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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission has sustained an irreparable loss in the sudden passing away of its President, Srimat Swami Akhandananda, nearly at the age of 71. The melancholy event took place at the Belur Math on the 7th February, 1937 at 3-7 P.M. The Swami had been suffering from diabetes and other ailments incident to old age, but there was nothing to show that the catastrophe was so imminent. Immediately on receipt of the news from Sargachhi (Dt. Murshidabad) that he was seriously ill, he was removed to Calcutta for treatment, attended by doctors. A coma set in during the journey, and despite the best efforts of the attending physicians, the condition of the Swami rapidly declined, and the very next afternoon he entered into Mahasamadhi. After the last homage was offered by the monks and devotees, numbering about four hundred, the

body was cremated with appropriate ceremonies on the Math grounds the same night.

Swami Akhandananda, or Gangadhar Ghatak, as he was called in his previous life, came of a respectable Brahmin family of Baghbazar, Calcutta. Even from his boyhood he was of a deeply religious turn of mind, and had extremely orthodox habits. He bathed several times a day, cooked his one daily meal himself, read the *Gita* and other scriptures, and regularly practised meditation. This was his mode of life when he first came in contact with Sri Ramakrishna. It was in 1884, at Dakshineswar, which he visited in company of his friend Harinath, the future Swami Turiyananda. Sri Ramakrishna, as was customary with him, received him cordially, and asked him if he had seen him before. The boy answered that he had : it was at the

house of Dinanath Bose, a devotee who lived at Baghbazar, but he was then too young. The Master made him stay overnight, and when he was taking his leave the next morning, he asked the boy in his characteristic way, to come again. Then began that close association between the Master and the disciple which afterwards ripened into a strong urge for renunciation of the world on the part of Gangadhar, and his dedication to the service of God in man. Every time he visited Dakshineswar, he was charmed to see some new phase of Sri Ramakrishna's God-intoxicated life, felt the silent transforming influence of his love, and received practical instructions from him on spirituality. Under his tutelage, Gangadhar gradually dropped his over-orthodox observances, which the Master described as "oldish," saying, "Look at Naren (Swami Vivekananda). He has such prominent eyes! He chews a hundred betel-leaves a day, and eats whatever he gets. But his mind is deeply introspective. He goes along the streets of Calcutta, and sees houses and chattels, horses and carriages, and everything as full of God! Go and see him one day. He lives at Simla (a district of Calcutta)." The next day Gangadhar saw Narendranath and at once understood the truth of Sri Ramakrishna's remarks. He reported his impressions to the Master, who wondered how the boy could learn all that in a single interview. Gangadhar said, "On reaching there, I noticed those prominent eyes of his, and found him reading a voluminous English work. The room was full of dirt, but he scarcely noticed anything. His mind seemed to be away beyond this world." Sri Ramakrishna advised him to visit Narendranath often. This was the foundation of his abiding devotion and

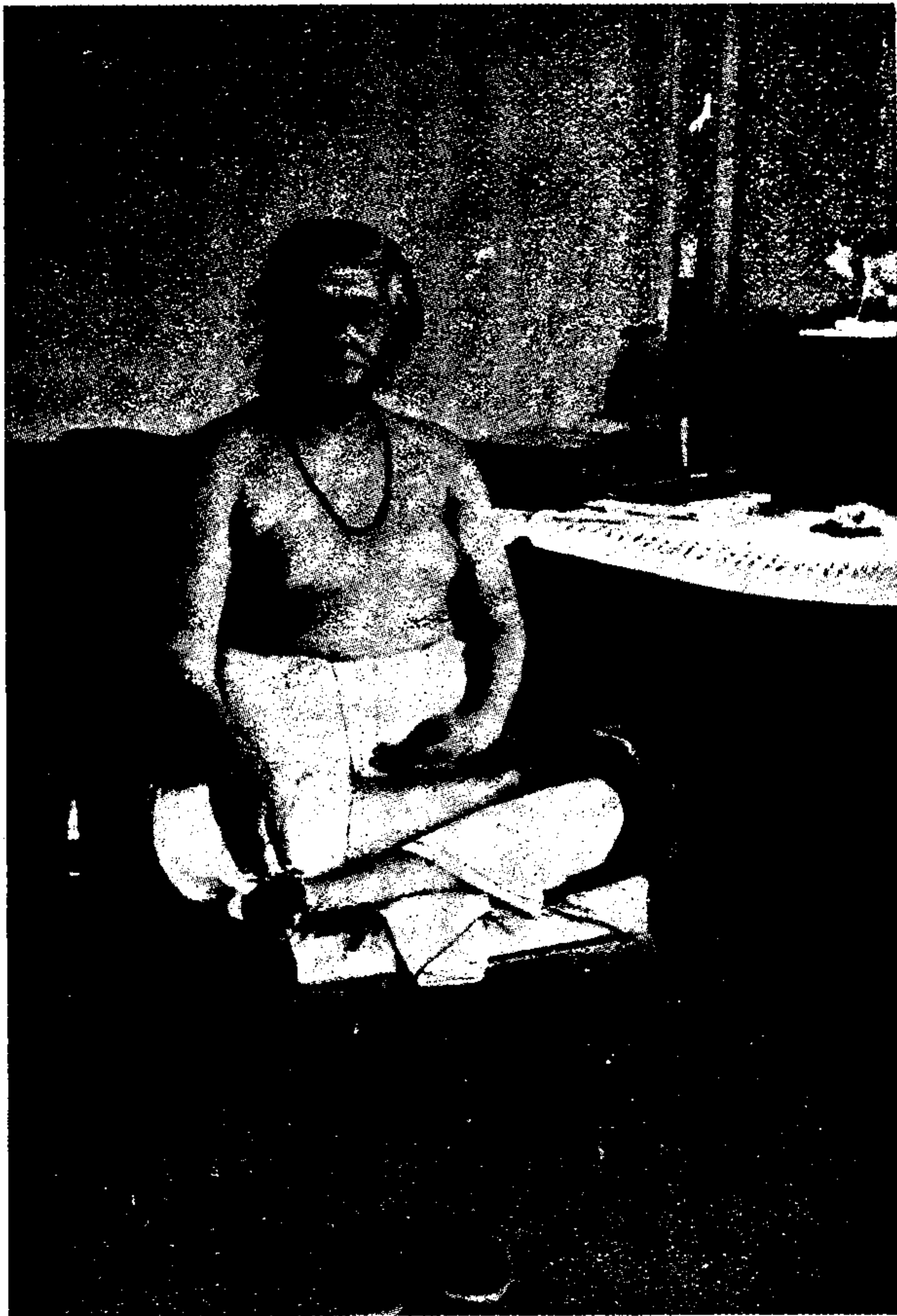
allegiance to Swami Vivekananda, the hero of his life.

Gangadhar went often to Dakshineswar, and lost no opportunity of serving the Master. This attained its climax during the prolonged illness of the Master (cancer of the throat) which necessitated his removal to the villa at Cossipore, where he finally entered into Mahasamadhi in August, 1886. In the course of those last few months, Sri Ramakrishna succeeded in binding his pure and selfless band of young disciples together in indissoluble fraternal ties, and placed them under the care of Narendranath as leader. Shortly after the Barnagore monastery was started, Gangadhar joined the all-renouncing group of monks and led an ascetic life with them, determined to realize the highest truth as taught by Sri Ramakrishna, or die in the attempt. From now on Gangadhar became Swami Akhandananda ('one who has his bliss in the indivisible Brahman'). No amount of privation could deflect them, even by a hair's breadth, from their life of absorption in God. It was the traditional ideal of monasticism venerated in India from time immemorial.

