mystics never claim any credit to themselves because they are fully aware

that the Supreme alone is the Lord of all actions great and small and that He alone is the source of all their strength and the master of their body and mind. Hence, true visions, voices, and supernatural favours that God sends as blessings to His devotees can rightly fall within the scope of true mysticism.

IV

Mysticism is neither a science nor a philosophy. It is innate in man and it grows in him accordingly as the spirit in him manifests itself. It is an art inasmuch as it is the attempt to realize the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature. It differs from the intellectual and emotional life of ordinary men. It is the development of the very essence of our being. Plato recognized it as that consciousness which could comprehend the real world of ideas. Plotinus called it another intellect which is different from what reasons and is denominated rational. Mysticism is the experience of the Absolute within one's own soul and also outside it. It may not follow any strict code of dogmas, rituals, and doctrines. It may not believe in any particular theology and observe the injunctions of any particular system of spiritual endeavour. There are many different roads along which the mystics have approached the Absolute. So dogmatism finds no place in mysticism. The soul is free and every man has the right of treading the path suited to his choice and temperament. There is no knowing as to how the soul will manifest itself through a particular individual. So the mystics advocate freedom from all sorts of narrow enclosures in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of their mystic experiences.

THE HOLY MOTHER'S CONVERSATIONS

BY A DISCIPLE

Mother was sitting on her cot. I was reading out to her letters from the devotees. Krishnalal Maharaj was also present. Someone had written that the mind could not be calmed and so on. At these complaints Mother replied with some animation : "If they can repeat the Lord's name fifteen or twenty thousand times a day, they can succeed. I have seen it myself, Krishnalal; the mind really gets steady. Let them practise first; if they don't succeed then let them complain. But then, it is necessary to practise with some concentration. But, that's not to be. None will do anything, they will merely complain why they did not succeed."

A devotee questioned Mother about meditation, etc. Mother said : "Repetition of the Lord's name, telling the number on fingers, etc.—all these are for turning the mind Godwards. The mind wants to run hither and thither, yet it is drawn this way through them. When one has the vision of God or meditation in the course of repeating the Lord's name, such repetition even ceases then. If you have meditations, you have everything."

"The mind is restless, so to make it steady it is necessary at the start to try to meditate by holding the breath a little. It helps the concentration of the mind. But it should not be done too much. It heats the brain. Everything—whether it be God-realization or meditation—depends on the mind. Anything can be achieved if the mind gets steady."

"Man indeed lives in oblivion of God. So when the Lord finds it necessary,

He comes down from time to time and shows the way by practising Sâdhanâs Himself. This time He has exemplified renunciation. He has said that a hundred years hence He will live a householder's life."

One day I asked Mother : "Mother, do you not always remember your real nature?" "How can that be," replied Mother. "Can all these works be done with such consciousness? But then, whenever the desire to know comes in the midst of works, a little thinking lifts up the mind at once and reveals the play of the Mahâmâyâ." Someone said : "Mother, we are trying so much. But, we never realize it." Mother replied, "You will realize it. What anxiety can you have? You will have everything in due time."

That night the conversation went on for long. I said : "Mother, Kedar Maharaj says, 'Perform all these works with great devotion. If you do so, you will realize whatever there is to realize, without further effort.'" Mother said : "Yes, you should do work. Work keeps the mind healthy. But, repetition of the Lord's name, meditation, and prayer are also necessary. You should sit for meditation at least once in the morning and in the evening. That's like the rudder of a boat. If you sit for meditation in the evening, then all thoughts and searchings of the good and the bad you have done in the course of the day come to your mind. Next, you should compare the state of your mind with what it was the previous day. Then, you should try to meditate on the form of your chosen Ideal while telling the

Lord's name. At first the face comes before the meditating mind. But you should try to meditate on the entire form from the feet upwards. If you do not meditate and repeat the Lord's name, morning and evening, side by side with your work, how will you realize what you are doing and what not?" I said: "Some again remark that work is of no avail and that only meditation and repetition of the Lord's name will be of service." "How could they know what would be of service and what not?" queried Mother. "Is everything achieved by practising meditation and repeating the Lord's name a few days? Unless Mahâmâyâ puts away the obstacles on the way nothing whatever will be of avail. You saw the other day how one deranged the mind by trying to meditate and repeat the Lord's name too much. If the mind becomes deranged what remains? The mind is like a screw, if it gets twisted this side a little it either gets deranged or is caught in the net of Mahâmâyâ, and flattered with

the belief that it is wise it thinks 'I am quite happy.' Again if it is twisted in the opposite direction a little, it moves on the right path and enjoys peace and happiness. One should always remember, and pray to Him, 'Lord, give me good sense.' How many can meditate and repeat the Lord's name always? They do a little at the start. Afterwards they become puffed with pride like N—and become miserable by thinking all kinds of trash things. It is far better to do work instead of giving reins to the mind by keeping it idle. The mind creates all kinds of troubles once the reins are handed to it. My Naren (Vivekananda) started selfless work in view of all these." Hinting at N., Mother continued: "Look at him, how impure his mind has become by continuous idling! How he is becoming a mere faddist for purity. And he complains of disquiet! Why so much disquiet? He gets no enlightenment even after so much experience!"

CROSS AND EAGLE*

BY COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

It is not true that a change in the conception of what Christianity represents is equivalent to de-Christianization. On the contrary, a deeper understand-

ing, in case religious and metaphysical experience remains what it was, would signify absolute progress. In this sense we are now in a position to understand

* I am offering herewith to the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata* the principal part of the chapter "Suffering" of my *Buch vom Persönlichen Leben* (The introduction to which was published in India in the May issue, 1936, of *Visva-Bharati*) of which a French edition will be published under the title *From Suffering to Fulfilment* by the Librairie Stock of Paris in November 1937. It deals with the two poles of spiritual life on this earth, one of which is symbolized by the Roman Eagle, the other by the Christian Cross. Obviously, it deals with them from a Western standpoint and in the context of present-day Western history. But since today there exist only planetary problems, I think that these considerations apply in principle to other continents as well. The reader will surely grasp my fundamental meaning in spite of the fragmentary character of this essay which has been cut out of a much wider whole.

better than ever before the deeper significance of the Cross. The symbol of the Cross cannot be comprehended in all its spiritual bearing if it is considered separated from that of the Eagle, under the triumphant sign of which it rose to the height of glory. Only two and no more creative attitudes of mind are possible in man with regard to reality: one is that of completely apprehending or conquering the objective world and the other of being completely apprehended or conquered by it—in other words, of complete emotional possessedness. We shall in the following name the two principles that of possession and that of possessedness. The first leads to self-control and mastery over the world. Every form of successful active life presupposes this attitude, its supreme expression is the hero. But if the hero would alone directly transform the non-Ego in the widest sense and impress upon it his being and individuality, he would himself have little inner experience and would not change himself. His symbol would be therefore steel or granite. Steadfastness and constancy are his highest resort in inner life. This mode of being, which for the Western world has found its prototype in the antique hero, found its supreme national expression in ancient Romanism, which lived under the sign of the Eagle with an exclusiveness which has never been equalled either before or after.

Now, when this sign reached the zenith of the heaven of its significance and power, and when everything was being explained under its sign, then for the first time in history the symbol of the Cross not only beamed forth, but it did so with such immeasurable vehemence and intensity, that in course of a few centuries it conquered the whole empire of the Eagle from within. The significance of this inter-relation has been expressed by one word of Christ:

“What would be the benefit of man if he wins the whole world but brings harm to his soul!” The pure eagle-man does not think of it at all; his life is an altogether objective one,—work, efficiency, struggle, victory or defeat, death and the objective continuance of life and its continued effectiveness in memory as crystallized into fame, lends significance to his whole life; he is not concerned with what he himself experiences therein or what would become of himself. Thus his sacrificing his life, for which he is ever prepared, signifies even more than it is: it signifies complete sacrifice of the subject himself. From this point of view it will be clear, in what sense the *exclusive* eagle-man represents the *evil* principle when judged spiritually. In the chapter “The ethical problem” of my “The Recovery of Truth” (London, Cape) it was shown that evil is a necessity in the living process, on the one hand as the destructive component in life which in every one of its moments is construction and destruction at the same time, and on the other, for the sake of creating frontiers and boundaries. It is not necessary therefore to revert to this theme here. But however necessary it might be for the living process: Evil still remains Evil; he who denies that robs the evil precisely of its positive meaning. And the more Evil becomes absolute, i.e., detaches itself from the connection with good, the more evil does it become in the generally accepted negative sense. Thus the pure eagle-man is actually that beast of prey, as which Oswald Spengler, who was absolutely blind spiritually, has described man in general. Beasts of prey however are enemies of all life which may serve them as food. Such were the Romans in their great days; in order to know what they were essentially, it would not do to question them—the

conquerors, but those who were conquered and ruled by them. And beasts of prey they were felt to be in those days by those who then stood for the future, i.e., the fathers of the Christian church. The exclusive eagle-man represents, when spiritually analysed, not the good but the evil principle, and there is nothing to modify or change this fact. The very fact that subjective life means nothing to the eagle-man is enough to prove this: in so far as he ignores the subjective in him he gives away what alone has intrinsic spiritual value. The external expression of this essentially evil quality is that the eagle-man, inasmuch as and in so far as he takes no account of his own self, is indifferent also towards others. Hence the horrible cruelty and hardness of all the peoples of European antiquity, particularly of the Jews who in their peculiar way stressed the eagle-principle with extreme one-sidedness. In their great days, everything was "objective" in their eyes: what mattered to them was fulfilment of law and not inner attitude. Judged from the point of view of posterity *they* are the true fathers of modern world—mastery in all non-military and non-political respects. How inevitably every exclusively ruling eagle-ethos leads to a supremacy of Evil is proved today symbolically by America, where everybody in smiling and friendly connivance claims for himself the basic right of throwing millions into misery and death for the sake of a favourable balance-sheet, and where the exclusive bent on success in the world thwarts the soul to such a degree as was perhaps never witnessed before.¹ And this is proved finally by the direct and conscious hostility against the soul of Bolshevism, murdering millions and persecuting every

faith in things of higher value. It need not surprise my readers that I refer Americanism, Judaism and Bolshevism also to the eagle-principle: if the hero is the prototype of its principle and Romanism the highest expression it has hitherto ever achieved, there are yet innumerable inferior forms of appearance,—for instance the destroyers without any sense of purpose like the Mongolian Khans; the adventurer who without any thought of benefiting himself or others again and again endangers his life; the profiteer who tries to take advantage, equally superficially, of every possible chance conjuncture; and the empty intellectual as violator of the world. But even the highest expressions of eagle-hood stand for the evil principle. The soldier however pure in mind has to kill and destroy and no interpretation can change the originally evil meaning of this activity. And if today, under the sign of a new orientation towards the pre-Christian hero-ethos, *every* kind of subjectivism is derided as clinging to the "narrow ego", and killing is felt to be a matter of course and the problem of immortality is no longer raised, this proves the same emphasis on hard and pitiless eagle-ship, thanks to whose unchallenged supremacy Christ's word on the loss of soul, which no earthly gain could compensate, could produce such tremendous effect.

At that time, in that Kairós, when the eagle was more omnipotent than ever, its absolute value and its birth-right to grow dawned for the first time on the spiritualized soul. This consciousness was of course awakened in the orient at a much earlier date, but still it is permissible to write "for the first time", because only in contrast to the triumphing Eagle the whole significance of the Cross could become clear with overwhelming force. Now it was felt by man: more important than ruling

¹ Cf. my analysis of the American soul in *America Set Free* (London, Jonathan Cape).

the world is to transform one's own self *in order to grow in spirit*. For that however is necessary an attitude of mind quite opposite to that of the eagle: the attitude of primary attention to one's own and other people's soul, recognizing as supreme value the *subject* within one-self and others which is ignored by the eagle. The way to one's own self however does not lie from conquest to conquest but from one complete emotional surrender to another.

In order to show how enormous is the orbit of this idea,—much wider than the compass of what has been hitherto associated with the symbol of the Cross, I reiterate here firstly what early in 1932 I wrote on the occasion of Leo Frobenius's "Schicksals-Kunde", for I can think of no better way of expressing, what is needful in this connection than by referring to Frobenius's discoveries in the field of cultural morphology. "According to Frobenius the true cultural history of mankind progresses not from concept to concept but rather from one emotional surrender to another in a ceaseless stream. Concepts, by means of which the world of actuality is mastered, are the last forms of expression of a pre-existing feeling of life; everything that can be secondarily interpreted as a leading idea or a prominent principle, makes its appearance at first as involuntary and not-understood expression. Thus man has been "possessed" of this or that particular side of the total actuality in a sequence of single direction, as in the case of time, or periodically, or from one country to another. And the particular cultural structure then results *a posteriori* from the particular kind of emotional obsession. Thus at various times the symbol of the animal or the plant or the sun or the moon or the observed creative nature or a spiritual yonder world experienced as actuality got complete hold

of the imagination of men. Once thus possessed, they were unable to experience anything in a different way than is determined by their pre-existing possessedness. However, as soon as the trance of the possessed people was broken, the individuality of the particular culture lost all of a sudden its vital roots. Similarly sharp and clear cut are the spatial frontiers which separate different feelings of life. Thus we know today that from paleolithic days an unsurmountable boundary line separating different conceptions of life ran over the Vosges ridge. . . . The last possessedness of the Occidental man has been *through facts*. Facts in the modern sense were hardly noticed before the 18th century. But from the 19th they monopolized attention with an exclusiveness as in previous times only magical phenomena could impress consciousness. This fact of being possessed by facts alone—which possessedness is exactly of the same type as any other—and *not* any really achieved consolidated intellectual progress, explains the gigantic dynamism of this technical age. But as soon as the trance of this possessedness shall cease—all the problems which were brought to the fore for the first time in the 18th century, would be done for."

The heathen Romans too were of course "possessed": namely by the pathos of devotion to the *res publica*. But as pure eagle-men they were possessed only "objectively", and moreover their main interest was politics and therewith the impersonal and blind world of Gana. For that reason the problem of personal possessedness presented itself to them perhaps less urgently than to any other people of historical importance. And precisely for that reason the Stoa could mean to them the last word of philosophy. As against this, the Christian impulse

effected a sudden and equally exclusive accentuation of the pole exactly opposite to that of the Eagle : this is the pole of the Cross. But here it was not only a question of possessedness by something particular, the precondition not merely of all experience but also of all activity—without burning zeal for an object no one can devote his whole energy to it—but *the highest appreciation of the possessedness in itself under the sign of truthfulness.*

This sentence gives the kernel of Christianity. It proves at the same time finally that the Christus-impulse is indeed a decisive step forward in the process of the in-break of spirit, and that this is the essence of Christianity. The eagle-man wishes only to possess the world; not only the question of personal possessedness, but, above all else, even that of truth has no significance for him, excepting in the sense that truth can be a means to attain and exercise power. That is why statesmen and generals lie and betray so naively whenever it may be of use to them. Now the *Spirit* can grow only under the sign of truth;—its symbol is the beaming clear light. Spiritual truth however does not signify congruence of representation and being on the plane of projection of scientific knowledge, but truthfulness. That is why Christ for the first time in the Occident continually harped on the turn of speech that he himself was Truth. Therewith we have returned to the first proposition of this chapter about the significance of suffering and the Cross, and may now proceed further. We wrote : “every man who is at all conscious of his own self is forced by his deep solitary being out of the fixations of the empirical plane. He feels : I ought to see life just as it actually is, for from the depth of my soul I wish it. I ought to find a new internal equi-

brium in the sign of truthfulness, for otherwise I shall never find peace. Yet for the fulfilment of this mission even the deepest man in its entirety is not ripe at the beginning : only a complete metamorphosis can create in him the new inner state he aspires to. This process is however painful. And herein lies the whole of the deep sense of suffering.” Christianity does not stop at suffering in itself. It requires acceptance of and consentment to suffering for the sake of truthfulness : Firstly in the sense that this life for the most part consists of painful experiences, and truthfulness requires it to be seen just as it is. Secondly—and this is most important—the growth of the spirit can be effected only by stressing truthfulness as such. The radical difference between Christ and Buddha may be perceived here, and it shows at the same time the former’s greater spiritual depth. Buddha was spiritually more “awakened” than Christ, and he is therefore precisely at this day one of the guiding stars of the first magnitude for the whole of humanity.* Yet he did not preach acceptance of and consentment to suffering, but rather its elimination through a proper process of psycho-analysis. For that reason Buddhism in its own time could not initiate a historical progress. But precisely in this connection it becomes clear how absurd it is to make of Christ an “heroic” man as is done today by so many Germans. The courage of being possessed by all suffering and therewith of taking the Cross on oneself, is indeed courage of the highest order. But if it is the function of words to help man to discriminate, then Christ was no hero, but precisely his antipole : the sufferer, the man of pain endured.

* I have shown this at length in *Creative Understanding and The Recovery of Truth* (English Edition, London, Cape).

But he was this in the positive sense—not in the negative, as is considered by the spiritually blind people of today. He was no weakling, and none of those who are prone to avoid difficulties, and no seeker of peace at any price. But Christ was a sufferer also in quite a different sense than, for instance, the “divine sufferer” Odysseus. The latter had of course to pass through much that is unpleasant, he also complains against it, but it could not transform him and it was not even accepted in advance that there might be anything positive in his suffering. As regards suffering, issueless tragedy was the last word of the Greeks. As opposed to this Christian suffering signifies, again, acceptance of suffering under the sign of truth and truthfulness as the only way to creative internal metamorphosis.

This characteristic then distinguishes the Christus-mythos radically from all those numerous ones about the suffering and dying and resurrected gods. Of course the Christus-mythos has absorbed in itself all those older myths of this type which were current within its sphere of expansion, with the result that it has now become difficult to historical study and text-exegesis to draw exact boundaries. But, as we have said before, considerations of these disciplines are irrelevant to essential problems. The ancient myth of the martyred and dying god was interpreted by the Christians—but only by them—in the sense that the bad and the evil may prove to be such efficient instruments of self-realization that the God-head himself did not disdain to suffer death in the most shameful way. The older suffering and dying gods were merely “divine sufferers”; they were tragic heroes of the kind of Christ as interpreted by the German-Christians, a latter-day German sect. In so far however as they were heroes, their exist-

ence too was impersonal and objective in the previously determined sense; i.e. not the personal and intimate experience with its personal results, but the objective historical situation with its externally comprehensible consequences was the main thing in it. Now it cannot be denied that not only Paul but also Jesus himself had thought in a similar way: i.e. to him too the thing of primary importance was the objectively planned redemption of mankind and its ultimate fulfilment. Yet precisely at this point it dawns upon us with perfect clarity, how little importance attaches to historical considerations in religious and metaphysical connections: what matters is spiritual *being*, and it is not necessary that its possessor should properly recognize it. For everyone, including the greatest and the freest of men, is bound by the tradition within which he grew. Whatever not only Paul but even Jesus may have thought for themselves—the true, and in its deepest sense original and essential Christian “fact” was that which from century to century has affirmed its differential modality in ever greater relief. Today this cannot be said with too much emphasis, for the whole future of the achievements of the Christian era depends upon it: The soul of Christian truth does *not* depend upon the truth of Jewish or pre-Christian eschatology, and neither upon the conformity to reality of the ideas of expiation, redemption, hereditary sin, of sin in any one of its many Christian meanings, and not at all upon a particular dogmatism as such. All dogmas and doctrines are rather attempts to comprehend the fundamental experience of Christianity in a manner susceptible of transference by means of thought, which naturally was more difficult, the more the unconscious of the Christians was attached to pre-Christian ideas,—that is

to say, it was most difficult at the beginning of our era. Moreover all particular teachings are but reading new meanings into old forms—a hitherto unused but important and necessary word, for an unusual quantity of spiritual facts are founded on it. Everybody knows that the dramatic poet requires a pre-existing theme, in which to plunge his whole mind, out of which at-onement there then emerges a creation so original that no one ever thinks of the alien element. Now the course of every man is the same as that of the dramatic artist, inasmuch as he endeavours to realize his own self. The spirit realizes itself always in projections; but it can project itself only on what is existing. The more it is possessed by it in the sense explained above, the more of his intrinsically own—not the more of what is alien to him—comes into existence. This is the explanation of the fact that ever again has mankind interpreted the whole universe into one particular book—I am thinking here not only of the sacred books, but also of the *Odyssey* which was regarded by the Greeks as a text-book of morals, of the *Divine Comedy*, of *Faust*, and even of Hitler's *My Struggle*—, and that on one and the same text, about the exact meaning of which much honest labour was lost, have been founded the most different and mutually antagonistic philosophies, theologies and theologies. From this does not follow however that such practice should be condemned: but rather how necessary it is to most men to pay allegiance to certain adopted texts. Otherwise they cannot realize their own selves.

The differential significance of the symbol of the Cross as opposed to that of the Eagle, and therewith of Christianity as opposed to antique heathendom, is, if expressed in the language which is best understood today, that suffering

accepted and borne and consented to in the spirit of truthfulness *changes man* and herewith advances the process of the inbreak of spirit. At least in one respect the Christian spirit is not only the opposite pole but also the exact opposite of the spirit of antique heathendom: while the latter forbids dwelling on suffering, the former rests solely and wholly on one's voluntarily confessing the suffering to one's own self. External victories may be the easiest to fight out, when personal experience is laughed away, but inner progress is completely dependent on surrender to the process of inner progress. And this and this alone was the original purpose of Christianity. More than any other religion of the world, Christianity subordinates everything to the growth of the spirit. Whatever facilitates this growth is good, whatever retards it is evil. This proves suffering to be better than triumph. For only he who completely confesses to himself what is going on in him, only he who deepens and accentuates his experience as much as possible through attentiveness to it,—only he achieves spiritualization deeper than from what he started. Such confession is however always without exception closely bound up with pain and suffering. Self-analysis, searching of conscience, internal struggle, conquest of one's own self, repentance—they are all processes of inner metabolism which give pain. And only those can achieve true progress who do not stun their pain, but who take upon themselves everything under the symbol of supreme truthfulness.

Thus it is that the Cross, the Cross which is voluntarily taken up and borne, is actually the only way to greater spiritualization. This paradox (from the standpoint of all occidental pre-Christian history) explains all the exaggerations of truth which were given

credence to in Europe time and again, such as the consentment to or even the glorification of dishonour, infamy, disgrace, contemnedness, and of misery, ugliness and disease. These exaggerations in their deepest sense do not mean reaction against or over-compensation of antique lordliness, but only an over-emphasis of the truth that intense possessedness in proper attitude conjures the greatest internal transformations leading to the greatest creativeness in the positive sense. Precisely this fact explains these epidemics of longing after suffering which have time and again raged within the sphere of Christianity, be it in the shape of self-flagellation or other kinds of mortification; and it also explains the astonishing popularity which has been always enjoyed by the preachers of hard penance also without the Christian cosmos. Even in the greatest artistic age of Florence no Florentine had enjoyed such popularity which fell to the share of Savonarola, whose request was precisely to sacrifice all that was beautiful. This is something quite different from the mortification of the flesh, the cult of which has been developed most by the Indians and the Tibetans. Such mortification attaches no value to suffering for its own sake; it should only serve to steel the will, to liberate the spirit, and elevate the soul through established training. Both the Yogi and the Jesuit lay as little emphasis on suffering as the sport-trainer. But in the case of the Christian, voluntary acceptance of the Cross accepted and emphasized suffering for its own sake means the way to salvation.

Now let us look back: has there ever been a thoughtful race of man which did not know this? Why have they never imagined the intellectually and spiritually great ones to be happy men? Why have they rather always demanded

that they should be subjected to more ordeals than the lesser men? For the rest the world-process is full to overflowing of the required suffering. He who has meditated my *South American Meditations* knows how absolutely nature is contrary to all norms of the spirit which represents the true inner norm of man. The more a man grows greater and higher in spirit, the more deeply does he feel the conflict with the non-spiritual in him, which is yet a part of him, and which he is not able to modify according to his ideal. All that is pure and noble and profound, however, cannot but provoke the hatred and mortal enmity of all that is ugly and lowly and superficial. There has never been as yet any notable exception to this rule.

This is the individual side of the kernel of Christianity in relation to Occidental history. The social side of it is represented by the fact that the stressing of one's own suffering induces the capacity for suffering with and for others, that is the capacity for sympathy, owing to which the voluntary acceptance of suffering awakens the desire to improve the world. One is gripped by horror when one realizes how natural was the conception of slavery even to such lofty spirits as Plato and Aristotle,—even though the slaves might have been princes even yesterday. They did not even raise the problem that slaves should not be treated in a manner unworthy of man. They absolutely lacked that imagination of the heart which is lacking even today in most Asiatics. This imagination is awakened only through the voluntary acceptance and stressing of suffering. It is clearly possible, for all experience proves it to be so, that even men who are otherwise good and profound in mind maltreat other beings in the most cruel manner whom they consider to be of lower niveau, if they have never confessed

to themselves their own suffering. If from this standpoint we consider the most normal phenomena not only of the pre-Christian, but of the Christian era, then it becomes clear to us, to what a degree the message of the Cross is of eternal actuality. Today particularly the small people, whose life is hard and who have to be hard against each other in order to be able to live at all are most pitiless towards their own class. Rarely do they concede to each other the right of falling sick, rarely do they spare each other, and rarely any sympathy is shown when one loses one's means of livelihood. Among peasants whose fundamental qualities for some undefined reasons seem to be parsimony and close-fistedness all over the world, are met with quite often even in present-day Germany conditions similar to those so powerfully described by Jeremias Gotthelf with reference to Switzerland; that the poor are as a matter of course despised and derided and treated as without any rights so far as it is permitted by law. This hardness of small people is much harder than anything ever evinced by clan-arrogance, for even though the man of noble lineage or high position may not consider the common man to be of the same status as himself, yet he feels no envy towards him and usually does him good voluntarily as best as he understands it. Where however the upper classes are very hard and cruel to the common man, it is always of a piece with the obduracy which they bring to bear on their own selves. The most unchristian of all phenomena in this respect is the characteristic behaviour of the intellectuals towards each other. For reciprocal generosity of even the slightest degree is a rarity among them. Shamefully they envy each other in the acrimonious intent of mutual disservice, excepting when they belong to the same coterie or fight on the same

front, in which case the mechanism of identification may deaden the envy and finally carry off the palm. From this point of view the position of the majority of German intellectuals is quite horrible since Nietzsche and his pupils furnished them with the weapons of psychoanalysis and characterology with which to supply an unconscious evil motive to every conscious thought or to interpret all that is noble in the light of baseness, and to contemplate all celestial phenomena in the perspective of the netherworld. But even these, which are perhaps the most repulsive of moral aberrations known in history, are in the first instance characterized by the fact that they do not confess to themselves their own essential being; they transfer it to others and ab-react thereby, in the form of malicious joy, what they themselves had suffered and what could have ennobled them. The most harmless, but unfortunately the most frequent form at the same time of unchristian absence of imagination of the heart is the tacit approval of the suffering of those whom they recognize to be spiritually great: they do not take part in the suffering, which would be of benefit also to them, but harden their heart under the pretext that the suffering redounds to the benefit of those who suffer. Also those who thus refuse to suffer themselves are in truth being hard on their own selves; for they miss the view of their own real condition and in this way conjure up horrible consequences in the form of disease, murder, starvation, extermination, etc., so that they would have had to admit afterwards if they could have understood what they do: "We have been more pitiless to ourselves than others have ever been." Wherever people are thus hard on themselves, the ancient Roman proverb may be applied: *homo homini lupus*. And there is only one way to

awaken heart's imagination and there-with sympathy: To confess to oneself one's own suffering.

Now, if this happens in the profundity of heart, then the hardness melts away in the long run of itself; it then becomes physiologically incapable of further existence. This explains that the Christus-impulse, however hard Jesus might have been on all who did not belong to him, however loveless and cruel ideas are bound up, even to this day, due to the literal-minded belief in the texts derived from pre-Christian times, with the religion of love, has slowly but irresistibly effected progressive humanisation, and on the other it also explains why this is true only of the Christus-impulse. Neither in Indian Bhakti, nor in Buddhistic pity, and neither in the culture of the emotions of Confucianism, is there any stimulus to make life better and easier for all. The Indian thinks only of his own solitary self; only for the sake of this self, and not for the sake of others, would he be good and charitable. The Chinese of the classical age was charitable only towards those with whom he stood in one of the recognized forms of relation. Unless touched by the Christus-impulse none can realize the Christian attitude to one's own suffering, thanks to which, in creative metamorphosis of the soul, suffering leads man to feel sympathy for all suffering and enables him to carry not only his

own cross but also that of all others. Herein lies the *eternal* significance of the symbol of Christ's death for the deliverance of all. No other religion has produced such saints as Dostoievski's Starez Sossima who sincerely believed to be himself guilty of all the crimes of others. Thanks to the reception of the Christus-impulse, we Occidentals, originally hard-hearted and loveless compared with Oriental peoples, have drawn most of the practical consequences that can be derived from the power of sympathy. The Christian attitude awakens and fosters, shapes and intensifies precisely the imagination of the heart. The man in whom it is very much alive, suffers in the most personal sense, not less from other people's sufferings than from his own. Rather he suffers more from them. Strictly speaking, almost every one can endure what befalls him personally. But only those who lack imagination can stand the suffering of others, for to the spirit which lives out his life in the form of images, representation is more important than actuality. The direction which the imagination would take with regard to the nearest depends on free stressing. It is the greatest social achievement of Christianity for the benefit of mankind to have initiated this new orientation.¹

¹ (Translated from German by Batakrisna Ghosh, Esq., Dr. Phil. (Munich), Litt. (Paris), Membre de la Societe Asiatique de Paris, Lecturer, University of Calcutta and revised by the author.)

ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE AND POPULAR RELIGION

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA, M.A.

Yogirâj Gambhîrâth was described by other saints of recognized spiritual insight as Mâyâtita (one who has transcended the world of Mâyâ), Trigunâtita (above the influence of three gunas, viz. Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas), Yuktayogi (a *yogi* whose entire nature remains consciously unified with Brahman or Âtman in the midst of all the changing external circumstances), and so on. He had reached the highest stage of Vedântic knowledge, attained the supreme ideal of Yoga, experienced the identity of himself and all other jivas with Brahman and realized the world as the diversified manifestations of the non-dual Absolute. By prolonged practice he had brought down this Samâdhijâ Prajñâ (the supreme knowledge attained in the deepest trance) into his normal course of life. Meditation became his normal nature. It is at this stage that he took charge of his Guru's Âsrama, the Gorakhnath Temple, at Gorakhpur and came in social contact with the people of the world.

Though himself above all differences of the actual and the ideal, bondage and liberation, the worshipper and the Deity, etc., he in his Âsrama-life strictly complied with the requirements of popular religion, as enjoined by the Sâstras. In conducting the affairs of the Âsrama and in giving instruction to the people at large, he never ignored the importance of popular rites and ceremonies and the Sâstric modes of worshipping the Deity in diverse names and forms. He himself set examples by offering such worship and arranging such ceremonies. When asked about

the efficacy of such ceremonial worship of different gods and goddesses for the fulfilment of particular desires and for advancement in spiritual life, he gently replied that no doubt should be cherished with regard to what the Rishis had prescribed in the Sâstras. He also declared that gods and goddesses really existed as the regulators of particular departments of the phenomenal world, that they were the moral and spiritual powers governing from behind the natural forces, the courses of physical phenomena and of human destinies, that those who worshipped them with faith and earnestness could have direct intercourse with them and have their prayers granted by them. But, he reminded the truth-seekers, they were all non-different from God the Absolute, they were the self-manifestations of God with various qualifications and with diverse names and forms and having special connections with special departments of the physical and mental universe. So long as the world of diversities appeared to be real, he explained, the deities should not be regarded as unreal, since both were manifestations in diverse names and forms of the same Absolute Reality, though the reality of both were phenomenal (Vyâvahârika), the deities represented higher orders of phenomenal reality than the objects of sensuous experience, because in the former the nature and power of God were mirrored in a far greater degree and clearer form than in the latter. Ultimately all were Brahman and Brahman was all, and nothing but Brahman really existed.

The life and teachings of this saint of Gorakhpur showed that the apparent conflict between reason and faith, philosophical truth and popular beliefs, reflection and meditation on the One without a second and ceremonial worship of gods and goddesses, living the life of freedom and willing obedience to the commands of the scriptures and the society, appeared to be irreconcilable only so long as reason did not reach the height of spiritual self-realization and stand face to face with the ultimate object of its quest. Reason at first asserts itself in human nature as a rebellious child. It revolts against whatever stands in the way of its free self-expression and self-development. In its quest of Truth it moves onward with implicit faith in the infallibility of the abstract principles of Formal Logic and declares a merciless crusade against whatever apparently fails to satisfy their demands. In its growing success it forgets the limitations of the principles it relies on. Proud of its discovery of higher and higher abstract truths, it becomes more and more indifferent to the concrete manifestations and embodiment of those truths in particular forms realizable to commonsense. The higher and higher abstract universal concepts, farther and farther from the particular names and forms and the objects of sense-experience, are accepted as representing the truer and truer characters of Reality, and the concrete realities of popular experience are rejected as false. The highest Truth of reason is thus found to be the most abstract and farthest from the world of concrete experience. But the knowledge of all such rational truths and even of the ultimate Truth is indirect and cannot finally satisfy the demand of reason itself. It feels a yearning for coming face to face with Truth, and the satisfaction of this yearning requires pro-

longed spiritual self-discipline and deep meditation. When by this means Truth is directly realized, the Absolute Reality reveals Its perfect character to such concrete experience of the purified soul. The conflict between reason and common sense then disappears. Reason had laid undue emphasis on the abstract aspect of Truth, and common sense upon its diverse names and forms. Common sense had regarded these diverse names and forms as realities, and reason revolted against this and conceived of the abstract principle as the Reality. But the closest acquaintance with the nature of Reality obtained through spiritual discipline and meditation reveals that there is truly no difference between them, that the concrete many are the diverse self-manifestations of the Abstract one. The One and the many are not mutually contradictory, but in each of the many the One embodies and enjoys Itself, not partly, but wholly, though in various forms. A man of true insight sees the One in Its perfect glory everywhere in all the sensible forms. So long as this experience is not attained, knowledge is not perfect. Whether we speak of the knowledge of Brahman or the knowledge of the world, the knowledge remains imperfect until and unless Brahman is experienced as shining in all Its glory in the diverse phenomena of the world and the world is experienced as a spiritual entity non-different from Brahman.

This knowledge being attained, nothing is looked down upon, nothing appears to be insignificant or contemptible, nothing becomes a source of disgust or uneasiness or agitation. Everything can then be truly appreciated in its essential moral and spiritual relation to its immediate surroundings as well as to the world system and also as a particular form of the self-expression of Brahman. The entire world of experience

with all its diversities appears as good, beautiful, and blissful. There is no ground why at this stage of the self-fulfilment of the rational consciousness of man the popular forms of worship and the socio-religious rites and ceremonies prevalent among the different sections of humanity should be detested or discouraged or abandoned as superstitions.

What is realized as true, good, beautiful, and blissful in the highest plane of spiritual consciousness by the Mahâpurushas is put before the people in general as the ideal to be pursued by them. What is real to the Siddhas (the men of realization) is the ideal to the Sâdhakas (the aspirants). The approved social customs and habits, the religious rites and ceremonies, the diverse forms of the worship of gods and goddesses,—all these are enjoined by the Sâstras and encouraged by the Mahâpurushas as means to the Sâdhakas' realization of Absolute Truth, Absolute Good, Absolute Beauty, and Absolute Bliss, which characterize the Absolute Reality as experienced by the self-fulfilled Mahâpurushas and the Absolute Ideal as sought to be attained by the aspirant for self-fulfilment. The Mahâpurushas enjoy the various rituals and practices as the particular concrete forms, in which the Absolute Truth—Beauty—Good—Bliss embodies and enjoys Itself, and the Sâdhakas are encouraged to have recourse to them for the culture of relative truth, beauty, good, and bliss, and to cultivate the habit of contemplating them from the viewpoint of the Mahâpurushas for the progressive approach to the realization of the Absolute Ideal-Reality.

It is in this light that Mahâpurusha Gambhirnath viewed and taught the people to regard all kinds of rituals and practices. To disdain them, as many so-called rationalists do, was according to him the sign of our ignorance or partial

view of Reality. He did not allow any negligence of the prescribed forms of worship in the temple and he himself took part in them. He went round the temple (Pradakshin) and attended the Ârati (light-waving, etc.) along with the other Sâdhus and Bhaktas (devotees). He had definite instructions to the Pujâri (the Sâdhu in charge of the regular worship of the Deity) and other Sâdhus not to be indifferent to the rituals.

Yogirâj Gambhirnath, though himself always in the meditative mood, offered special encouragement to Jâtrâ-bhinaya (itinerant religious dramatic performances), Râma-lilâbhinaya (dramatic performances depicting the life-story of Râma, the ideal man-god of India), Kirtan and Bhajan (religious songs), etc. The professional parties that specialized in them used to come to the Âsrama, sometimes on their own initiative and sometimes on invitation, to entertain the Sâdhus and Bhaktas. Yogirâj asked the officers of the temple to make arrangements for their performance and himself encouraged them by his presence and kind look of approbation. He used to explain in a few words to those around him that these were not mere amusements, but national educational institutions which moved from place to place and imparted highly useful education to the mass of people with regard to the various aspects of the domestic, social, political, moral, and religious ideals and duties of the Hindus. Being given in the garb of amusements, the truths appealed directly to the heart and became very effective. The truths discovered and cultured by the highest in the society naturally flowed to the lowest through these institutions. No more effective means for mass education could be conceived.

He also pointed out that these institutions had also a powerful liberalizing influence upon the outlook of the people. They generally based their instruction and entertainment upon the stories of the *Râmâyana*, the *Mahâbhârata* and the *Purânas*. The stringent rules and regulations, the elaborate rites and ceremonies, the distinctive forms of worship and discipline, which were based on the injunctions of the *Vedas*, the *Smritis* and the *Tantras*, represented one side of Hinduism. The lives of Râma and Krishna, the principles illustrated in the anecdotes described in the *Râmâyana*, the *Mahâbhârata*, and the different *Purânas*, the religious songs composed by the mystic poets, the stories about the ways of conduct of the *Jivanmuktas* and the *Bhâgabatas* of different ages, etc. constituted another side of Hinduism. The two sides were complementary to each other. The one side lay greater emphasis upon the discipline and purification of the body and the mind and the necessary segregation of oneself from all possible undesirable influences. This, if not properly understood, might have a tendency to create a narrowness of outlook and an undue attachment to ritualism and mechanical obedience to rules. The other side therefore laid greater emphasis upon universal moral culture, the culture of altruistic feelings and social virtues, the cherishing of humanitarian and cosmopolitan ideals and the breaking of artificial barriers raised through attachment to ritualism. The proper harmony of these two sides, emphasized by the two classes of scriptures and their exponents, was necessary for the entire moral and spiritual character of man being perfectly built up and led towards the realization of Absolute Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Bliss. The strict conformity to the rules of discipline imposed by the scriptures

and the Âchâryas recognized by the society and the community to which one belongs and the spiritualization and universalization of outlook were both necessary for harmonious self-development and self-perfection. The contribution made towards this end by the popular *Jâtrâ* etc., was considerable. It helped greatly also in bringing together on the same level of moral, spiritual, intellectual, and æsthetic culture the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, the *Sâdhus* and the householders, the followers of different sectarian forms of worship, the men brought up under different social customs, etc., who together constituted the Indian Society. The Mohammedan and the Christian masses also were brought under the influence of Hindu culture to a great extent by the charm of these institutions. Bâbâ Gambhirnath used occasionally to attract the attention of his English-educated and partially westernized disciples and admirers towards the great part played by these instruments of mass education in the development of the moral, spiritual, intellectual, and æsthetic culture of this great country.

Yogirâj Gambhirnath, though himself above all sense of difference between man and man and even between man and insect, free from all prejudices with regard to food and touch and other social customs, and always dwelling in the highest spiritual plane of consciousness, did not approve of the wilful violation of the long-standing social and religious customs and restrictions by the men of ordinary intellectual and moral calibre. He held that such violation contributed little to any desirable reform, but did considerable injury to the transgressors by taking away the social restraint upon their sensuous propensities and capricious desires and the

spirit of indiscipline. Real reform, he taught, could be accomplished by men extraordinarily gifted for the purpose,—by men of true insight into the inner life of the society and the spirit of the age. For leading a well-disciplined life and preparing the body and the mind for the pursuit of higher ideals, an ordinary individual ought to abide by the rules and regulations which the society and the Sâstras as interpreted by the recognized Âchâryas enjoined upon him. These rules and regulations were not of course eternal. They were liable to change, the underlying spirit and purpose were eternal and would remain the same. When in future these present rules would be repealed and new rules should take their place, the future generations of men should, with the same moral and spiritual end in view, follow the new rules and violate the repealed ones.

Though holding such views, with regard to the mode of life of ordinary men, his own catholicity and generosity found expression off and on in his dealings with men and things. Let me give an illustration. One day he was sitting still in his habitual mood on a terrace in front of the main temple. An educated Bengali disciple was by his side. A well-dressed young woman alighted from a carriage, approached the temple, entered into the inner compartment of the temple, bowed down with deep reverence before the altar, came out and made obeisance to Bâbâji and

went away. Though her behaviour was in every respect like that of a pious lady, it somehow struck the disciple that she was a prostitute, and he was wondering how she could be allowed to enter into the temple. Yogirâj read his thought and in a tone full of kindness and love said that even she being a Hindu was entitled to enter the shrine. A new truth was revealed to the disciple. Even a prostitute by profession, an outcaste in the eyes of society and kept at a distance by every decent gentleman, was entitled to enter into the inner compartment of a temple, stand in the closest proximity to the Deity, and offer worship to Him, because she was a *Hindu*, because she was a believer in the Hindu Deities, the Hindu ideals, the Hindu forms of worship, the Hindu scriptures and the Hindu manners and customs. On account of her immoral practices her company might reasonably be forsaken by the pious men of the society; but she was not on that account forsaken by the merciful Deity. The Deity accepted worship from and took mercy on, all those who sincerely believed in Him and offered their hearts to Him. All persons, virtuous or vicious, belonged to the Deity; but the Deity belonged exclusively to none. A true believer in the Deity had no moral or religious right to debar another believer from access to the Deity on the ground of the latter's low birth or immoral conduct.

BRAHMACHARYA OR CONTINENCE

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

In "Sayings of Brother Giles" it is said: "He who wishes to move a large stone or any other great weight and carry it to any other place, must try to move it rather by ingenuity than by force. And so, if we desire to overcome the vice of impurity and to acquire the virtue of chastity, we must set to work rather by the way of humility and by a good and discreet method of spiritual discipline, than by a rash and presumptuous use of penitential austerities.

"Every vice troubles and obscures the fair glory of holy chastity, for it is like a bright mirror which is clouded and darkened, not only by contact with impure and defiling things, but by the mere breath of man. It is impossible for a man to attain to any spiritual grace, so long as he is inclined to carnal concupiscence and therefore, whithersoever thou turn thyself, thou shalt never be able to attain to spiritual grace until thou canst master all the vices of the flesh. Wherefore, fight valiantly against thy frail and sensual flesh, thine own worst enemy which wages war against thee day and night. And know that he who shall overcome this mortal enemy of ours has most certainly defeated and discomfited all his other enemies, and shall attain to spiritual grace, and every degree of virtue and perfection.

"Amongst all other virtues I would set the virtue of chastity first, because sweet chastity contains all perfection in itself; but there is no other virtue which can ever be perfect without chastity.

"Chastity is, in strict truth, the careful and continual custody of our corpo-

real and spiritual senses, in order to preserve them pure and immaculate for God alone."