Not caring to be confined to one place, and fired with the ideal of leading the unfettered life of a wandering monk, Gangadhar started, early in 1887, on a long pilgrimage to the Himalayas, and after visiting the sacred Kedar-nath and Badrinarayan, he crossed over to Tibet, where he lived at Lhasa and elsewhere for three years, returning to India in 1890. After his return, he was full of the grandeur of the Himalayas and Tibet, had frequent correspondence with Swami Vivekananda, then at Ghazipur, and succeeded in inducing the latter to visit those regions in his company. Accordingly, Swami Akhandananda came to the Barnagore monastery, and after spending a few

happy months with his brother-disciples, sharing his experience with them, he set out in July, 1890, with Swami Vivekananda, on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas. Visiting important places on the way they reached Almora, whence they proceeded to Karnaprayag,

nanda, who had been seriously ill while practising austerities at Hrishikesh, the great resort of monks at the foot of the Himalayas, and by some other brother-disciples of his, including Swami Brahmananda. When, after five delightful months of association with his



SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

on the route to Badrinath. But illness of the one or the other prevented their proceeding further, and they returned after some weeks, *via* Tehri, to Dehradun, whence Swami Akhandananda went to Meerut for treatment. Soon after he was joined by Swami Viveka-

brothers, Swami Vivekananda, impelled by an inner hankering to remain alone, left them to make a tour of the country as a wandering monk, Swami Akhandananda, unable to bear his separation, followed him from province to province, determined to find him out. But at

every place he visited, he got the disconcerting news that Swami Vivekananda had left it a few days ago. He persisted in his search with unflagging resolve, till at last he discovered the object of his search at a port called Cutch Mandvi in distant Cutch. He, however, yielded to the leader's earnest desire to be left alone, and continued his pilgrimages.

Shortly after Swami Vivekananda's departure for America in May, 1893, Swami Akhandananda learnt from his brother-disciples, Swami Brahmananda and Turiyananda, at Mt. Abu that the real motive of the leader's journey to the West was to find bread for the hungry masses of India; for the sight of their crushing poverty and misery was too much for him, and he considered it absurd to preach religion to them without first improving their material condition. This communication made little impression upon Swami Akhandananda at the time. Then he fell ill and went for a change to Khetri, where, after six months' rest and treatment, he regained his health. But those months gave him ample opportunity to come in close touch with all sections of people, high and low, rich and poor, and it was then that he realized the truth of Swami Vivekananda's words. Burning with the desire to serve the poor and helpless masses, he wrote to the Swami in America, asking for his permission. The encouraging reply he received pushed him on, and in 1894 he began his campaign against poverty. He found that at the root of it all was the appalling ignorance of the masses. Hence that became his first objective. He moved from door to door, impressing upon the residents of Khetri the need of educating their children, and succeeded by strenuous efforts in raising the strength of the local High School from 80 to 257, as well as in improving

the teaching staff. He next visited the villages around Khetri, and started five Primary Schools for the village boys. Seeing all this the Maharaja of Khetri afterwards made an annual grant of Rs. 5,000 for the spread of education in his territory. At the instance of the Swami, the Sanskrit School at Khetri was converted into a Vedic School, and as the students were too poor to purchase books, the Swami raised subscriptions, purchased books and had them distributed free to the boys by the Political Agent. He also induced the Maharaja to lift the ban against his poor subjects getting admittance on Durbar days to have a sight of him.

Next year the Swami happened to visit Udaipur, where he was much pained to see the condition of the Bhils, the aboriginal inhabitants of the place, and with the help of a friend had them sumptuously fed one day. He also took great pains to start a Middle English School at Nathadwara, and founded at Alwar and other places of Rajputana a number of Societies, which regularly discussed useful social, religious and educational topics. Finally he left Rajputana and returned to the monastery, then at Alumbazar, early in 1896.

Here also he was not idle. Whenever a cholera case was reported in the neighbourhood, he would run to the spot and try his utmost to nurse the patient to recovery, without any regard for personal safety. A few months later, he started northwards on foot along the Ganges, till he came to a village some twenty miles off Berhampore, in the district of Murshidabad, where he met a poor Mahomedan girl weeping. On inquiry he learnt that she had broken her pitcher, the only one in the family, and there was no means to replace it. The Swami had only four annas with him. He bought a

pitcher from the grocer's shop for the girl, and gave her half-anna worth of popped rice to eat. While he was resting there, a dozen emaciated old women in rags surrounded him for food. Immediately he spent his little balance in purchasing some lunch for them. Shortly after, he came to learn that a famished old woman was lying sick and helpless in that village. He at once went there and did what he could to help her.

This was his first contact with famine. The further he proceeded, the more frightful spectacles he met, till at Mahula he cried halt. He resolved not to move from the place until he had relieved the famine-stricken people, and wrote to the Alumbazar Math asking for help. Swami Vivekananda, who had returned to India about three months ago after his four years' epoch-making work in the West, was staying there at the time. He despatched two of his monks with some money to the scene, and on the 15th May, 1897, the first famine relief work of the Ramkrishna Mission was inaugurated with Mahula and Panchgaon as centres, which lasted for about a year. In the course of it Swami Akhandananda had to take charge of two orphans, and the idea of founding an orphanage first entered into his brain. With encouragement from the district officers, the Swami, after taking temporary care of a number of orphans, founded in May, 1898, at Mahula, the orphanage entitled the Ramakrishna Ashrama, which was removed shortly after to a rented house at Sargachhi. After continuing there for thirteen years, the Ashrama has been occupying its premises in the same village since March, 1913.

From its foundation right up to the last day of his life, the Swami bestowed his best attention on the improvement of the institution, which has saved a

good number of orphan boys from starvation, illiteracy and degradation. Many of these have been put in a position to earn an honest living. Under the Swami's supervision, the Ashrama has all these years been continuing a day and a night school for the village boys and adults and an outdoor dispensary, which has of late developed considerably and treats thousands of sick people every year, the daily average of attendance being no less than 45. From 1900 to 1910 the Ashrama ran a full-fledged industrial school, teaching weaving, sewing and carpentry, as also sericulture for part of the period, which was the pride of the locality. The handicrafts turned out by its boys won first prizes for several successive years at the Banjetia Industrial Exhibition organized by Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Cossimbazar, who, by the way, was a staunch patron of the institution. Unfortunately, for want of accommodation the school had to be discontinued, and has never been revived since.

The Swami not only attended to the general education of the Ashrama boys, but also paid due regard to their spiritual training, the chanting of prayers morning and evening being compulsory for them. Select passages from the sacred books like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were read and explained to them. Orphans were admitted into the Ashrama without any distinction of caste or creed. Thus a few Mahomedan boys also were maintained at the Ashrama for several years, and trained so that they might develop faith in their own religion.

The training given at the Ashrama had enough scope for the culture of the heart as well. Through example as well as precept Swami Akhandananda encouraged his boys to noble acts of service whenever there was any out-

break of pestilence or any other calamity in the neighbouring villages. Thus hundreds of cholera patients were nursed by them and saved from untimely death, while prophylactic measures were adopted in many villages with satisfactory results.

Even after the opening of the orphanage, Swami Akhandananda could not help bringing succour to the distressed in distant places. During the heavy flood at Ghogha, in the Bhagalpur district of Bihar, he forthwith started a relief work in which fifty villages were helped for ten weeks, and himself nursed a large number of cholera patients on the occasion. Again, during the terrible earthquake in Bihar in 1934, he, old as he was, personally inspected the scene of ravages at Monghyr and Bhagalpur, and gave impetus to the Mission's relief work in those areas. These are only a few of the hundreds of instances of his overflowing sympathy for the poor and helpless. His whole life was full of such disinterested acts. To him all human beings in distress were veritable divinities, and he found intense joy in serving them to the best of his might. In this he literally carried out Swami Vivekananda's behest: "The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that the service of these alone is the highest religion."

Space does not permit us to do even a semblance of justice to this large-hearted great soul. He loved to work silently and unobserved among the dumb masses, and this is why, in spite of his indifferent health, he stuck to the village work at Sargachhi. He was made the Vice-President of the Ramkrishna Mission in 1925, and President of the Math and Mission in March, 1934, on the passing away of Srimat Swami Shivananda, the second Presi-

dent. The duties of the latter post required his presence at the Belur Math, but he preferred the solitude of Sargachhi, and was quite happy with his orphan boys, supervising the agricultural work and taking care of his valuable collection of trees and plants in the orchard. Routine-work was distasteful to him. Throughout his life, however, he was a lover of books and gathered a great store of knowledge on diverse subjects. He had a prodigious memory, which, coupled with his strong power of observation and dramatic sense, made him a first-rate story-teller. His adventurous life of a penniless itinerant monk, throughout northern and western India, particularly his experiences in Tibet, furnished him with inexhaustible materials for this, and he would keep his audience spell-bound with narrations of the privations and dangers he had gone through, and the rare experiences he had gained in exchange for them. He was an authority on Tibet, having visited that little-known country long before the late Rai Bahadur Saratchandra Das, and he had great opportunities of studying the people at close quarters on account of his knowledge of the language. He had a special aptitude for learning languages; while in Rajputana, he mastered the intricacies of Hindi Grammar in the course of four short days. He knew Sanskrit as well as English, and his particular interest was in the Vedas. Not only could he recite and explain choice passages from the Samhitas, but at one time he was keen about founding institutions in Bengal for the study and propagation of Vedic culture, visiting scholars and persons of distinction for this purpose. He was a forceful writer in his mother tongue and occasionally contributed serial articles to magazines, such as the unfinished "Three Years in Tibet," in the

Udbodhan, the Bengali organ of the Ramakrishna Order, and his Reminiscences in the monthly *Vasumati*, left, alas, incomplete by his sudden passing away. Sometimes also he diverted himself by writing under a pseudonym in the daily *Vasumati*. He was an extempore speaker too, though he was extremely reluctant to appear before the public in that rôle. His impromptu speech at the memorial meeting in honour of the late Nafar Chandra Kundu, who gave his life to save two sweeper boys from a man-hole in Calcutta, was much appreciated.

Above all, like many a great saint, he loved fun. In fact, the boyish element was uppermost in him, so much so that even in the midst of a serious conversation he could make his audience laugh with some droll anecdote. His brother-disciples, knowing this lighter side of his nature, would tickle him by creating humorous situations, which he too relished. Swami Brahmananda was a pastmaster in this game. Once the two brothers stayed together for some weeks at Kothar, in the district of Balasore. Swami Akhandananda, who had been long absent from Sargachhi, wanted to return. A day was finally fixed for the departure. In the evening a palanquin was brought for him, which he mounted to catch the train at the railway station some miles off. The bearers jogged on for the whole night. When finally they laid down their burden early in the morning, and opened the door of the vehicle for the Swami to step out, great was his astonishment to see Swami Brahmananda greeting him with the remark, "Hallo, Gangadhar, what makes you come back?" He at once understood all and took it in a sportsman-like spirit. The bearers, under the secret instructions of the senior Swami, had carried

him round and round, without crossing the boundary of the village!

The love which the children of Sri Ramakrishna bore towards one another was etherial. It is indescribable. Swami Akhandananda, being almost the youngest of the batch, was the favourite of all. Swami Vivekananda loved him particularly, and affectionately addressed him as "Ganges" (the English equivalent for 'Ganga'); but he did not on that account spare the young Swami, when it came to indulging in practical jokes. The Master himself was a great lover of fun and used it as an effective means of imparting spirituality; and all his disciples shared this attitude towards life. Even if the joke was at one another's expense, it endeared them all the more to one another.

Since his assumption of the Presidential office, Swami Akhandananda was called upon to initiate disciples. Though he showed reluctance at first, perhaps out of humility, he soon overcame the scruple, and during the last three years blessed a good many earnest seekers of both sexes. He insisted on their observing a high standard of purity and moral excellence in their everyday life.

About a year ago he had a premonition of the approaching end, and told some of his disciples about it. With this in view he arranged the recital of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in his presence. Quite recently he expressed his desire of celebrating the Vasanti Puja, the vernal worship of the Divine Mother Durga, at the Ashrama. But knowing that both his predecessors had had that desire and passed away without seeing the ceremony performed, he had misgivings about his own case too, and expressed himself to that effect. He had a shed erected for this purpose and said to the

Ashrama workers, "If I do not live to see the worship, at least I have the satisfaction of raising this Mandapa for the Mother. You will do the rest." Like the independent man that he was, he often pooh-poohed the idea of suffering long in death-bed. Chafing under the infirmities of old age, and the loving services of his attendants that he had to accept through sheer necessity, he would occasionally declare that he sometimes had a mind to break away from these ties and wander alone, away from the haunts of men. He loved Sargachhi dearly, and never liked to be away from it for long, if he could help it. But it was a cherished desire of his to give up the body not there, but at the Belur Math, the place that was sanctified with thousand and one memories of his beloved brother-disciples, from the great Swami Vivekananda downwards. This wish of his was providentially fulfilled.

A month before his passing away, Swami Akhandananda wrote to Mayavati asking for the wording of a Sanskrit couplet that had appeared in the April number of the *Prabuddha Bharata* in 1927, in an article entitled "Neo-Hinduism." it ran as follows :

न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नाऽपुनर्भवम् ।
कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम् ॥

"I do not covet earthly kingdom, or heaven, or even salvation. The only thing I desire is the removal of the miseries of the afflicted." The idea expressed in the couplet was so much after the Swami's heart that even after the lapse of ten years, on the eve of his departure from this world he wanted to know its precise reading. Could there be a more touching evidence of his burning love and sympathy for the suffering and the miserable?

We are too near the bereavement to judge of its immensity aright. Speaking from the human stand-point, the longer such spiritual luminaries live among us, the better for the world. But there is such a thing as Divine purpose behind everything that happens. Swami Akhandananda came to the world in accordance with that, and after his task was done, he has gone back to the Source of Light and Life from which he came. After his eventful life, he has attained eternal union with his beloved Master. Ours is but to submit to the Divine Will, and try to do our part in this life, profiting by the shining lesson that he has left for us all. May his glorious example of selfless love for humanity inspire us, may his rare combination of head and heart be our watchword, and may his pure and intensely active life set the standard for us !

MANKIND IN THE MAKING

BY THE EDITOR

I

In the world today men have become one whole so far as economic and political phenomena are concerned. So people are tempted to think that human unity can be achieved by means of economic and political adjustments

alone. They ought to be disillusionized of the dream and be made awake to the disappointing reality which the present chaos in the world has brought about. Although commerce, currencies, and political fortunes are today interdependent, men are far away from feeling any

necessity of treating mankind as a unit. The present condition of the world is undoubtedly the sign of an inward crisis, and the age itself is in the state of a great transition. Wherein the hope lies and on what depends the future progress of mankind are some of the vital problems that modern men are confronted with. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, discusses the problems in an inaugural lecture* delivered before the University of Oxford in October last and voices forth the messages of Eastern thought, indicating its enduring value as a living force in shaping the soul of the modern man. In the following paragraphs we shall examine the line of his arguments as an exponent of Eastern thought. At the very outset, the learned professor observes that human progress is marked by a series of integrations, by the formation of more and more comprehensive harmonies; as such, when any particular integration is found inadequate to the new conditions, man breaks it down and advances to a larger whole. "While civilization is always on the move," says he, "certain periods stand out clearly marked as periods of intense cultural change. The sixth century B.C., the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages and from the Middle Ages to Modern times in Europe, were such periods. None of these, however, is comparable to the present tension and anxiety which are world-wide in character and extend to every aspect of human life. We seem to feel that the end of one period of civilization is slowly drawing into sight." According to him, attempts to bring about human unity in the world through mechanical means have proved fruitless. The future of the human race as of the individual depends on the direction of

its life forces, the lights which guide it, and the laws that mould it. He recognizes a region beyond the body and the intellect, one in which the human spirit finds its expression in aspiration and which he calls the soul of a being, the determining principle of body and mind. It is in the souls of men today that there are clashing tides of colour and race, nation and religion; so people find division in the soul of mankind—which is absolutely a myth.