Brahmacharya is no doubt the first thing required in all spiritual life. And people who are not prepared to observe perfect continence in word, thought and deed will never be able to remain on the higher plane, even if they obtain some glimpses of the higher truths. They will always fall down again, so that the highest realization and the higher forms of spiritual life can never be attained by them.

You should make it a point never to give the enemy a frontal attack. There is an art of fighting the senses which must be learnt. Never be too violent. You see, sometimes without first creating the right mood, we want to overcome the senses by extreme violence. This is very dangerous and should never be attempted. Sometimes, remaining in a lower mood, we try to control ourselves in a most violent manner without rising to a higher plane. Then, naturally, there come most violent reactions, physical as well as mental, and our whole progress is retarded or even stopped altogether. So, with an effort of the will, we should first raise the mind and create the higher mood, and then with a little force everything is accomplished. We should never court the danger of violent reactions. Just think of the lever-action, the action of the crowbar which enables you to lift heavy weights which you could never have moved without taking their help. The fun is, with reference to the things of the world we are so worldly-wise and careful, so ingenious and practical; but

with reference to spiritual life and practice we are so foolish and careless.

First of all, try to be conscious of the higher centre. Then you will find that you are on a higher level than the thing or person that tempts you. And thus the desire can be very easily controlled. All such thoughts and desires are far more psychical than physical.

We may be very near a bad or impure thing physically, but at the same time very far from it mentally and psychically. In order to remain unaffected, we should raise a strong barrier to insulate ourselves on the thought-plane. But this is not enough. It is a negative process, and we should bring in a positive factor also, i.e. we should think of the Divine or of some Holy Personality most intensely, filling our whole mind, our whole being with that thought. Draw yourself away physically and mentally, and then give your whole mind and attention to the Divine alone and do not allow it to stray away towards the object of temptation. Do not allow yourself to go near it either physically or mentally. Then, in a very easy and natural way, we learn to draw ourselves away from the things and persons that tempt us, to raise a strong barrier between them and us and to remain unaffected.

Physical nearness is not the only danger. The person who tempts us may be far away physically, but we feel a tremendous attraction for him or her on the thought-plane. So even when the person that attracts us or the object that tempts us is only on the thought-plane and not physically near, we should do exactly and scrupulously what we are told to do on the physical plane, i.e. we should in no way communicate with that person, we should dissociate ourselves mentally from him or her, draw our mind away from all thoughts connected with the object of temptation

and raise a strong barrier or even a feeling of loathing or disgust for that person. And, after having done that, we should see that we give all our thoughts and feelings to the Divine alone. Creating a strong dislike or disgust for the object of temptation is not the ultimate solution, but in many cases it proves to be very helpful as a stepping-stone on our way to the sublimation of our feelings and desires, and so should be made use of.

It is a very vital point to do this consciously, deliberately, in a systematic way. At the same time, one may do more of Japam, practise a little more of meditation, say some prayer, repeat some elevating passages, even if the mind be divided or in a state of unrest, even if there is a terrible tug-of-war going on in the mind for some time. Somehow or other, in the case, of all aspirants, a strong counter-current of thought is to be raised.

Practically speaking, all our troubles are more mental than physical, and unless there be mental troubles, there can never be any physical ones, unless something in us responds to the outer stimulus, whatever it may be, there can be no object of temptation.

If we are not able to create the higher mood at the time the trouble arises, we should draw ourselves away from the person or object of temptation and then try to create it. There should be a conscious, deliberate cutting off in all such cases. Our cutting ourselves decidedly away from the things that trouble us, to some extent helps us in developing the higher mood and purifying our mind from all the dirt that is lying hidden in its depths.

Mental pictures and brooding over them constantly create even greater troubles and dangers for the aspirant than physical ones. Both strong counter-currents of thought and counter-

feelings must be raised and intensified. We should never allow ourselves to drift in cases of danger.

If one is not able to change the picture, one should drop it for the time being. For some people it is easier to change their thinking than their feeling. Feeling having come, it at once tries to dominate everything and even brushes reason and thought into a corner. The only way of bringing about a change in the feeling is first of all to change the thought and make it very intense.

Really speaking, we all live more in a world of thought than in the physical world. This is a fact. And the outer world, as I said before, could have no attraction, unless there were the corresponding thoughts and desires in our mind. Only when the impure mind receives some outer stimulus in a certain way, can we be affected at all.

We should see to have some ready-made counter-pictures or some ready-made counter-thoughts at hand, so that we can use them as weapons the moment any desirable thought or feeling arises and tries to find some expression on the mental or physical plane.

Suppose a person attracts you. Then what to do? Raise at once a very intense counter-current of thought or some very definite counter-picture. Imagine that person as dragging you down and think at the same time strongly of your Ishtam, setting the picture of your Ishtam against that of the other person. Then it becomes easier to evade the subtle charm of the object of temptation and to change the thought and feeling regarding it.

You see, the whole trouble is this :—The person that affects me I regard as a great reality. So I feel drawn towards that person. Now suppose, I look upon that person as a mere shadow, as some-

thing unsubstantial, then he would lose his charm for and his influence on me, and the fight would become a very easy one. But generally the attraction is such and our consciousness is so confused and full of wrong notions that we do not even want to do this in most cases.

Another very psychological way is to think that the person that troubles me is merged in my Ishtam or object of meditation. This is very effective in most cases. Or if anyone meditates on the Impersonal aspect of the Divine, he should imagine that, like the salt-doll, that person is getting lost and dissolved in the Impersonal. You should make it a point to raise very vivid and intense counter-currents of thought, in order to change and purify your feelings completely.

Sometimes, especially in the case of persons tempting us, we must have a little imagination. Instead of this beautiful form that draws me, I should see the skeleton, the bony structure. Nothing is truer than this imagination. So we may look upon that person either as a shadow, something unsubstantial and unreal, or as a skeleton, a mere bony structure, or again we may create a sort of bitterness, disgust or dislike for that person, thinking very intensely that he or she is going to drag us down and is to be strictly avoided as a great danger and hindrance on our path. And really speaking, the fighter should always have all his weapons ready at hand. Just one weapon won't do. But if one weapon fails, then make use of the other.

A great point to note is that we should change our attitude towards ourselves and towards others. We should try to look upon ourselves in a different and truer way :—‘I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am not the body, I am the

Self, I am Infinite Consciousness and Bliss, not limited by any Upâdhis, not this physical form with which I happen to be associated for some time. I am sexless, etc., etc.' If we are able to bring about this change in our outlook and really come to feel it, then the position becomes very very secure.

By constant thinking in a certain way, a habit is created, and once this is done, everything else becomes more and more easy. And all this thinking can be done very effectively and without any great strain if one tries to rise to a higher plane of consciousness.

Just take the example of the baby-kangaroo. Whenever there is any danger, it goes and jumps into its mother's pouch. Your centre of consciousness should be like the mother's pouch in the case of the baby-kangaroo. Try to be with your Ishtam the very moment any trouble arises, and then you are safe and do not court any unnecessary reaction by acting in too violent a way. The moment you let go the hold on your Ishtam, you allow your mind to come down and feel the attraction, and then you are gone.

At such times, when we are struggling with our senses and some outward attraction or mental picture, we should have some rhythmic breath, do Japam, repeat some holy passage or prayer or think in a very intense and one-pointed way of a Holy Personality who remained undisturbed and unruffled in the midst of certain similar temptations. And, as I told you, the fighter should always have all his weapons at hand. We should never rely on one weapon alone.

Once Swami Brahmananda told me, "My boy, give your whole mind to God. If you give it to the world, the world will destroy everything." Give all your attainments, your youth, everything, to the Divine. If you give it to

the world, the world will spoil it all and leave you empty-handed in the end.

Really speaking, Brahmacharya is absolutely necessary in higher spiritual life, although sometimes people are not told this very plainly, in order not to discourage them at the very beginning. There can never be any real meditation, any higher realization, without unbroken Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed. Without perfect continence and purity higher spiritual life does not become natural. But, as I said, I sometimes manage to talk a milder and less direct way just in order not to upset people.

If the working of the lower centres is not stopped, the person will never be able to keep himself on a higher plane, whatever people may say or think. Really speaking, there can be no spiritual life, if these lower centres are allowed to function. Stop their work. And unless you do this, the higher centres can never work properly.

There are people who may have some glimpses without observing the strictest Brahmacharya, but they can never succeed in remaining on the higher plane, and no higher form of realization can ever be attained by them. Brahmacharya is to be observed under all circumstances if the aspirant wants to attain to any higher life and to any higher form of realization. There is no other go.

The trouble is that here the ideal has been lowered so much and just dragged down to the plane of mere morals. People are so beggarly that they are satisfied with so little. Just a little glimpse is enough for them. And then they go and make much of it. Moral life is not spiritual life, although the really spiritual person would always act in a perfectly moral way. To him that has become natural. In the *Vedâta-*

Sâra we find a passage that says :—
 “Thus it has been said : ‘If a man who has known the truth of Oneness acts according to his whims, then where is the difference between a knower of Truth and a dog as regards eating impure stuff?’ Further, ‘One who has given up the conceit that he has realized Brahman is alone the knower of the Self and none else.’ After realization, humility and other attributes which are steps to the attainment of knowledge, as also such virtues as non-injury etc., persist like so many ornaments.”

We follow the moral rules with an effort of the will, but they, the men of realization, simply wear all these virtues as so many ornaments. They have become so natural to them. Merely by leading a moral life, we have not become spiritual. This is a mistake that is very often made by people.

In the higher forms of Christianity, in Buddhism, in Hinduism, everywhere, great stress has been laid on perfect Brahmacharya in thought, word, and deed. The idea is not just to be a moral man as ordinarily understood by the popular mind. Something more is necessary, something far higher than the plane of mere morals, if the aspirant wants to attain to the highest goal.

Christ says : “For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb : there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men ; and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive let him receive.”

And St. Paul : “I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry : for it is better to marry than to burn.”

And in his *Inspired Talks* Swami V ve kananda says :—

“Do not wait to have a harp and rest by and by ; why not take a harp and begin here ? Why wait for heaven ? Make it here. In heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage ; why not begin at once and have none here ? The yellow robe of the Sannyasin is the sign of the free. Give up the beggar’s dress of the world ; wear the flag of freedom, the ochre robe. Sacrifice on God’s altar earth’s purest and best. He who struggles is better than he who never attempts. Even to look on one who has given up has a purifying effect. Stand up for God ; let the world go. Have no compromise. Give up the world, then alone you are loosened from the body. When it dies, you are free. Be free. Death alone can never free us. Freedom must be attained by our own efforts during life ; then, when the body falls, there will be no re-birth for the free. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ This sentence alone would save mankind, if all books and prophets were lost. This purity of heart will bring the vision of God. It is the theme of the whole music of the universe. In purity is no bondage. Remove the veils of ignorance by purity, then we manifest ourselves as we really are and know that we were never in bondage. The seeing of many is the great sin of all the world. See all as Self and love all ; let all idea of separateness go.”

One should direct all one’s energies, all one’s thoughts, all one’s feelings and powers to the Divine alone. Without perfect purity in thought, purity in word and purity in deed spiritual life, in the true sense of the term, is not possible.

And here Brother Giles gives a very fine definition of the virtue of perfect chastity when he says :—

“Chastity is, in strict truth, the careful and continual custody of our corpo-

real and spiritual senses, in order to preserve them pure and immaculate for God alone."

To the extent we become pure in thought, word, and deed, we are able to maintain the higher mood. During the

period of our Sâdhanâ there is very often a terrible tug-of-war between the lower and the higher centres, but the aspirant should never lose heart, and try to soar higher and higher. And then spiritual life will become something natural without any tension or strain.

THE WANDERER

(AFTER A SWEDISH POEM BY ERIK AXEL KARLFELDT)

BY PROF. E. E. SPEIGHT

Who are you, and where do you come from, friend?
I cannot tell you; I am no man's son;
No home is mine, nor will be to the end.
I am a stranger till my days outrun.

What is the faith you hold, your trust in whom?
All that I know is that I have not known
As others say they know. It is my doom
To seek the Unsearchable, lost and alone.

How have you lived? What happiness was yours?
Through bitter need, and thunderous ocean-drive
I fought my way. Through sorrow that endures
I have so loved what it is to be alive.

WHAT VEDANTISM IS

BY PROF. SHEO NARAYANA LAL SRIVASTAVA, M.A.

(Continued from the last issue)

THE VEDANTIC VIEW OF SELF

The cardinal tenet of Vedântism is the principle of the identity of the ultimate *self* of man with the foundational Consciousness-Being which as we have explained above is the root Reality. To understand this central principle, we should first ask the question: What does 'self-hood' consist in? In other

words, what are the differentia of 'self' that distinguish it from everything that could be called the 'not-self'. The Vedântins go into a searching analysis of experience to differentiate the 'self' from the entire region of the 'not-self' (*drg-drsya-vivéka*), and their analysis on this point, I venture to say, is the most remarkable achievement in the sphere of

reflective enquiry. The theory of 'self' is the central pivot round which turn all the special epistemological, psychological, cosmological and even ethical theories of Vedântism.

What, then, is the self? Vedântism answers this question, not by what has been called the *a priori* method of logical deduction, but by an appeal to the *patent experience of self-awareness*. Herein is a clear parting of ways with the Kantian approach to the problem. To Kant, the self is merely a necessary logical *postulate* of experience, an Idea of Reason, a *focus imaginarius*, an object of moral *faith*, and not a determinate *fact*. Now, Vedântism fully conceding that the self is a principle to which none of the logical categories of thought are applicable, yet holds that we have a *direct awareness* of the self, though an awareness of a kind radically distinct from our awareness of *objective* facts.

To every living being, who as such is the percipient of a known or experienced objective world, is indubitably *given* the fact-hood of his own self as a *percipere* distinguishable from the entire totality of known and comprehended things of the world. Such distinguishing awareness of the self is the patent experience not only of human beings, but as Vâchaspati Misra says, of all livings including worms and moths, etc.⁸ That such inferior creatures as the worms and moths should have so much discrimination as Vâchaspati credits them with, is, it appears to me, disputable. To distinguish the self as the *pure* subject, transcending everything objective,—even the mind and the body—is, I think, an achievement possible only for man who

⁸ “स चायमाकीटपतङ्गेभ्य आ च देवविभ्यः प्राणभृन्मात्रस्येदंकारास्पदेभ्यो देहेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धि-विषयेभ्यो विवेकेन ‘अहम्’ इत्यसंदिग्धाविषयस्ता-परोक्षानुभवसिद्ध इति”

—Vâchaspati in *Bhāmati*.

has the capacity for philosophical reflection. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, any sentient creature if it had the reflective capacity of man, would be aware of 'itself' as the principle of consciousness, transcending all that is objective, its own body and mind included so, over awareness of our 'self' is a veridical awareness of it as an extra-objective, perceiving-something the denial of which would mean the cancellation of all experience itself. Consequently, the question: Is there a self? is as meaningless as it is superfluous. Samkara points out that the existence of the self cannot be refuted; for, that which refutes is itself the essence of the self.⁹ No one can doubt, says Vâchaspati, “Do I exist?” or “Do I not?”¹⁰ Even Mr. Bradley, for whom the concept of the self “is too full of contradiction to be the genuine fact” is constrained to concede that “the fact of one's own existence, in some sense, is quite beyond doubt We are all sure that we exist, but in what sense and what character—as to that we are most of us in helpless uncertainty and in blind confusion.”¹¹ Philosophies which have attempted a theoretic denial of the self, like those, for example, of David Hume and William James in the West and those of the Baudhhas in the East, have really been speculating in abstraction from facts.