People nowadays desire to make all things new for the betterment of the world without pausing to think how they can completely detach themselves from the old. Professor Radhakrishnan admits that modern men cannot get away from their roots in the old. He traces the ideas that were in the past and that rule the present. The moulding influences of modern civilization, the spirit of science and rationalism, secular humanism and the sovereign state have been traced to the period of classical antiquity. It was the Greeks who laid the foundations of natural science for the European world, and again they were the first to attempt to make life rational. To test and prove all things in the light of reason was the ambition of the Greek mind. Socrates used to warn people against the unexamined life and Plato stressed that the universal or the general idea determines the nature of a particular individual and has greater reality than the latter. Yet the Greek mind was mainly concerned with man in his full concrete reality. He observes here: "The Greeks were not famous for their religious genius or moral fervour. We do not come across any hunger for the eternal or any passionate indignation against injustice. The main religion of the Greeks was the worship of the Olympian gods, who were conceived on the analogy of man. Dionysus, Aphrodite, Hermes. Artemis, each of them

* *The World's Unborn Soul*. Oxford University Press. 31 pp. Price 2s.

represents some quality of man. If we measure the nature of a religion by the sense of mystery it induces in its followers, the mythology of the Greeks is not religion of a high quality. The Sophists questioned the right of what religion taught to control man's conduct. It was at best a human convention.

"Religious beliefs, however, were useful for political purposes. Some god or other guards every city with special care. The religious festivals were open to the Greeks and closed to others. If Socrates was executed and Anaxagoras exiled for attacking traditional beliefs, it was because of their unpatriotic impiety. It was more political oppression than religious persecution. If the Sophists did not for long subvert the piety of the ancients, if Epicurus admitted the existence of the gods, even while he denied them any part in the government of the world, if the Stoics with the most pronounced rationalism still employed the old religious dynamic, it was because they knew the social value of religion."

Greek civilization came to an end on account of its adherence to the false religion of patriotism to which modern nations more or less cling even today. Then, Rome followed but she lacked the spiritual unity which could bind her different provinces. She exposed herself to foreign religious influences, and the old traditions were washed away by the surging tide of Christianity.

II

The vital urge to the development of medieval culture was, according to Prof. Radhakrishnan, derived from the Judaic-Christian conception of life. Christianity imbibed from the Jews an ethical passion and a sense of superiority, from the Greeks a logical setting of the vague mysteries of the spirit, and from the Romans the love of organization which helped to institutionalize the religion. The desire for world dominion

made Christianity a fiercely proselytizing creed. He observes, "While Christianity gave to Europe a sure sense of the reality of the unseen, which holds the key to the destiny of man and the clue to right conduct, and thus redeemed even the intellectual and artistic pagans from an easy, self-centred, self-complacent superficiality, it imposed on Europe religious bigotry, which stifled free intellectual inquiry and fostered narrowness and obscurantism. But people whose physical and mental powers are unexhausted cannot remain content with such an order. The elements of a freer life gradually asserted themselves." The scholastic movement prepared the way for the Renaissance, the age of disintegration and rebirth. The Renaissance has been a progress in one sense, it has brought about political freedom, economic prosperity, intellectual advancement, and social reform. But in another sense it has been a sure decay of traditional religion, morality, and social order. It gave back to Europe the free curiosity of the Greek mind, the Roman's practicality and sense of social utility, and medieval religious discipline—all these were employed for the pursuit of science. Philosophy began to be shaped according to the dictates of science and it went as follows: "Truth is contained only in that which can be recognized clearly and distinctly. What is unclear and mysterious is not true. Truth lies where all men think alike, in judgments of universal validity. Mathematics is the great example of ideal truth." Kant and Spinoza aimed at a strictly scientific metaphysics. The passion for laws and rules dominated most of the philosophies during the Renaissance. The infallibility of the Church yielded to the infallibility of scientific reason. The reaction naturally set in under these circumstances and we find indications of

a transition from the period in the philosophical tendencies of voluntarism, pragmatism, and vitalism. The faith that the spread of reason will remove all irrational things began to disappear. The reaction against the Renaissance has been described by Prof. Radhakrishnan: "We long for freedom from convention, mistaking it for real freedom. Conventions are said to be mere inhibitions and habits an orthodoxy: A cold dissection of the deepest things men have lived by ends in libertarian experiments in morals. Intellectual and artistic refinement places no check on brutal lusts and savage passions. The faith that the spread of reason will abolish all irrational outbursts has disappeared. There are more violence, oppression, and cruelty than there used to be. Man tries to rule his conduct by means external to himself, by technique and not self-control. Morality as an individual regeneration, an inner transformation, is not accepted." The democratic conception of the right of individuals broke up feudalism and in its place we find the beginnings of economic individualism and the promise of modern industrialism. While people began to abolish capitalism, a tendency towards state absolutism rapidly grew in its place. Coercion became justified within and without the state. Although the Reformation insisted on the right of an individual to interpret the *Bible*, in practice different Churches imposed on their respective members particular interpretations of the scripture. Every Church thought its own exposition of the *Bible* as true and the only will of God. Philosophers of the time began to attack the traditional religion, and the theism of the Middle Ages lapsed into deism. The Christian theology got steadily rationalized and was recommended on the ground that it could be

reconciled with scientific truth and ethical values.

III

Coming down to the modern age, Prof. Radhakrishnan observes that humanism is the religion of the intellectuals today. Most of them who profess to be religious do so by habit, sentiment, or inertia. They accept their religion even as they do the Bank of England or the illusion of progress. They profess faith in God but are not inclined to act on it. "We know the shapes of thought but do not have the substance of conviction. When men have lost the old faith and have not yet found anything solid to put in its place, superstition grows. The long starved powers of the soul reassert their claims and shift the foundations of our mind. The weak, the wounded, and the overstrained souls turn to psycho-analysis which deals with the problems of the soul, under the guise of rationality and with the prestige of science. It tells us that man is only rational in part. The authoritarian creeds, which take us back to pre-Renaissance days, appeal to those who find the life of pure reason so utterly disconcerting. Revivals overtake us and we yield to them in the faith that something is better than nothing. The age is distracted between new knowledge and old belief, between the cheap godless naturalism of the intellectuals and the crude revivals of the fundamentalists. As piety in any real sense has been effectively destroyed for large numbers, the national state absorbs all their energies and emotions, social, ethical, and religious." Aggressive nationalism must be said to have reached its climax, when we hear some people cry today that their country is the only religion. Man in the community is half civilized and the state being a huge beast of prey is still primitive,

People have no strong public opinion and there is no effective international law to restrain the predatory state. But for the fear of defeat or of an irrevocable break-down, modern nations would have engaged themselves in far greater and fiercer wars than the Great War. So the present position of men today is in the state of an uncertainty, a fundamental agnosticism, and a sense of uneasiness. The modern civilization is drifting towards an incalculable future. The worst state of the situation is that people do not know what they want. Because, "in previous periods men had a clear conception of the goal they were aiming at. It is either a life of reason or a triumph of religion or a return to old perfection. We are to-day aware of the void and the profaneness of our life, but not of a way of escape from it. Some advise us to retain our respect for reason and submit to fate. Others tell us that the task is too much for man and we are only to wait for a saviour who alone can set right the disorder in the heart of things. Some gaze back in spirit to the mellow vistas of the nineteenth century of industrial prosperity, colonial expansion, and liberal humanitarianism, honestly persuaded that the world was better off under the guidance of men of birth and breeding, and are prepared to fight a last battle for authority and order. A vision of the medieval order with Church and theocracy, militarism, and despotism for its principles is sometimes held up before us. All these efforts are irrelevant to our times. They are like doses of morphia which give us temporary relief but cause permanent injury to the health. Neither a contented fatalism nor religious expectancy nor reversions to the past can give meaning to a world which is in search of its soul." Then, wherein lies the hope and in what consists the

resuscitation of the soul of man? The learned professor asks modern men not to despair of the slow dying of the old order, because it is the law of nature that life comes only by death. Every civilization is an experiment in life in the processes of time and can be dispensed with, when it has finished its legitimate career. The great periods of human history are marked by access of vitality coming from the fusion of national cultures with foreign influences. In times of trouble, men need inspiration from the sources round about them.