We have, therefore, a direct, intuitive, veridical self-awareness and in this living awareness we can get hold of the criteria of real self-hood which will enable us to distinguish philosophically the self from everything that is not-self. This is the

⁹ “यदेव हि निराकर्ता, तदेव तस्य स्वरूपम्”—

¹⁰ “न हि जातु कश्चित् संदिग्धे ‘अहं वा नाहं वेति’—

—*Bhāmati*.

¹¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 64.

clue which Vedântism has taken up in its approach to the problem of self.

Now, then, what are the criteria of the self? The self is, firstly, a *percipere per sang*. It is a perceiving, comprehending, witnessing, conscious principle, and never a perceived or comprehended content. All that can be characterized as a presented "this" (*idamtayâ*) is for that reason only a not-self, an object, and not the self or the subject. The only consistent view of the self can be to take it as the ultimate subject which for the very reason of its subject-hood is incapable of being presented as an object. A second criterion of self-hood which follows as a necessary corollary from the first is its 'immutable and self-identical persistence'. The self *qua percipere* is and must be ever-the-same witness of all this rolling and changeful pageant of experience. Experience of change presupposes as its inexpugnable basis an experiencer which itself is not subject to change. This is the point where any out and out philosophy of change must come to a sure ship-wreck.

Our deepest veridical self-awareness also, which persists identically through all the changes of body and mind in the successive stages of childhood, youth, and old age, is expressible in some such form as "I am the *same I* that I ever was"; and there is a further ineradicable FAITH that "I shall be the *same I* for all time I exist." Immutable self-same-ness and unobjectifiable subject-hood, are, then, the ultimate criteria of self.

Applying these criteria, we can easily see that the body or the mind, each of which is an ever-changing mass and a *comprehended* content, cannot be the real self. Of course, taking the body as the self is too crude a view to be acceptable to men who have even so much as begun to think philosophically, but viewing the self as a psychical mass or entity is a snare which has caught even

the philosophers. The Indian view of construing the self as *Âtman* or the *pure* foundational consciousness presents a conspicuous contrast to the views of many accredited thinkers in the West, who are all in some way or other, inclined to take the self as some central nucleus or part of the psychical stream. We shall consider this point at some length in the following section.

SOME WESTERN THEORIES OF SELF CONSIDERED

Attempts have been made in the history of European thought to show that the psychical series at any moment is itself the self and is aware of itself as such. Hume, for example, resolves the "I" into a bundle of conscious happenings and sees no reason to believe in the self as an enduring entity distinct from them. Little did Hume realize the difficulty of such a view! We cannot understand how there can be *unity* in experience or how the discrete and successive impressions and mental states could be linked together in the unity of the *same man's* experience, unless there were behind them a unifying subject. Similarly William James sought to explain the phenomenon of self-consciousness by making each passing thought the subject of experience. Each thought as it emerges in the mind gathers into itself the whole past experience and passes on or integrates into the next succeeding thought. Thus, says James, the thought is the thinker. James is evidently confusing the process with the subject of the process. The consciousness of the process as such, indispensably presupposes the existence of a subject which itself is not an item in the process but transcends and comprehends it. The subject of successive conscious states cannot itself be a link in the successive series. Further, it is not in the least intelligible how one thought can be the

subject of another thought. Every attempt, therefore, to reduce the self to a momentary bundle of psychical contents, must end in a disaster.

Prof. S. Alexander who occupies an eminent position amongst the realist philosophers of today, holds a view of the mind¹² somewhat similar to that of William James. The mind according to him is "a continuum of mental acts". "At any one moment," says Alexander, "a special mental act or state is continuously united with other mental acts or states within the one total or unitary condition; i.e. perceiving of the tree with the sight of adjacent objects, the sensation of the cold air, the feeling of bodily comfort and the like, not juxtaposed with them but all of them merely elements which can be discriminated, according to the trend of interest, within the whole mass. Moreover not only is the mental act continuous with others at the same moment, but each moment of mind is continuous with preceding remembered moments and with expected ones. This continuum of mental acts, continuous at each moment, and continuous from moment to moment is the mind as we experience it."¹³ The untenability of such a view must be clear from what we have said before. Alexander resolves the mind into a running stream of mental events, without accounting for how the awareness of this stream as such is possible without an underlying unifying consciousness.

Bradley also failed to make out the real nature of the self, because he was labouring all the while under the delusion that the self could only be conceived as some cross-section or part or central nucleus of the psychical stream, and failed to hit at the transcendental or GROUND-CONSCIOUSNESS. He very tell-

ingly argues¹⁴ that the notions of the self as (i) the momentary psychical contents in the individual's mind or (ii) as "the constant average mass" of psychical contents or (iii) as an "inner core of feeling" resting on what is called coenesthesia or (iv) as "some kind of monad or supposed simple being" or (v) as the "simply subjective", meaning thereby that residual portion of the psychical stream which may be thought to stand in the relation of the subject to the rest of it considered as the object. And lastly, Bradley also rejects the notion of the self as the *subject*—and here Bradley is in hopeless confusion and error, for he gives to the concept of subject a meaning which it never can have.

Bradley grossly misconstrues the nature of the subject in so far as he locates it within the orbit of psychical contents. This fatal mistake is palpably evident from his statement that "both subject and object and their relation" are "inside a man's mind."¹⁵ If the subject could be comprehended as *given* inside a man's mind, it would be but the object, a psychical content. We should not say that the subject is inside the mind, but that the mind is inside the subject. The subject construed as the ultimate comprehending consciousness cannot be inside anything, everything being inside it or *within* its comprehension. The subject, as Bradley understands it, is only a concrete psychical content and the "Ego that pretends to be anything either before or beyond its concrete psychical filling, is a gross fiction and mere monster." It may be pointed out that a concrete psychical content presupposes the subject as the transcendental precondition of its apprehension and therefore the former cannot be equated with the latter. To bring

¹² By 'mind' he does not mean anything different from what could be called the self.

¹³ *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. I. Pp. 13-14.

¹⁴ *Vide Bradley's Appearance and Reality*, Ch. IX.

¹⁵ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 76.

down the subject to the level of a psychical content, is to assent that it is only a content, and not the subject of a content. The subject is *ipso facto* unobjectifiable, though in all the experience we have, it is necessarily correlated to an objective. To call an empirically observed psychical content the subject is a manifest contradiction. Bradley's empirical bias prevents him from recognizing a transcendental consciousness, without which no knowledge or observation could ever be possible.

We may cite here one more instance *viz.*, Prof. Taylor's view of the self which is so typically illustrative of the Western view-point on the question. The self for Taylor is a teleological concept. "The self whose quality is revealed in Biography and History and judged in Ethics, has for its exclusive material our emotional interests and purposive attitudes towards the various constituents of our surroundings; of these, and of nothing else, our self is made. And the self, again, is one and individual, just in so far as these interests and purposes can be thought of as forming the expression, in the detail of succession, of a central coherent interest or purpose where this central interest appears not to exist at all, we have no logical right to speak of a succession of purposive acts as the expression of a single self."¹⁶ Continuity of a central and a pervading purpose is what constitutes the identity of the self. Consequently for Taylor "the self is essentially a thing of development, and as such has its being in the time-process."¹⁷ "It is probable," he tells us, "that there is not a single element in what I call my present self which is not demonstrably the product of my past development, physical and mental."¹⁸

Now, in the two aspects which Mr. Taylor ascribes to the self, the one that the identity of the self consists in the continuity of a central and unchanging purpose, and the other that the self is subject to a continual development, there is an apparent incongruity; for, will not the central purpose itself go on changing as the self whose index it is alleged to be goes on changing and developing? We cannot make the identity of self rest on a structure which itself is anything but self-identical. In an ever-changing system of interests and dispositions, there can, at best, be only a relatively permanent central interest or purpose. The self which for the practical purposes of History, Ethics and Biography, we take to consist in the system of "our emotional interests and purposive attitudes towards the various constituents of our surroundings" has too mobile an identity to pass for an abiding self in a genuinely metaphysical sense. Evidently, Professor Taylor fails to distinguish from self as an organized system of interests and purposes with an ever-growing and developing organization and structure, the abiding subject-consciousness at the back of it. On Professor Taylor's view we cannot understand how the awareness of the *same* "I" all through the changing episodes of life can be possible at all. The continuity of some central attitude or interest in life can hardly account for such awareness. Consider the case of a man who has followed different callings in different periods of his life and has in these different periods pursued widely differing ends and interests. Even such a man, in spite of the discontinuity and utter discreteness of his interests and ends, is aware of himself as the *same* man. The identity of the self, therefore, cannot be accounted for by the continuity of any interest or attitude or

¹⁶ *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 335.

¹⁷ *Ibid*: Pages 340-41.

¹⁸ *Ibid*: P. 341.

sentiment, but only by positing a deeper unity of consciousness which comprehends the different organizations of the mind as so many moments of its experience. The self as the abiding subject of experience is distinguishable from the growing, developing structure of the psychic make-up of man. The latter by reason of its objectivity and mutability, does not possess the criteria of self-hood, which we have set up.

What, then, is the real self? It is not the body which is objective and ceaselessly changing, passing from one mode of existence to another, different in childhood, youth, and old age; nor is it the mind or any part or cross-section of the mental or psychical stream, which is equally objective and changeful. But deeper down, it is the **GROUND-CONSCIOUSNESS, THE ATMAN**, the immutably persisting *percipere* of the entire changeful objective order including the body, the mind and the whole world of inorganic objects. In the psychical sphere, we cannot find the marks of genuine self-hood *viz*, unobjectifiable subjectivity and immutable self-sameness. A psychical phenomenon or any aggregation or organization of the psychical phenomena is always, as a matter of fact, a comprehended *content*, and as such, leaves behind the subject as the *condition* of its comprehensibility. A procession of discrete ideas, images and thoughts in the mind obtains a unity of experience simply because there is a transcendental bond of unifying consciousness which itself is not dragged into the procession. The self, then, in the last analysis, is the trans-objective, trans-psychical **SUBJECT CONSCIOUSNESS**. The Subject and the Objective, are, then, spheres so radically divergent from each other that we cannot speak, as Bradley does, of their mutual interchangeability. If the subject were to degenerate from its subject-hood and

become the object, we would have the manifest contradiction of an experience without the experiencer.

DECENTRALIZATION OF SELF, THE BASIC ERROR OF MODERN REALISM

Thus viewed, the self as subject, is unique and foundational in reality and not simply a part or component of reality. It is the **CENTRE** of reference of *all* objective reality from which at the same time it stands eternally self-distinguished. It is not *in* space, but it is the condition of comprehending all objects as spatially related; it is not *in* time, but it is the condition of there being an order in time. We cannot carry the concept of causation which is properly applicable to the objective order to what is wholly beyond it. The modern realistic philosophers in the West, who attempt to bring down the self or the subject to the status of other objects, are simply blind to the incontrovertible fact that there must of necessity be a *foundational* consciousness *for* which is the entire cosmos of objective reality. The subject *for* which the entire cosmos of relations exists, cannot itself be determinable by those relations; in fact, it cannot be a 'relatum' at all, being that which renders all relations possible. Consequently, the subject-object relationship, the relationship that obtains between the subject and the objective, is the most generic and unique relationship which is presupposed by and is the pre-condition of, every other specific inter-objective relationship. When Alexander speaks of the 'compresence' of the mind and the object on a co-ordinate level, he understands 'mind' simply as the psychological correlate of the object, and not as the epistemological ground of the *entire* objective cosmos. In fact, it is the denial of a

unique status to self in the scheme of reality which is the most objectionable feature of what is known as the modern realist movement in the West. Construing the self, then, as the *percipere* or the ultimate subject of experience, we cannot equate it with anything short of the Basic Consciousness which is the *prius* of the entire objective universe and therefore has a position which is foundational in reality. The trans-objectivity of the subject also makes it indeterminable by any of the categories of thought, which necessarily have an objective reference. Thus, in Vedântism, the 'self' does not mean a finite something encased in or attached to the finite body, but the primal Being, the Infinite Itself.

THE SELF AND THE ABSOLUTE

The principle of non-difference of the self from the Absolute is the corner-stone of the Vedântic metaphysics. The self *qua* foundational consciousness is the Absolute. A distinction is usually made between the self as the individual knower or finite centre of consciousness and the Absolute as the All-knower, the Eternal Mind or God. The All-knower doctrine figures very prominently in the philosophy of T. H. Green. Green construes the individual self as a finite centre of consciousness whose growing knowledge is a gradual 'reproduction' in the human mind of the Eternal Mind or God. This distinction involves the assumption that the subject of our experience is not the ultimate and *originate* source of our knowledge, but merely a conduit or a passive receptacle of knowledge, whose real source is the Absolute behind it. The self, we may say on this view, does not *itself* know, but *receives* knowledge. Thus another entity at the back of the so-called finite knowing consciousness is posited to explain the possibility of knowledge.

Now, the knowing consciousness *qua* knowing, must needs exceed and transcend all that is known or *capable* of being known which is the same thing as saying that it transcends and comprehends *all that is*, and therefore, cannot but be the *foundational* principle in reality. The knowing consciousness, by virtue of its being the *all-comprehending* principle, cannot be equated with anything short of the First Principle. There is an obvious inconsistency in saying that the *all-comprehending* consciousness is not ultimate. To posit another entity in the form of the Absolute behind the knowing subject is to hypostatize an abstraction. There is and can be but *one* knowing intelligence behind the entire intelligible objective reality. The assumption of an All-knower distinct from and other than the knower, is unwarrantable and self-contradictory. The knowing subject is the Absolute, if that be our term to designate the fundamental principle in reality.

The *oneness* of the knowing intelligence also rules out the notion of a plurality of selves. Construing the self as consciousness, the question whether there is a plurality of selves resolves itself into a further question as to whether consciousness is divisible into a multiplicity of consciousnesses? And the answer obviously is in the negative. We cannot conceive of a division or limitation of consciousness, all division and limitation being *within* consciousness. Consciousness is *ipso facto* one and infinite. It is important to remember that consciousness *of* finitude is not finitude of consciousness. It is this confusion that we fall into when we construe the conscious subject as a finite centre. It is forgotten that it is precisely because of its infinity or illimitability that consciousness *can* apprehend anything as finite or limited.

INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY AND THE THEORY OF "ADHYASA"

An important question now crops up. If the self is nothing but the Universal Consciousness, how am I to explain what in my everyday existence I refer to as my 'individual' personality or as *myself*? The answer of Vedânta is that this individual personality is but an appearance, being the result of a *false* appropriation of or identity with the objective on the part of consciousness. This is what Samkara calls *adhyâsa*. If we look closely into the phenomenon of self-awareness as we experience it, two facts become palpably evident. One, that I am *directly* aware of myself as the conscious *percipere* of the entire objective reality around me from which I stand *consciously* self-distinguished; and secondly, that I am aware of myself as an unchangingly self-same entity which, as pointed out before, is expressible in the formula "I am *the same I* that I ever was." Conscious self-distinction from all objects and unchanging identity are the two directly veridical characteristics of self as found in our patent experience of self-awareness, and therefore, these should be the criteria for determining philosophically what the self *ultimately* must be. Now, applying these criteria to what is usually understood as the individual personality, it becomes clear that it is only a section of the objective, and not the subject that stands in conscious self-distinction to it. What is usually known as the individual personality is the psycho-physical organism of man constituted by his body and his psyche comprising his permanent dispositions, emotional interests and his purposive attitudes towards the various elements of his surrounding; in a word, all that go to make up the identity of his character. Such a psycho-physical system, changing continu-

ally and characterized by objectivity, cannot pass for the self in the real sense. But the body-mind complex which a man calls 'himself' has meaning for his ordinary experience and in social life is the basis of differentiating one individual from another. A distinction, therefore, between the *apparent* and the *real* self becomes significant; and though in our ordinary experience we are aware only of the former, we can arise to a reflective awareness of the latter. To transform this reflective understanding into what may be called in the phrase of Kant a "perceptive understanding" is the object of all spiritual endeavour.

It is this taking the *apparent* as the *real*, the objective as the subject, something as other than what it is (*atasminstadbuddhih*), which Samkara designates *adhyâsa*. It consists in translocating the properties of one entity to another radically opposed in nature to it. Bondage in Vedânta means just this distemper, this association of the Real with the Apparent; and emancipation is the riddance therefrom, the realization by the subject of its *transcendental freedom*. So Vedântism denies any cleavage between the self and the Absolute. *Ayam âtmâ brahma sarvânubhuh.*

THE STATUS OF THE OBJECTIVE OR THE WORLD IN VEDANTA

By the objective we are to understand all intelligible or meanable reality, this world and all other worlds included. So the objective will comprise not only all that is actually known or comprehended, but also all that is *knowable* or comprehensible by consciousness. We are not here concerned with specific details about the objective (that is a consideration for science), but for purposes of metaphysical construction, with *what is implied in the notion of objectivity as such*. And one thing is evident at the very outset that the objective as such

has no self-subsistent existence, but is there *for* consciousness. The comprehending consciousness is logically prior to the comprehended objective. Consciousness being there, the objective is; and this is a relation which from the very nature of the case is irreversible. So, the very first thing that is evident about the objective is that it has a *dependent* existence, and *has no being in its own right*. As it is, it exists in relation to something else, *viz*, consciousness which is the *ratio cognoscendi* of its existence.

Secondly, consciousness alone is the abiding and unsublatable reality, while the objective is not only changeful in waking experience but exhibits *wholly* changed characters in the other conscious states of dreaming and dreamless sleep. The consideration of the different *avasthâs* or states of experience has a profound significance for the Vedântic metaphysics.¹⁹ We should first make it clear to our minds that the most generic feature of reality (meaning by reality all that exists) is that reality is subject-objective. Next, we have to understand—and this is a principle of paramount importance—that the correlation of the subject and the objective obtains not only in the waking experience but also in the dream and deep sleep states. The Vedânta stands alone amongst all the philosophical systems of the world in reckoning the dream and the deep sleep states as full-fledged states of conscious experience on a coordinate footing with the waking state. Those systems of philosophy which are confined to a consideration of the waking experience alone assume covertly that the dream and deep sleep states are *lapses into unconsciousness or semi-consciousness* and are as such sub-

jective states; while the waking alone is the *fully* conscious state of experience wedded to a *permanent* objective. This assumption must be critically examined if the Vedântic view-point is to be properly appreciated.

First, as to the alleged unconsciousness or semi-consciousness of the sleep states. What, we may ask, is implied in a state of experience being unconscious? But, is there not a ring of absurdity in the very raising of such a question? Is not a state of experience *eo ipso* conscious experience? An *unconscious* experience is a pure myth. Is deep dreamless sleep a lapse into unconsciousness? Certainly not. If it were so, no recollection of it would ever be possible. The man, waking from a deep sleep, recollects it and says, “What a happy and blissful sleep I had!” There can be no recollection of a void.

What is true of the dreamless deep sleep state is also true *mutatis mutandis* of the dreaming state. So, consciousness never lapses or never passes into ‘unconsciousness’. The notion of semi-conscious state of experience is an equally ill-conceived one. Consciousness as such is never less nor more nor half nor three-fourths.²⁰ Dream and deep sleep states, are then, full-fledged states of *positive* conscious experience, and the correlativity of consciousness and the objective which obtains in the waking experience is equally present in them. Consciousness is always there and the *objective* also is there as the content of consciousness. But the nature of the objective is not the *same* in all the states of conscious experience. A consideration of the conditions that make the difference throws a rich flood of light on the status of the objective. The *Mândukya Upanishad* gives us an

¹⁹ Vide the writer’s article on “The Transcendental Approach in Vedantism” in *Prabuddha Bharata*: July and August, 1935.

²⁰ नोदेति नास्तमेत्येषा न वृद्धिं याति न क्षयम् ।—

—*Drg. Drgya-Viveka* 5.

admirable analysis of the operative conditions underlying the different states of conscious experience. I give below a brief sketch of that analysis.

In the waking state, the objective for us is the gross physical world of common experience which the *Māndukya* metaphorically calls the seven-limbed. (The heavens as its forehead, the sun as its eye, the air as its breath, matter and water its belly and the sky and the earth its feet.²¹) In this state, the experience of the objective is conditioned by the functioning of the psyche and the sensorial apparatus; hence it is spoken of as nineteen-mouthed, the nineteen mouths or channels of receptivity being the five organs of sense-perception, the five organs of motor activity, the five vital forces and the psyche with its four-fold functioning as मनस्, बुद्धि, अहंकार and चित्त. Experiencing through the instrumentality of all these, we have in the waking state, the objective as a "world" of gross physical objects (स्थूलभुज्). The dream also is like the waking दृकोनविंशतिमुख and we again have the objective as a world of differentiated physical objects, but of a subtler nature (प्रविक्लभुज्).

In the dreamless deep sleep state, the psyche²² and the sensorial apparatus completely suspend their functioning, and the objective is there not as a differentiated world but as an undifferentiated continuum—a seamless *totum objectivum*. This state of experience is described as चेतोमुख or one where we apprehend by conscious-

ness itself unmediated by the mind and the senses.

One important fact of far-reaching consequence is brought out by the deep sleep state of experience; and, it is this, that the manifoldness or differentiation which obtains in the waking and the dream states is entirely contingent and conditional upon our apprehending the objective through the psycho-sensorial mechanism. *That ceasing to function, there is no manifoldness.* The differentiated world, in its ultimate nature, is purely phenomenal. The perception of the spatial, temporal, and causal relations are all contingent upon the functioning of the psycho-sensorial mechanism. Our 'time-sense' itself becomes different in the dream and the waking states. Events that would require a considerably long time in the waking world would be done in an inconceivably short time in dreams.

The phenomenality of the world obtaining in the three states cannot entitle it to be called "absolutely real" which should only be sought for in a noumenal state of experience. Vedântism admits of a Fourth (तुरीय) state of noumenal experience, where the objective is entirely sublated and consciousness is left as the sole Real. This is the *ne plus ultra* state of experience where reality is appraised in its ultimate truth, primal homogeneity and undivided wholeness. The world or the objective, then, according to the Vedântic standpoint is phenomenally real and *transcendentally ideal*.

It should be remembered in this connection that when the world is pronounced 'ideal' in Vedântism, it means nothing like what is known in European thought as 'mentalism' or subjective idealism or solipsism. Subjective idealism equates the world of outer reality with the procession of momentary psychical states in the individual mind,

²¹ This metaphor simply brings out the nature of the objective in the physical shape as we see it.

²² By the cessation of the functioning of the psyche is here meant the non-projection of its nascent mental vestiges which fabricate the dream world.

thus nullifying the distinction between the act or process of knowledge and the 'objects' of knowledge existing independently of the knowing process. The entire objective order is identified with the pulse of discursive thinking. This is emphatically not the Vedântic position. Vedântism fully retains, for our waking experience, the distinction between the passing course of ideas in our minds and the world of *outer* reality. It is only in the higher wakefulness that the objective world is sublated. The subjective idealism of European thought corresponds to the *Vijñānavāda* of the Bauddhas, of which, as is well known, Samkara was a relentless critic. Epistemological realism has not been ruled out in Vedântic thought.

What Vedântism insists upon is the fact of the 'dependent-being' of the world order. It is in its conception of 'real being' that Vedânta parts company with naïve realism. The world has no being *in itself* or *apart from* its transcendental ground which is *Brahman*.²³ Being of a *real* nature is grasped and realized by me in my own immediate and veridical experience of "*I am*." It is only in the experience of my *self as the Subject* that I become aware of being at first hand, being which is indubitable (*asamdigdham*) and immutable or which is and never *becomes*. Objectivity and becomingness go together; true being is the sphere of the Subject alone. The non-becomingness of the Subject places it beyond all doubt; the becomingness of the world makes it subject to doubt. It is possible to raise the question: "Does the world really exist or not?" But the question "Do *I* exist or do *I* not?" is ruled out *ab initio* by the immediate certainty of "*I am*". Objectivity does

²³ सर्वं च नामरूपादिविकारजातम् सदात्मना एव सत्यं, स्वतस्तु अमृतम् ।—

Samkara, Chh. U.P. VI. 8. 2.

not carry with it immediate certainty of being. How could we make objectivity the guarantee of reality, for, are not our dreams and even our ordinary illusions and hallucinations objectively realized? The Vedântic argument on the question of 'being' may thus be summarized: What is objective is becoming; what becomes, negates itself; what negates itself can have no 'real' being. Vedântism, therefore, does not accord the same kind of reality or being (*sattā*) to the objective order as to the Supreme Consciousness or *Brahman*. *Brahman* has unconditioned and non-negatable reality or *pāramārthic sattā*; the objective order has conditioned and negatable reality or *vyāvahārika sattā*. The concepts that are applicable to the objective and the negatable can never be applicable to the non-negatable Being-Consciousness. To seek to apply the concepts that have reference to the order of 'becoming' to the order of 'being' would be what Kant called a "transcendental illusion". Consequently it is impossible to express in any synthetic logical formula or proposition the relation between Being and Becoming, *Brahman* and *jagat*. All the categories of our thinking such as 'causation', 'creation', 'transformation', etc., have reference only to the objective order and cannot legitimately be used in reference to *Brahman*. To say that '*Brahman* is the cause of the world' or that '*Brahman* creates the world' or that 'the world is a transformation of *Brahman*' is to forget the utter incompatibility between the spheres of Being and Becoming, the Subject and the objective, the non-negatable and the negatable. A philosophy that seeks logically to harmonize or synthesize *Brahman* and *jagat*, is from the Vedântic point of view only a pseudo-philosophy. That the world is, in some way, an expression of *Brahman* may be conceded-

ed; but to specify the nature of this expression in terms of categories that have reference to the world alone would be illegitimate. To be more correct, we should say, the world is an *inscrutable* (*anirvachaniya*) expression of Brahman. By the inscrutable power of *Brahman* (*Mâyâ*) we see this prodigious paradox in experience—the union of Being and Becoming, the Subject and the objective, the non-negatable and the negatable.

The objective order has not the same kind of indubitable and self-subsistent *being* which the Self or Brahman has; they are not *samasattâka*. If “absolute being” be the criterion of our judgment, we cannot say the world *has being*. It is an objective fact of experience; but ‘objective facthood’ and ‘being’ are not convertible terms.

The objective facthood (*vyâvahârîka sattâ*) of the world is distinguished in Vedânta, on the one hand, from the unsublatable and primal facthood (*pârmâarthika sattâ*) of Brahman; and on the other, from the *more ephemeral* grades of objectivity characterizing the *merely* illusory (*prâtibhâsika*) and the dream contents (*swâpnika*). Samkara’s distinction of *prâtibhâsika sattâ* or the category of the ‘merely illusory’ from the *vyâvahârîka sattâ* or the standing objectivity of the world of our waking experience, is a clear vindication of the fact that he did not mean to place both on the same level. The world is not an illusion or hallucination in the *ordinary* sense. This is what the adverse critics of Samkara with their half-digested understanding of Vedânta have never clearly realized. When the world is said to be ‘unreal’ in Vedânta, it is always said so in a relativistic sense, that is, judged by the criterion of Absolute Reality. Vedânta refuses to ascribe *as much* reality to the world as to the Absolute. The world is *less* real than

the Absolute, but not on that account on a par with illusions and hallucinations. The greatest injustice that has been done to Âchârya Sri Samkara is that he has been called an illusionist. So much about the metaphysics of Vedânta.

THE ETHICS AND RELIGION OF VEDANTA

It would perhaps be in the fitness of things that I should round up this exposition of the philosophy of Vedânta with a word about its ethical and religious import. In the present tangled and divided state of world civilization, we cannot prize too highly the sublimity and redeeming power of the ethical and religious import of Vedântic thought with its insistence on the *oneness* of the Spirit which pervades all existence and which exists as the very ‘self’ of all living beings. The Divine is not a remote entity, not something ‘other than’ man, but his very *self*. The Vedânta interprets the religious struggle and endeavour as simply the impulsion of the Spirit in man to come to Itself (*swarupâvasthiti*). Nothing on earth satisfies us because we are dislodged from our real nature. There is a divine discontent in us because we are not of the earth alone. Religion, says Vedânta, is nothing but unlocking the gates of Glory that *eternally* belongs to man. It is the realization of what man himself is *sub specie aeternitatis*. The Vedânta conceives the End not as the *acquisition* in the literal sense of something extraneous, but simply the removal of the ignorance about it. An extraneous something which is merely *acquired* would stand every danger of being lost again, and Emancipation would be a thing of perpetual insecurity. Thus Vedânta alone shows the pathway of real redemption—the realization of the Self as the All. All other doctrines and dogmas of priests and pontiffs are

simply beguiling and hypnotizing traps for the soul of man.

The *oneness* of the pervading Divinity, again, is the foundation of Vedântic ethics, nay, the only tenable foundation of ethics as such. Every system of ethic puts forth as its cardinal principle the realization of "the highest common good" of the social whole, this realization demanding on the part of the individual, love, unselfishness and service of others. But why should I love and

serve others? Because, says Vedânta, we are all in reality *one*, though seemingly or through ignorance we appear to be different. "He who sees the Atman in all beings, and all beings in the Atman, cannot, for that reason hate anyone." Thus, oneness of the Self is the bed-rock of Vedântic ethics, religion, and philosophy. To realize this Self in the depths of our being is the highest purpose of our sojourn on this earth.

(CONCLUDED)

REAL SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY R. R. KHANNA, M. Sc.

The real spiritual life is the life of relationship between a human being and God or, in other words, the relationship of one individual soul with the Universal Soul. Spiritual life presupposes the existence of God, and does not call for any proof through the instrument of reason. Seekers of real spiritual life have no doubt whatever about His existence. What they are constantly longing and labouring for is greater and more increasing contact with Divinity. They know that this increasing contact is obtained through the unselfish service of others. To them, the aim of human life is absorption in God, union with Divine Life, resulting in everlasting peace, bliss, and salvation. They seek to help others also along the same path.

On the other hand, there are persons who have either no time or no inclination to seek or follow spiritual life. They are satisfied with what is commonly known as material life, *i.e.*, with the pursuit of wealth, power, and honour for their own sake. Their energies of youth are focussed on obtaining knowledge and then wealth; and from this source they

expect to obtain all comforts, to be able to live in peace and happiness eventually. Some persons add the pursuit of worldly honour, or social distinction to their chase for wealth. There are still others who like to acquire power, so as to be able to rule and dominate their fellow-men. These acquirements are frequently intended for self-glorification, for self-aggrandisement. These are persons who can be said to live for themselves a purely material life. For these followers of pure material life the words "Spiritual Life" have no meaning. Some of them openly declare that religion is a fraud, a hoax practised by clever, unscrupulous men upon ignorant minds or upon gullible fools. For them Avatars (Incarnations), prophets, and sages who lived the life of love, faith, and service, were either mythical characters unknown to history, or absolute frauds.

There is another important section of the human race, whose apparent occupation in life is pursuit of wealth, but whose inner life of worship, faith and devotion remains hidden, even from

their closest friends. According to them inner life is sacrosanct and should be effectively screened from the public gaze. They love and worship God in private, without making a show of it; they take their guidance from Him before the daily round of duties, remember Him in their task during the day and then return to Him for solace, after the day's work is done. An average man only sees their outer life, and wonders if they have any inner life at all. But their actions speak louder than words. Their spirit of service, sympathy, kindness speak out for themselves.

An average man, however, only sees two distinct classes of persons, existing side by side, in this world of strange contradictions. One class attempts to collect all the goods of the world and the other class is contented with what little it has. The average man is, however, not aware of the state of mind of the two different types of men, *i.e.*, of men without any faith in God and of men with faith in God : followers of pure material life and followers of spiritual life. The difference is, however, enormous.

Most of us will doubtless have experienced that there comes a time when one or other of our *ties* of life snaps : a dear one dies, a misfortune overtakes us, or we feel great helplessness in some other way. A sort of earthquake brings down our house of cards, built on insecure foundations; our false values then become too apparent. Then we see Truth in the couplet : "The Great Hunter has His eye on every branch of every tree : It is His Will that I should not build my nest anywhere (except in Him)." We all know that there are occasions when we find ourselves face to face with death, agony, starvation, disease, when only some Higher Power can save us from a critical situation. Even the most confirmed atheist, who

proclaims his atheism when he is well off, on such an occasion cries out either aloud or in his heart of hearts, "Oh ! good God," and then he checks himself by force of habit and says, "Is there a Power that can still save me from this sudden death, this agony, this disease ? If so, let Him come and help me." His agonizing tears shed in secret, his contrite heart are sufficient to move the tender heart of our Great Loving Father. He comes readily to the rescue of the misguided one. The situation is invisibly averted and the agony is spared. A fresh lease of life is thus obtained. For Lord Buddha the sight of one corpse was sufficient to divert his attention from princely life to the life of the spirit. Similarly, for some grateful souls one mild shock is sufficient to give them a permanent awakening to real values. There are, however, others like me upon whom the incident of a critical situation averted through sincere prayer is soon lost and its lesson is quickly forgotten. The same agnosticism starts again. The grateful soul, however, having once seen a situation of complete helplessness of man turns to establish its relationship with the Almighty God on a permanent basis. In our lives many shocks have perhaps failed to rouse us from our slumbers. That is why we ask : "Is there a Creator for this universe ? Can His existence be proved with reason ? Why should I worry about Him at all ?" Apparently we need more shocks ; it is a mercy that they don't come more often. Perhaps because the Loving Father cannot see His children suffer. And, yet, we are not prepared to learn without suffering !

While we think seriously of the deeper problems of life, the following questions naturally suggest themselves to us : (a) Is it reasonable to assert that this universe, consisting of the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the planets, etc.,

exhibiting such wonderful beauty and clock-work regularity, should be without a supreme controlling Power? (b) Do not the laws known to Science suggest to us that there must be a Master-Mind behind them? Does Science *make* laws of nature or merely *discover* them? (c) Is it right to deny the existence of the Science of Chemistry or Bacteriology, because we have not received any training in these Sciences? (d) Have the atheists definitely made a search for God and failed? Have they followed the instructions of those who know Him? Much has been made of reason in this age. Reason has its own sphere of action but that sphere is limited like the spheres of all other human faculties. The human eye cannot see the infra-red region or the ultra-violet region. Other delicate instruments know these regions perfectly well. The human ear can hear only within a limited range. The "Wireless" shows us the existence of other regions clearly. Similarly the boundary of reason is also limited. For example, reason finds itself bewildered in the region of love. Love is known to be blind. It is not surprising therefore that reason cannot understand faith. The position of reason is very insecure. Four persons, whose reason is not strongly developed, sitting together will be found at peace with one another—whereas four persons whose reasoning faculty is strongly developed will be found quarrelling with one another in a short time. Each one of them will claim his reasoning to be right. Which one should we follow? You cannot build the house of your life on such shifty, sandy soil. One argument tomorrow may upset all my reason of today. We must look for surer *foundation* to form the bed-rock of our lives.

For the benefit of those of us who have not yet made a beginning in spiritual life, but desire to do so, I would respect-

fully suggest that they should assume for a time that God exists very near us, that He is all-powerful: also that He loves us. The Creator loves His creation. This is perfectly simple. The Father loves His children. Each of us has a daily task to perform or some difficulty to face. For most of us the load appears to be heavier than we can carry with joy. Let us therefore pray to our Father, to our Master for help, before starting. Let us pray to Him for help, imagining that He is standing before us in human form, listening to all we say. Imagine that He is full of power, full of love, anxious to help us when we ask Him for it. Who would not like the friendship of a powerful being? Then, let us thank Him for what He has given us—for we are better off than many round about us. If we are deprived of any of our present belongings, any of our organs of knowledge, we shall then learn to prize these gifts greatly. Let us express our deep sense of gratitude for all these, because He has given them to us unimpaired. Let us also beg Him for help in our day's duty. I have found that help does come *invariably* and I can now carry my load with joy, because of His help. This is available free, merely for the asking, to everyone of us, provided we are sincere in our asking. Try this experiment and you will like the results. If you find that this prescription works and results are satisfactory then forge ahead. Your assumption with which you started will stand proved. You will find the most difficult task becoming easier. If after sufficient trial you find that the prescription has failed, then either give it up or go to someone who can help you along. He will tell you the cause of your failure. You will find that your faith will grow from strength to strength. Life will become a joy instead of a burden. The language to be used in prayer does not

matter. God knows all languages. The most effective language is the language of the heart. Any time you select for prayers according to your religion is good. God is available at all times. Follow your own religion and carry out the teaching of the Founder of your religion with sincerity and love. But, remember to get down to the *original teaching*. No change of religion will be necessary.

Let me describe to you the state of mind of a man or woman without faith. My observation is that a man without faith is the weakest animate being of all creation. Don't be deceived by his external make-up; don't be bluffed by his apparent bravado. See him when the rude shock of life comes to him. That is the time to test the strength of a man. He is then found unprepared; he will look like a ship without an anchor trying to meet a storm. His reason refuses to help him then. Reason gives poor solace to a man whose heart is broken. Can the pain of the heart be relieved by an appeal to the head? On the contrary a man endowed with faith finds a permanent support for his mind in God. In all such situations, his mind travels back to the feet of his Lord, to whom he

presents his afflicted heart for the healing balm—love. He receives internal support and fights his battle again with renewed vigour, and greater faith.

Real spiritual life consists of this relationship of love between human beings and their Creator : call Him by any name you like : worship Him in any form you like : pour out your heart to Him in any language you like : at any time you like. He will respond to all sincere worship, to all true devotion. This relationship is held firmly together by the cement of faith, through all stresses and storms. We observe that the sun, the moon, the earth, the air, the water, belong to all of us. God, their Creator, similarly belongs to all of us. He cannot be the monopoly of any one religion : He belongs even to those who do not seek Him. He loves them even though they do not love Him. A father loves his child even though the child be a truant child : even if he is disloyal for a time. He likes to see us all happy and loving each other truly. Those who strive in this direction obtain joy and happiness in this life ; their faces are bright and glowing with radiant joy. This road is open to all.

SWAMI KALYANANANDA : IN MEMORIUM

The news of the sudden passing away of Swami Kalyanananda, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and the founder and head of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Hardwar, on the 20th October last, at 11 p.m., at Mussoorie will be received as a great shock to many. He had been in indifferent health for a long time and had gone there for a change in June last. But no one expected that the end would come so soon. Indeed he was writing

to many friends that he was better and would soon return to Kankhal to make arrangements for the Kumbha Fair. His body was brought by car to Kankhal on the next day and was consecrated to the Ganges after due ceremonies.

He was born of poor parents at a village in the District of Barisal. His family name was Dakshinaranjan Guha. His father died when he was young, and he studied up to the Entrance class at the Banaripara High School of the same

District, under the care of his uncle. From an early age he was of a calm disposition and a religious turn of mind, and used to study the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. He also loved to serve the poor. Though he was the only son of his parents, he left his mother and other relatives to join the Ramakrishna Order at the age of twenty-two.

Shortly after Swami Vivekananda's return from the West, Dakshinaranjan was admitted as a Brahmacharin of the Ramakrishna Order at the end of 1898. He used to go round the village of Belur and help the poor and nurse the sick. Next year he was fortunate enough to nurse Swami Yogananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in Calcutta for a month during his last illness. The same year he was initiated into Sannyasa by Swami Vivekananda, who immediately before the ceremony asked him whether he was prepared to be sold as a cooly if Swamiji wanted it to get some money. The young man replied that he was ready to do whatever Swamiji asked him to do. Indeed his whole life showed that it was completely dedicated to his Master.

In July, 1899, he visited Benares and inspired his host, the present Swami Achalananda, and his many friends with his spirit of Seva, so that they started a year later the Ramakrishna Home of Service, Benares. Proceeding next to Allahabad, he helped for some time an institution named the Allahabad Orphanage. In 1900 at the instance of Swami Swarupananda, the first President of the Mayavati Advaita Ashrama, he conducted for a year a Famine Relief centre and a temporary Orphanage at Kishengarh, Rajputana. Before returning to Mayavati, he visited the Belur Math in the beginning of 1901 to meet his Master, who had meanwhile returned from the West.

Swami Vivekananda used to say that

Seva work should be started in all the pilgrimage centres. Swami Kalyanananda, who had seen the plight of the Sadhus at Kankhal for want of medical help, was actively encouraged by Swami Swarupananda to start a Sevashrama there. With one or two assistants he rented a house and began to conduct the Seva work, maintaining themselves by begging. Their unselfishness and devotion soon attracted the notice of a number of charitable men, and through their help a plot of land was secured at Kankhal in 1902 and some thatched houses were constructed on it. Gradually men and money began to come. Swami Kalyanananda was joined by his brother-disciple Swami Nischayananda, who was his righthand man till his passing away in 1934. Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Order, visited the Sevashrama in 1903 and encouraged the workers by staying with them for a month. From such small beginnings the Kankhal Sevashrama has now grown into a great philanthropic institution.

Swami Kalyanananda was much devoted to his Master Swami Vivekananda and used to serve him heart and soul whenever he stayed at the Belur Math. Once, when Swamiji was suffering from diabetes, Swami Kalyanananda was asked to purchase some ice for him from Calcutta. He returned with about half a maund of it, which so pleased Swamiji that he blessed him saying that in time he would turn a great Paramahansa. Indeed, in the latter part of his life Swami Kalyanananda was much revered by the orthodox heads of the different Ashramas at Kankhal and Hardwar, and received frequent invitations from them.

Noticing his preference for Seva work Swamiji encouraged him to develop this side of his character. But from the living example of Swamiji, who em-

bodied in himself knowledge, devotion, Yoga and work, and from his desire, once communicated to this disciple, that he wanted to start Ashramas in which both spiritual meditation and its practical application in Seva work should remain side by side, Swami Kalyanananda, towards the end of his life, manifested devotion as well as a spirit of service in his character. In fact, he would point out that the Kankhal Sevashrama practically did both Math and Mission work. He used to invite the brother-disciples of Swamiji occasionally, and serve them with great devotion. In 1912 Swami Brahmananda stayed with him for more than seven months and had the Durga Puja performed in the image—for the first time at Kankhal. Swami Turiyananda, who used to perform Sadhana at different places, was invited during his sickness by Swami Kalyanananda and served with devotion in the Ashrama, which then appeared like a great Vidyapitha where the scriptures were explained by the learned Swami. The monks of the Ramakrishna Order in general also enjoyed the hospitality of Swami Kalyanananda, who arranged for

their medical treatment and shelter during their Sadhana.

From 1902, when he came to Belur to consult his Master about the Ashrama work, he practically passed his whole life at Kankhal. In the early years of the Ashrama he came to Allahabad twice to conduct relief work during the Kumbha Mela. Although during the last fifteen years of his life he suffered from diabetes, he would not consent to come to Calcutta or Benares for treatment. Latterly, when the disease took great hold of him, he would occasionally go to some summer resort like Mussoorie, Almora or Kashmir. After recouping his health a little he would return to the field of his work. A few years back he was induced to come and stay once more at the Mayavati Ashrama, where all enjoyed his delightful company. He was a staunch Karma-yogin and a worthy disciple of his Master. His loss to the public in general, and to the Ramakrishna Mission in particular is irreparable. May his soul rest in peace, and may his memory inspire all with his spirit of service!