In Judaism we find that Abraham came from Mesopotamia and Joseph and Moses from Egypt. The Greek development was considerably influenced by Asia Minor and Egypt. In the medieval world, the creative impulse came from Palestine. So it may be presumed that the civilization of the East, their religions and ethics may offer to the modern world some help in changing the course of the present-day civilization towards a happy and enduring good which mankind is eagerly awaiting. "The only past known to the Europeans," says Prof. Radhakrishnan, "emerging from the Middle Ages was the Biblical, and the Graeco-Roman and their classics happen to be the subjects studied in the great universities founded in that period. Now that we have the whole world for our cultural base, the process of recovery and training in classics cannot cease with listening to the voices of Isaiah and Paul, Socrates and Cicero. That would be an academic error, a failure of perspective. There are others also who have participated in the supreme adventure of the ages, the prophets of Egypt, the sages of China, and the seers of India, who are guideposts disclosing to us the course of the trail. Of the living non-European civilizations the chief are the Islamic, the Chinese, and the Hindu. The Islamic

has the same historical background as Judaism and Christianity, which is well known in the West. The humanist civilization of China was considerably affected by the religious conceptions of India, especially Buddhists. Religion, however, has been the master passion of the Hindu mind, a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path, the presupposition and basis of their civilization, and driving force of their culture, and the expression—in spite of its tragic failures, inconsistencies, divisions, degradations—of their life in God.”

The Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics now enters into his favourite Eastern thought, namely, the rationalist attitude of Hinduism in the matter of religion.

IV

The learned professor distinguishes the religions of the world into those which emphasize the object and those which lay stress on experience. For the former religion is an attitude of faith and conduct directed to a power without, while for the latter it is an experience to which the individual attaches supreme value. The Hindu and Buddhist religions belong to the latter. For the Hindus and the Buddhists religion is more a transforming experience than a notion of God. “Real religion,” says he, “can exist without a definite conception of the deity but not without a distinction between the spiritual and the profane, the sacred and the secular. Even in primitive religion with its characteristic phenomena of magic, we have religion, though not a belief in God. In theistic systems the essential thing is not the existence of the deity, but its power to transform man. Bodhi, or enlightenment, which Buddha attained and his followers aim at, is an experience. Perfect insight (*sambodhi*)

is the end and aim of the Buddhist eight-fold path. There are systems of Hindu thought like the Sâmkhya and the Jaina which do not admit God but affirm the reality of the spiritual consciousness. There are theists like Râmânûja for whom the spiritual consciousness, though not God himself, is the only way in which God can be known.” Thus, spiritual consciousness is the rock upon which a religious Hindu takes his stand, although there may be rites and ceremonies, authorities and dogmas, which are assigned a subordinate place in his religion. To declare that God exists means that spiritual experience can be attained, and the possibility of the experience is the most conclusive proof for the existence of God. The fact of God does not depend upon mere authority or miracles, as modern men may not believe in them but they cannot deny the fact of spiritual experience. While spiritual consciousness is the fact, the theory of reality is an inference therefrom. The process of spiritual realization does not consist in speculation or in any amount of information, but in the direct perception of the identity with the supreme, a dawning of insight into that which logic infers and scriptures teach.

The Supreme is interpreted by Prof. Radhakrishnan as the principle of search as well as the object sought, the animating ideal and its fulfilment. The impulse that makes the human soul strive for the infinite is also the Supreme. The distinction between the absolute self, the divine person and the human individual has been made by the professor in the light of Samkara’s commentary on the *Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad*, III. 8. 12 in which we find : “Therefore the unconditioned self, beyond speech and mind, undifferentiated, and one is designated as ‘not this, not this’; when it has the limiting

adjuncts of the body and organs which are characterized by imperfect knowledge, desire, and work, it is called the empirical individual self; and when the self has the limitation of the creative power manifesting through eternal and unlimited knowledge, it is called the inner ruler and divine person. The same self, as by its nature transcendent, absolute, and pure, is called the immutable and supreme self." The fundamental truths of a spiritual religion like Hinduism have been pointed out by Radhakrishnan in the two main issues that our self is the supreme being, which it is our business to discover and consciously become, and this being is one in all. This is, in a word, the philosophy and religion of the Hindus, which are but two aspects of a single movement. This is the view which is humanistic in the deepest sense, as it looks upon religion as a natural development of a really human life. "The soul that has found itself is no longer conscious of itself in its isolation. It is conscious rather of the universal life of which all individuals, races, and nations are specific articulations. A single impulsion runs beneath all the adventures and aspirations of man. It is the soul's experience of the essential unity with the whole of being that is brought out in the words, 'Thou in me and I in Thee'. Fellowship is life, lack of fellowship death. The secret solidarity of the human race we cannot

escape from. It cannot be abolished by the passing insanities of the world. Those who are anxious to live in peace with their own species and all life will not find it possible to gloat over the massacres of large numbers of men simply because they do not belong to their race or country. Working for a wider, all-embracing vision they cut across the artificial ways of living, which seduce us from the natural springs of life."

Due to the collapse of the modern civilization built on the elements of an antisocial and antimoral character, modern nations seem to be confused, and the thinking men and women all over the world are anxiously looking forward to a new emphasis in religion and a new call of the spirit. Prof. Radhakrishnan has undoubtedly succeeded in presenting to the distracted world of ours the message of harmony and peace which was proclaimed by the seers of India in the dawn of a great civilization in the history of the world. He is right in saying that a new world is struggling to be born and it is the task of a spiritual religion to go forward with the work of reforming the old world, and that the civilization of the East may offer the modern nations some help in establishing a kingdom of spirit on earth and in shaping the soul of mankind which is still in the making.

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

AT THE BELUR MATH, 1915

Sri Maharaj, Baburam Maharaj, Mahapurush Maharaj, Khoka Maharaj and others were at that time staying at the Math. For sometime past

Maharaj had made the rule that all the monks and the Brahmacharins should rise up at four in the morning and sit for meditation at half past four after finish-

ing their morning duties. After about a couple of hour's meditation there would be singing of Bhajans (devotional songs) for an hour or so in Maharaja's room. In order to wake up the boys punctually Maharaj himself would get up before four and ask one of the attendants to ring the bell at ten minutes past four. Occasionally, after the singing of Bhajans, Maharaj would counsel on spiritual practices and many other similar matters.

Maharaj: The mind which is the ruler of the senses has to be controlled. Again the mind and the intellect have both to be merged in the Self. It won't avail unless the mind is totally annihilated. The sense-appetites are sleeping now thanks to holy company; don't think they are dead. They don't disappear until one has Samâdhi. Just slacken a little, and you will find them biting at you with redoubled vigour. So one has to be very watchful till one gets beyond the mind and the intellect.

There is God; there is religion,—these are no mere words or make-believes for bolstering up morality. Truly He exists; He is an object of immediate experience and realization. There is nothing truer than Him. Fanaticism is bad. One must be calm, quiet, and controlled.

Practise meditations four times a day, in the morning, after ablutions, in the evening and at midnight. You have come here forsaking your hearth and home for the sake of God; you must have one-pointed devotion and must stake your life in the attempt to realize Him. You have to be restless like a mad dog for the sake of God. To tarry at the Math content with a bare sustenance is to drag on a most wretched existence. You lose here, nor will you gain anything in the world. You forfeit your opportunities in both. You will have success nowhere. If the

mind refuses to dwell on Him you have to keep up your practice. It is necessary to read a chapter from the *Gîtâ* every day. I have watched it myself that when the mind becomes unclean a little, the reading of the *Gîtâ* makes it pure by sweeping away, as it were, all the dirt. To rest content with a pittance is to lose everywhere.