SIVA MAHIMNAH STOTRAM

THE HYMN ON THE GREATNESS OF SIVA

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

महेशान्नापरो देवो महिम्नो नापरा स्तुतिः ।
अघोरात्नापरो मन्त्रो नास्ति तत्त्वं गुरोः परं ॥ ३५ ॥

महेशात् better than Siva अपरः another देवः god न there is not महिम्नः better than the hymn on the greatness of Siva अपरा another स्तुतिः hymn न there is not अघोरात् better than Siva अपरः another मन्त्रः sacred word न there is not गुरोः better than the spiritual teacher अन्यत् another तत्त्वं thing to be known नास्ति there is not.

35. There is no god better than Siva, there is no hymn better than the hymn on the greatness of Siva, there is no

sacred word¹ better than the name of Siva, there² is nothing better to be known than the real nature of the spiritual teacher.

¹ 'Sacred word'—which is to be repeated and meditated upon for spiritual unfoldment.

² There . . . teacher—The spiritual teacher is the channel through which Divine mercy flows ; as such he is one with God. One who has known the spiritual teacher has known God.

दीक्षा दानं तपस्तीर्थं ज्ञानं यागादिकाः क्रियाः ।

महिम्नःस्तवपाठस्य कलां नार्हन्ति षोडशीम् ॥ ३६ ॥

दीक्षा (initiation) दानं charity तपः austerities तीर्थ pilgrimage ज्ञानं knowledge of the scriptures यागादिकाः like sacrificial rites क्रियाः works महिम्नःस्तवपाठस्य of the merit of reciting the hymn on the greatness of Siva षोडशीं कलां one-sixteenth part न not अर्हन्ति are not equal to.

36. Getting initiation into the spiritual life, charity, austerities, pilgrimage, knowledge of the scriptures, the performance of sacrificial rites—these do not give one-sixteenth part of the merit that is got by reciting 'the hymn on the greatness of Siva.'

कुशुमदशननामा सर्वगन्धर्वराजः

शिशुशशधरमौलेर्देवदेवस्य दासः ।

स खलु निजमहिम्नो भ्रष्ट एवास्य रोषात्

स्तवनमिदमकार्षीद् दिव्यादेव्यं महिम्नः ॥ ३७ ॥

कुशुमदशननामा Pushpadanta by name सर्वगन्धर्वराजः the Lord of all Gandharvas शिशुशशधरमौलेर्देवदेवस्य of the great god who has got the crescent moon on his head दासः servant सः He खलु indeed अस्य of Siva रोषात् एव from anger निजमहिम्नः from his glory भ्रष्टः fallen सन् being दिव्यदिव्यं very nice इदं this महिम्नःस्तवनं hymn on the greatness of Siva अकार्षीत् composed.

37. The Lord of Gandharvas,¹ Pushpadanta² by name is the servant of the great God³ who has the crescent moon on His forehead. Fallen⁴ from his glory due to the anger⁵ of the Lord, he composed⁶ this very beautiful hymn on the greatness of Siva (to regain His favour).

¹ Gandharvas—musician demi-gods.

² Pushpadanta—literally 'flower-toothed', i.e. whose teeth were like flowers.

³ God who . . . forehead—refers to Siva.

⁴ Fallen . . . glory—he lost the power of flying through the air.

⁵ Anger of the Lord—Siva got angry with Pushpadanta as the latter trod on the flowers left after His worship.

⁶ Composed etc.—It is said that Pushpadanta had his power restored by composing this hymn.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

We have attempted to give in our *Editorial* an idea of the highest form of mysticism, as also to indicate in brief the varied spiritual experiences of the great mystics of the East and the West. In *Cross and Eagle* Count Hermann Keyserling deals with the two ideals of humanity—the 'Eagle' stands for the complete apprehension or conquest of the external world which ideal reached its zenith under the Roman Eagle and which spirit rules the world today once more, especially in the West. In contrast to it the 'Cross' stands for being completely apprehended or conquered by the external world—in other words what makes man feel that more important than ruling the world is to transform one's own self in order to grow in spirit. He suggests a return to the ideal of the 'Cross' as the only panacea for the ills of the modern age. Prof. Akshoy Kumar Banerjea in his article on *Absolute Knowledge and Popular Religion* presents some of the teachings of his Master, Yogiraj Gambhirnathji. *Brahmacharya or Continence* is a discourse given by Swami Yatiswarananda of the R. K. Mission in Switzerland, and contains some practical suggestions about the means of attaining perfect self-control and self-purification. Prof. Sheo Narayana Lal Srivastava concludes his article on *What Vedantism is* in this issue. *Real Spiritual Life* of Mr. R. R. Khanna, Registrar of the Lucknow University, furnishes a clue to what affords abiding peace to human life.

TOWARDS A VIRILE NATIONHOOD

One of the most pressing problems which confront the governmental and the educational authorities in India is

the physical health of the students. Year after year medical examinations of the university and school-boys continue to reveal a sadder and sadder state of things. Yet, apart from some temporary noise in the press, no serious effort has been forthcoming to arrest the progressive degeneration of the Indian manhood. There are some Provincial Directors of Health entrusted with the responsibility of looking after the physical fitness of the boys. But, due to a multiplicity of reasons, nothing more appears to be done than to make the boys do some physical jerks at odd hours on certain days. A healthy body is an essential condition of mental vigour and alertness. In spite of her huge man-power India lies inert and lifeless, lacking the urge to progress and freedom for want of physical fitness. Our natural tendency is to develop the mind at the expense of the body. We little realize that in the life of a nation strength and vigour count infinitely more than mere fine intellect, and that only 'nerves of steel' can be the fit receptacle of an adamant will. In this connection it is instructive to learn the great stress modern Germany is laying on the physical efficiency of its youths.

In autumn last, a British delegation paid a visit to Germany to report on the system of physical instruction prevalent there. Among other things, the report remarked that physical education in German schools "had been raised to the importance and dignity of a principal subject in the curriculum; in the universities the student had to reach a degree of efficiency before he could go forward beyond a certain stage; and in industry its value as a corrective,

restorative and alterative was fully realized." Referring to the 'Napoli' schools which are intended to train boys with a natural capacity for leadership for political, military, and other posts of special importance and responsibility, the delegation reported that "the first aim is the cultivation of healthy, hardy bodies, patient of toil and fatigue and heat and cold, and inured to stress and storm. Next comes the development of mental capacity, the formation of character, schooling in the exercise of will-power and determination, and training in responsibility and leadership." Though the delegation felt that physical education was over-emphasized there, it was constrained to admire its "novel, far-reaching, highly interesting and often very instructive" features. This over-emphasis was attributed by the delegation to Germany's desire to build up a nation of giants to be used as cannon fodder in the next war. Quite a different explanation comes from Germany. It is that, "excessive pre-occupation with the affairs of the mind was the prime source of the weakness of Germany in the past and led to mental instability, indecision, crankiness, and ego-centricity and tended to paralyse the national effort at moments of crisis." There is much force in the argument. We know here how poorly are our youths equipped by the educational institutions to face the battles of life. Here is a healthy lesson to learn from abroad. Physical efficiency of the youth in India is largely bound up with the question of poverty. But, much can also be immediately done with the limited facilities at the disposal of those responsible for the welfare of the students. It is now widely believed that the present political atmosphere has placed new opportunities at the hands of the popular representatives to carry out nation-building programmes. Our

Provincial Governments should bestir themselves immediately in this direction to lay the basis of a virile nationhood.

THE "NEW LIFE" MOVEMENT IN CHINA

Modern China is just now passing through a phase of social reconstruction. Though many of the old social forms are yielding place to new ones, the Chinese are sticking fast to the fundamental ethical principles of their culture, which have been responsible for the extremely long life that the Chinese civilization has enjoyed. In the course of his lecture on the Modern Chinese History in the University College of Arts, Vizagapatam, on the 10th of September last, Prof. Tan Yun-Shan stressed the ethical basis of the Chinese social structure. He remarked that "Chinese society was based upon ethical principles. Hence it laid much stress on morality. The Chinese sages had set up numerous laws and rules for moral standards." Regarding the "New Life" movement in China, which aims at the remoulding of the Chinese society, he made the following observations which are sure to be of great interest to all those in India, who are engaged in the work of social and economic reforms. "China's", he said, "was the oldest civilization of the world and her people were proud of their own culture and respected it very highly. Only since the nineteenth century when China came into close contact with the Western civilization, the stable foundations of Chinese culture came to be rudely shaken. Since then, the attitude of the Chinese towards foreigners had also changed completely; they were now inclined to imitate and accept foreign ideas more readily than ever before. The movement for new culture was followed by the 'New Life' movement,

started by Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek in 1934. The object of the new movement was to take the Chinese philosophy and ethics as the foundations of the Chinese culture and then to assimilate the Western scientific spirit in order to formulate a new mode of life for the Chinese people."

One of the clearest lessons of history is that the nations which glory in material power and enjoyment are the shortest-lived and that the longest-

lived are those which are based upon high religious and moral principles. While the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman civilizations have become matters of antiquarian studies, the Hindus, the Chinese, and the Jewish cultures still endure from a remote past. The East has to assimilate the scientific spirit of the West, but she must never forget that her very life depends upon spiritual principles.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CREATIVE INDIA. FROM MOHENJO DARO TO THE AGE OF RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA. BY BENOY KUMAR SARKAR. Published by Motilal Banarsi Dass, Saidmitha Street, Lahore, 1937. Pp. 714. Price Rs. 15.

Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar has been one of the most enthusiastic of the Indian scholars who have tried a good deal to dispel the erroneous notion, generally held by Western savants, that the Hindus of history were given exclusively to supermundane speculations and interests in total oblivion of worldly concerns. He has further the knack of bringing to public gaze things and movements whose significance to the modern mind often escapes the researchers into antiquity. In this work he has tried to exhibit, from this angle, some of the trends in the evolution of Indian manhood and civilization, which are generally overlooked or minimized in the writings of authors who devote themselves to the Indian subjects in all their variety. To convey an adequate idea of the creations of the Hindus in personalities, institutions, movements and theories from the days of Mohenjo Daro to the age of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda "as specimens of human energizing" is undoubtedly an ambitious venture and a fit subject for a co-operative enterprise. For, as the author says: "The Hindus have discussed every subject in the universe from the tamarind to the pole-star. Hindu literature and art are the literature and art of every human passion and activity from sex to salvation." The author's aim has, therefore, naturally been selective and suggestive. He is anxious to impress upon the readers that the place of creative India

in the world of values, dynamic as it is, is extensive and varied. "And the problem of the 'revision of values' which has become a vital question of philosophy in post-war Eur-America is no less urgent in the science or sciences bearing on India. the Indian races and the Indian culture-systems, especially in their age-to-age orientations to the rest of the world. A new Indology is a desideratum today in order to help forward the transvaluation of values demanded long ago by Nietzsche."

The past achievements of the Hindus in the various branches of knowledge will redound to the glory of any nation. Their contributions on "pure" mathematics, algebra, arithmetic were far in advance of those of the Greeks. By the discovery of the decimal system they laid the foundation of the mathematical science known to us. They wrote extensively on anatomy, physiology, embryology, politics, government, municipal administration, jurisprudence, warfare, census, and laws of war and peace. In these various fields they anticipated many of the conclusions and discoveries of Descarte, Newton, Vesalius, Harvey, Paracelsus, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Jean Bodin and Grotius. They have produced excellent treatises on literature, painting, architecture, music, irrigation, navigation and town-planning. They excelled not only in theories but also in translating them into efficient and well-ordered social, political, economic, financial, municipal and religious institutions. Many of their contributions travelled beyond the borders of India and went to lay the foundations of or enrich, the cultures of the peoples of Eastern, Central and

Western Asia. "In a sense the geography of creative India is as wide as Asia itself." Nor is the part played by the Indians as creators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to be belittled. The Indian races have been exhibiting their vitality during these centuries in no questionable manner.

"Creative India's role in technocracy and culture is as much in evidence today as in the days of Mohenjo Daro." The book is a valuable and informative survey of India as the creator and inspirer of values at home and abroad in the various fields of human knowledge and activity.

NEWS AND REPORTS

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

The 101st anniversary of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated by the Vedanta Society of Chicago on March 19 and 21, 1937, and an interesting programme was gone through. Swami Akhilananda came from Providence to attend the ceremony. Swami Gnaneswarananda, the local leader, and Swami Akhilananda chanted a grace in Sanskrit, which was translated into English by the former. The speakers of the evening were: Swami Akhilananda, Mrs. Ruth Everett, Prof. Charles S. Braden and Prof. George V. Bobrinskoy. Each speaker touched upon one prominent phase of the life of Sri Ramakrishna. A full house of over 125 guests listened with rapt interest to the inspiring speeches delivered by the distinguished speakers.

On Sunday, March 21, at the regular service of the Society, at 8 p.m., Swami Akhilananda gave a short speech dwelling specially on the love of Ramakrishna for God and also for man. Swami Gnaneswarananda then gave a long talk on the life and works of Sri Ramakrishna, illustrating his discourse with lantern pictures. The spacious auditorium of the Society was full to capacity and everyone enjoyed the talks.

ALL-INDIA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Thirteenth Annual Session of the All-India Educational Conference will be held in Calcutta this year during Christmas Holidays. This Conference is held under the auspices of the All-India Federation of Educational Associations. The different Teachers' Associations and Educational organisations in India are affiliated to the Federation, which, in its turn, is affiliated to the World Federation of Educational Associations. For the last twelve years the Conference has been holding its annual sessions in different parts

of India under the presidency of distinguished Indian educationists.

India is passing through a stage of transition, and the time is most opportune when those who are engaged in the real nation-building work should come together to discuss the problems of education in all its aspects with special reference to the present exigencies prevailing in India. The future welfare of the nation depends to a great extent upon the proper solution of the educational problems of the country. Bengal, the pioneer of English education in India, will have an opportunity of inviting the educational experts on this occasion to give a lead in this matter, and Calcutta, the cultural centre of the Province, will be the venue of the Conference.

PRAMATHA CHANDRA KAR

On the 2nd of August last Mr. Pramatha Chandra Kar, a sincere devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, passed away at his Calcutta residence. He was well known among the devotees of Ramakrishna and the readers of the famous *Ramakrishna-Kathâmrta* in Bengali as Paltu. As a school-boy he came under the influence of the late Mahendra Nath Gupta, popularly known as Master Mahasaya. In the latter's company he came to visit Ramakrishna and was blessed by the Master's holy contact. Ramakrishna had a great love for him and in one of his ecstatic moods declared that he would also gain the end of human life after a certain time.

In later life he came to be one of the reputed attorney-at-laws of the Calcutta Bar. He spent a good deal of his earnings on philanthropic works of various kinds and was intimately connected with a number of charitable institutions. The Ramakrishna Math and Mission used to count him as one among its sincerest friends and well-wishers. We deeply mourn his loss and offer our sincere condolences to the bereaved family.