You must goad your mind every day and question yourself: "Why have I come here, how have I spent the day? Do I really want God? And if I want Him what am I doing then?" Just lay your hand on your heart¹ and say whether you are deporting yourself in a manner worthy of realizing Him. The mind will try to play tricks. You have to throttle it so that it cannot deceive. You must hold fast to truth and be pure. The purer you grow, the more you will acquire the power of concentration and detect the subtle tricks of the mind, which will then be fully extirpated. "Who are the enemies but the senses? Conquered, they themselves turn out to be friends." This mind is the enemy of the self, and again this mind becomes its friend. The more one is able to discover this flaw of the mind by cross-examining it and thus to remove it fully, the more quickly will one advance along the path of spiritual practice.

Practise meditation intensely. At first the mind dwells on gross objects. It learns to grasp finer things after some practice in meditation. The winter is just the time for meditation and contemplation, and this is the proper age. Go and sit for meditation with the vow: "Let my body dry up in this seat." Do try to find out once whether God exists or not. It is good to practise a little endurance e.g., to take one meal on the new moon and on the eleventh day of the fortnight. Remember Him all the day instead of spending it in idle

¹ A sign of sincere confession.

talk and gossip. Remember Him always,—while you eat, lie down or sit. If you do this you will find the power of Kulakundalini (the serpent power) awakening gradually. What's there more efficacious than the remembrance of the Lord? The veils of Mâyâ will fall away one after another. You will see what a marvellous thing abides within you,—you will be self-revealed.

The days are passing away one after another. And what are you doing? Those days will never return. Pray to Master. He is present still. He shows the way and leads if one calls on Him sincerely. Don't forsake him, else you

will be ruined. Have this faith, "You are mine, I am yours." If after taking up this path you don't practise meditation and try to merge your mind in Him, you will come to great grief. The mind will always wander after lust and gold. It is good to have that Tamas which springs from Sattva, e.g., the feeling, "Alas! I have not found God as yet. What's the use of this wretched life? I shall end it now."

The bearing of the Sadhus at Hrishikesh is like that of emancipated souls; but in reality they have not reached that stage. They only delight in argumentation.

WHAT IS TRUTH ?

BY DR. MOHAN SINGH, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT.

THE QUESTION

I

"What is Truth?" queried he and tarried not for an answer. Forsooth he must have been a supreme fool or an utterly wise fellow. Folly and wisdom in the absolute are indistinguishable.

On the ordinary plane, folly is absence of the spirit of inquiry and wisdom, the realization of the immediate, urgent need of persistent questioning. He was not an ordinary fool whose inner urge manifested itself in the face of silencing factors all round. From our personal action-senses and knowledge-organs to our parents, children, society, religion, all unabashedly and unitedly conspire to stifle the query within us. Until our mind disgusted by the sheer tragedy of dailiness rebels, the question cannot attain release for itself and for us.

But thanks to the perfect ordering or inspiration of the Lord, God, everyone does get that disgust with an unintelli-

gent acquiescence in fact. The final, absolute cause of our rebellion is God's grace, but the immediate, relative cause may be death or pain or disappointment or mere ennui. Death in any case is there, and that is the greatest and surest mercy of the Benign Father.

Nature, in this respect, is fully in league with its God, for at every turn through its aberrations, accidents, breaches, blind thrusts it impells man, like a wounded hart or a half-crushed ant, to turn in agony and fling the tiny question in the face of the huge, horrid oppressor, "What is Truth?"

Society itself is a great reminder to us of our need for the interrogation. We have in our great search for Truth made it constantly better and better hoping that its added improvements will help us to forget this inconvenient and fruitless quest, but alas! even our best friends betray us, our own creations land us in trouble and in sheer irony compel us to ask, "What is Truth?"

Society does that in various ways, getting out of our control, taking us napping or unawares and out of the very ingredients we prepared for the soporific powder, it produces a terrific explosion to awaken us and make us cry out in sublime helplessness "What is Truth?"

Often your own wife, your own children, your own hands and feet, ears and eyes produce the reaction ; they deny their responsibility for sin ; accept themselves as but loyal agencies. Left alone to bear the burden, you are forced to yell out, "What is Truth !"

Truth alone can set us free ; Truth alone can answer the grand question ; Truth alone can produce the soundest, dreamless sleep. Untruth is duty-bound to, must by very nature, keep your nerves ever on edge, keep you revolving in the cradle of ghastly dreams ; and annoy you with its infinite facets, divisions, and convex and concave images of itself.

Civilized man has become weak, is more satisfied, feels safer ; hence there is greater need for him, if he cares to be told, to awaken to reality and ask "What is Truth?" for the danger he has exposed himself to is the greater ; the kick, the shaking, the disillusionment he will be inflicted with will be proportionately acuter.

The man with fewer wants and activities goes to sleep with fewer, simpler dreams ; he whose interests are many-sided and artistic necessities plentiful, must despair of quick long, sound, dreamless sleep. The sage and the idiot both sleep well for the one Truth has touched to peace and the other untruth has not yet galvanized to activity in the right cause.

If then we went to know "What is Truth?", we must first wait for the day, hastening it, of course, if we can, when right from the inmost self of us will float up to our lips this great question.

When circumstances, individual, social, moral or political, have successfully conspired against you, closed round you with their terrific faces and resources, and hounded you on to the edge of a gaping vacuity, when you sincerely and entirely feel the incompleteness, contrariness, futility, irony, tragedy, sweet mockery of things, you will have undoubtedly qualified yourself for putting the question to the powers that be.

Nations do not put that question ; nor religions, nor organizations, not even groups. Only individuals do and can do, for the mass, physical or mental, is essentially inert and its release or reaction or safety or continuity or existence lies in blind linear action, not in wise static contemplation. They do not want to die and their existence has limitation, "relativization", confinement as its first condition. Little circles cannot open up for they would cease to be circles. They are not infinite circles.

Particles break off, drops separate, alas ! only to condense and form new planets and clouds and organizations. That is the way of the world ; that is *Mâyâ*. It may be very tragic from the standpoint of Brahman. Truth must ever be awake as is untruth. But in the absolute every particle, every individual who detaches himself, who is released in the process, is so much addition to the strength of God. Glory be to the few who find themselves.

It is a Buddha here, a Christ there that dares utter the question in private as loudly as in public, in the court as caustically as in the temple. *Vairâgya* has never been the virtue of a nation or a section as a whole. Worst crimes have ever thrived side by side with finest virtues in all climes and ages. Why quarrel with and damn the West alone for its greed and acquisitiveness and mechanization and immorality.

More individuals are asking for what is Truth in the West than in the East.

They are dissatisfied most; their quest is the most earnest; their knocking is the most insistent. Kali Yuga is in full swing there. So much the better. They are the nearest to Satya Yuga. What can a lazy fool achieve who yet rolls in his bed with his eyes half-shut and the body reeking of the smells of a stuffy room? There is someone who has dressed up, gone out in full holy haste to ask "What is Truth?" of everybody he meets, begs Physics and Chemistry, Biology and Psychology, History and Philosophy, Ethics and Religion, War and Peace, Woman and Wine, Art and Artifice, Youth and Old Age, Patriotism and Internationalism, begs one and all to tell him "What is Truth?"

II

Untruth—its intensive, whole-hearted experience is the best guide to Truth. The child begins by going out, acquiring, breaking, frequent repetition. Youth is the time when individuals as the nations grapple successfully with the untruth about them; home-coming is the phenomenon of the evening, neither morning nor noon. That is the normal process.

Each being is a centre; he or she starts from it without knowing the central self, the storehouse of all energy. The process consists in filling out, in spinning out, in expansion; God or past Karma or heredity has wound up the spring to a particular point of power. From that centre he goes out in straight lines, radii, to a certain distance in time, space, and causation. There is return to the centre, unconscious, and another radius is drawn, till the flowering, petalling is complete. There is the relative, individual circle. Mâyâ has done her job well; evolution has served its purpose. Involution must begin, when?

Under whose ægis? With how much strength? The return of the prodigal son will come about sooner or later, strongly or weakly, self-willed or forced, according as the outward adventure has been small or big, forceful or tardy, aided or unaided. The circle must, in any case, be completed, the circle of the full experience of the untruth, or relative truths, back to the glimpse of and residence in the Truth. Not in time or space but in thought must every going out be reversed, every Pravritti be transformed into Nivritti. Every sin when re-traversed, relived in contemplation, in repentance will have yielded a virtue-knowledge and thus fulfilled its mission.

Sin has a divine mission; the worst times draw the best spirits down to earth; despair is a starting point for fresh hope; all the previous despairs mingling their essence of enlightened experience for the benefit of the capitalist's new venture. Every individual, every stage, every slip is a relative truth; evil is real as much as good; neither perishes, constantly giving place to newer evil and newer good and admitting of transformation of the one into the other. That is the greatest wisdom of the Lord, that no evil but can be transformed into good, no sin but can be redeemed into virtue, for evil is only one side, the going out, the filling out, in fact, the very purposes of existence, and divine play. Rid yourself of your false, unworthy ideas about evil. Evil in the absolute sense is the purpose of all existence. We are born to sin, we must live in sin and so die.

All life, manifestation, union, creation is untruth but then it receives its sanction, its sustenance, its liberation in Truth; in this sense, only, the end of untruth is truth; of evil, virtue; of darkness, light; of pain, joy. There is

just continuity and that continuity need not necessarily involve mathematical time and space (and causation); at any point the one may end in the other. That is the Beauty of Infinity, that is its Wonder, that is its Art, that is its Strength. The Infinite is infinitely removed from the finite, the Brahman is eternally, infinitely apart from the Mâyâ and yet He touches the finite, the Mâyâ at one and all points, so that there need be no fear or pessimism. The most sinful one can be very near his liberation and fulfilment in virtue. The child has always the whole man in him, the whole mankind, in fact; the whole universe is literally at the back of every point in it; only the point, not conscious of it, starves, pants, wilts, or, conversely, plays, enjoys in a disproportionately small measure, smaller than its rightful share. But in time and for the time the smaller share is just what is needed. So that Untruth is Truth in partial, acceptable utility.

The wisest do not ask only "What is Truth?"; they also inquire what is "Untruth?". What is Brahman and what is Mâyâ. In history what is Mâyâ has been the prior, more useful, more persistent question. We first set our eyes on Mâyâ, treat it as Truth till we in our upward march are startled at some point into the realization that it may not be Truth; what then is it? What is Untruth?

Science is just flapping its angelic wings to glimpse the untruth, the Mâyâ; the more it realizes it, the nearer will it approach Truth; but what about the ultimate vision of Truth, how much will be the shock, the pain of that transformation, that birth or death, if you like?

Great is the labour Science has put forth and greater must be its reward. "What is Truth?" does not require much answering; it is a simple affair, like the

birth of a child, the breaking asunder of a bit of matter from the sun, the inspiration of an idea, the unveiling of a statue. Untruth is a far more complex organization, not an organism; all organisms are alike, they but reproduce the first process, the first mixture, the first union, but no two organizations are alike for the growth of the universe takes place in time and space which are manifold, never complete, ever diverse and diversifying, conflicting, indeed.

The answer to his problem, physical or metaphysical, artistic or social, comes to the seeker in an infinitesimally small part of time but to manifest that answer, to realize it, to frame it in thought, word and deed requires all eternity. God's universe, creation is not complete; it can only be completed in eternity; He is therefore so much the imperfect God at any moment. In union with Mâyâ He is imperfect; it is only in and as Himself that we can call Him Perfect. The wise have, therefore, always called Him, when it was a question of calling Him, of expressing the perfect realization, Truth, Existence, in the terms of finite knowledge that He is Sat-Asat, Good-Evil, Life-Death. As of God, so of Man. In creation He is imperfect without Woman and His experience of love must be infinitized, must continue to vary, progress, expand.

It is no wonder, therefore, that as Creator the Lord is represented as androgynous, later splitting into Isvara and Sakti, in fact committing incest, for Umâ, was born out of Brahman and then for creation, propagation He united with His own daughter. The Truth—Untruth, the Life—Death, the Light—Shade splits itself and then Truth and Untruth separated go on uniting and dividing and subdividing eternally, ever "relativizing" themselves separating and meeting, conflicting and harmonizing—so goes on the play. Every new shape

is, however, the shape of Mâyâ, every new name and cause, too. The Lover is the same; it's the beloved who is changing and acquiring and giving newer and newer joy and consciousness and power by its fresh fashionings of itself, fresh dressings-up, fresh flights and embraces.

It is the Untruth which is taking a new line, sounding a new note each time. You must tackle it first and at as many points as you can. Truth cannot reveal itself except through Untruth; you must, therefore, proceed from Untruth to Truth after having known something of the Untruth. The whole of Untruth you can never know for it is never whole, ever on the way to perfection, ever elusive, ever changing; while Truth in the absolute is soon said and sooner known. For you are at the very bottom Truth yourself and it is just feeling yourself to be It, what you ever are, have been and will be.

THE ABSOLUTE

I

If the wise man asked, "What is Truth?" and did not stop for an answer, he, indeed, did well for he knew Truth, the moment his lips had framed the query. There is nothing much to know about Truth. Every metaphor is Truth, every symbol, every hyperbole, every paradox is Truth. Shaw is the fullest with it and so were the Upanishads. There is no contradiction in Truth, only assertions; the centre of Truth is everywhere. Truth is a centre; Untruth is its circumference. You can know the Truth about yourself at once but what untruths you are capable of perpetrating eternity alone can show. There is no end to adventure, to wrong, to sin, to work, to thought, to combinations and permutations; but rest, peace, virtue, contemplation are the very end itself. There is no end to life, to Mâyâ.

Poor Brahman! He is just the beginning and the end, nowhere to go to, nothing to do, just to be; and if He wants to play, well let Him create, tolerate and suffer an endless companionship and eternally repetitive union, resolution, evolution, involution. Giving up His rest, He shall know no rest.

Identifying Himself with time, space, and causation, action, thought, and inertia, He ceases just to Be as such; He perpetually becomes and hence from the plane of Becoming, we can describe Him in any terms and those must be acceptable, for they are applicable, to Him. If He, the Truth, has chosen, or at least appear, to identify Himself with Untruth, non-Truth, Mâyâ, well, He cannot object to our talking of everything we see and hear and touch and smell and taste as True, the very Truth. There is no evil, no pain, no darkness, no untruth, no shadow, no poison, no death, no destruction, no disease.

"What is Truth?" in the Absolute, is very simply answered by Guru Arjan Deva,¹ a saint of the Punjab (1563-1606), thus:

"He is Truth and verily all His Creation is True. He alone knows His Limits and Movements.

"Truth is He and True is all which He sustains and shall support.

"For him who knows, everything is Truth, indeed. Truth is He, the Lord."

When He is Truth, everything that has proceeded from Him is True. The *Upanishads*² are perfectly justified in glorifying every glaring single fact of Nature as Truth, the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the World. Prâna, Breath, is He, the

¹ *Adi Granth, Sukhmani*, 16 and 17.

² *Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad*: Speech is Brahman, Life is Brahman, the eye is Brahman, the ear is Brahman, the mind is Brahman, the heart is Brahman.

Truth, the Creator; Fire is the Creator; Ether is the Creator; Earth is the Creator; Mind is the Creator. Modern Science is equally justified. Sex is Truth; Motion is Truth; Power is Truth; Matter is Truth.

For me every wheel, every tree, every mountain, every face, human or animal, is Truth. Why should anyone bother about the question at all, might I well ask? There is no Untruth; I should better go ahead logically and say there was no *Mâyâ*, no Untruth, there is none and there will be none. Rendered positive, here is the first and greatest utterance of the founder of Sikhism, Nanak, which every Sikh must read the first thing in the morning:

“He is One; His Name is Truth; He was True in the beginning; He has been the True One, the whole Truth, all through Time; He is True; and He shall be True ever after.”

But you will protest rightly; this is sheer casuistry, begging the whole question. Everything is Truth; Truth is everything; Truth is God; God is Truth; Nothing but Truth has existed, exists and will exist; Truth is Life, Truth is Death; Life is Truth, Death is Truth; *Mâyâ* is Truth; Untruth is Truth: Where does all that lead us to? By indulging in such paradoxes, metaphors and absolutisms how is the question answered?

Yes, absolute Truth does not lead anyone anywhere. That is why the absolute Truth in every religion has proved a stumbling block, a drag, a damned brake on the progress of that religion. Why religion alone? Take philosophy, history, sociology, art: the absolute truth, mere statement of the final position, the completest acceptance of all possible positions, situations, compromises, universal sympathy, forgiveness, understanding, etc., etc.,—

they would just atrophy all action and thought, and spell perfect death, stagnation. If the world has to be, well, it has to have struggle and error and disease and so on, and upon the dead bodies of untruth, if you so call it, we are fated to reach up to Truth.

Even literature, a small affair that it is, as opposed to action, does not thrive on Truth. The Literature of Absolute Truth would be just so many barren, bald, bare statements. Wherefore, the most perfect literature of the Absolute Truth is Mathematics, the science of numbers, and Astronomy, the science of time and space, and basic Grammar, the science of single or *Bija* letters and the rules of word-formation.

Alas! however, for to the ordinary man Mathematics and Astronomy and Grammar yield no ethics, no petrol, no bread, no shelter, no pleasure. There comes the piercing call of the hungry to drape truth for them in the terms of men and women in action, in thought, at rest. Brahman must reveal Itself through *Mâyâ*. The *Vedas* arose and the *Upanishads* and the *Purânas*—each attiring the same one Truth in social, economic, physical, physiological, psychical, material terms. But those terms, those images, symbols, events, are not mere images, symbols and events. They are the eternal Truth. They are not mere representations. The mountain is not a spiritual figure of speech, does not merely represent spiritual grandeur. It is spiritual grandeur, just as it is physical immensity. Ours is an entirely spiritual world and we are wholly, completely spiritual beings. We are as much true and real as the idea in Plato's Realm of Divine Ideas which we represent, incarnate, enflesh and encircle.

II

The whole, the absolute Truth is of no use to Man. It is of inspiration-won-

der-use to the super-Man, the seer, who sees gods in stones, *Vedas* in brooks, and Laws and Dharma in seasons. Even if the mere man sees with his partly developed, balanced imagination, he will see only manly gods, degrading them to his own level. And if his intellect is developed at the cost of imagination, if all the three Gunas are not balanced in him, if he has not been lifted into the fourth, then he will refuse to see matter as anything else but matter.

Of what avail, for instance, is such a description of the Truth, the Absolute, as the following by Nanak (1469-1538 A.D.) to the man-in-the-street and the man-in-the-temple :

“Millions of Brahmās and Vishnus and Sivas are singing Thy praise, O Lord; there are millions of suns and earths and moons engaged in chanting hymns to Thee. Verily, I behold millions of Buddhas and Muhammads lying prostrate at the door of Thy Remembrance. He might have added millions of Christs, Moses and Nanaks.”

The average man stands aghast before such an utterance. He can hardly manage to digest one Son of God at one with Him, the Son participating of the grace of the Father, dispensing forgiveness through expiation of the sins of all who put full faith in him. How can he digest millions of Sons, all One with him. There is the Vedāntist who would fain tell the sinful man that in fact he himself the erring, the gross, the material, is the very Son. Sheer sophistry, profitless idealism, intellectual gymnastics, would he call it. The *Vedas* (*Samhitās*) are replete with absolute statements; who has profited from them? Even the six wise ones have quarrelled over interpretations of them, parted company and have given the impression of being six different, mutu-

ally opposed and exclusive and contradictory systems. The *Purānas* which further “relativize” the *Vedas* present the spectacle of a still more pitiful, muddling partisanship and head-breaking. The Absolute is everything to everybody; every relation is His and in every space and time can He be encased. Extreme confusion results in the mind of the reader on being told now that He is the father, then the son, then the grandson now of low birth, now of high. He is quite legitimately led into concluding that there are in the cases concerned different Brahmās and Kasyapas and Manus and Vishnus and Sivas. The Sun is different in different seasons, climes, times and glasses and water-pots and eyes. Nothing is exactly the same to the two on-lookers. What a pothor !

Could one, however, discern the gross in the subtle, the absolute in the relative and the relative in the absolute, the dream in the waking and the waking in the dream, the sun in the moon and the moon in the sun, the father in the son and the son in the father, things could be smoothed over. But insuperable is the difficulty of seeing the whole universe in the size of the thumb, the infinite circle compressing itself into a dimension-less point and the point, ever in touch with every other point, expanding on all sides into a circle, the circumference of which recedes on and on in all planes and dimensions and at every moment. Of what esoteric guidance is Emerson’s “a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere” as a definition of Truth, to a man, who has a definite circle and centre, placed amidst countless circles and in contact with all of them.

To know what is Truth may, speaking relatively—in time, space, and causation—be more harmful than to

know Untruth. Excessive light blinds, enervates, kills. The ant, when the search-light is turned on it, suspects danger and proceeds to give a fight. Christ was hanged for the light was too much for the ants. The best and profoundest answer to "What is Truth"? is "Silence". To which it has been added in the interest of Truth, "Silent-wonder." But that is, of course, not the answer which would satisfy intelligence. Truth is vision, but of what? Can the whole be visioned by a part? Thus the question "What is Truth?" reduces itself in the case of an individual, a part, into "How much of Truth can I assimilate?" "Which side of the Mountain I am looking at?" "From what angle am I taking the picture?" "Where in the infinite series am I starting?" When the child asks the question "What is this?" "Who is that?" you may tell him it is fire and he is Smith, which is as good as telling him nothing. The man in the moon is man in the moon to man and animal in the moon to the animal. The sun is what the water-pot reflects it to be. Truth is what the seeker after Truth can accept it to be and no more and no less. Nothing is Untruth till you have felt it to be so, made it to be so. Grow and the Truth will grow with you. Matter and Mind and Wars and Radios are the Truth for we know no more. They who know more, Truth for them is wider, and conversely.

"Truth does not lie in rational generalization of laws and methods, but in an instinctive growth, implying a hardly-won and hardly-kept organic process of delicate adjustments between the individual consciousness and Nature."

Substitute the Absolute for Nature, if you please. There has spoken John Cowper Poys who, says Will Durant, is

the profoundest and subtlest and noblest genius whom he has met.

III

Truth being a matter of individual growth, discovery and living cannot, therefore, be known in totality for the individual must first, for this purpose, have lived out eternity, infinitely. No orders or organizations for Truth, said Krishnamurti and at once disbanded the order of Star in the East and West. Each must answer: "What is Truth?" for himself or herself, and the answer for each would differ according to his or her growth. The Rishis saw Truth on the mountains and the Mnnis lived it out silently in the forests. After that came literature about Truth and it degenerated, divided into analysis, synthesis, argument, inference, experiment, and characterization, the six Darsanas.

All what the imperfect individual can at any time do is to go on dispelling more and more untruth, not this, not this. That the whole of Truth can be discovered by one finite man at any point in time, and space, and causation, that while conscious of the series from 1 to 10, one could eliminate from one's consciousness the whole series, transcending both I and 0 is palpable falsehood and physical absurdity. Brahman needs not to discover, know Himself; Mâyâ as zero cannot know one, and the zero as zero can just change, impel, whirl about, without knowing Itself. He therefore who thinks that he knows does not know. Then who knows the Truth?

And yet everyone has faith in himself and feels that he knows a part of the Truth. Well, there is hope for salvation for him, if the faith be there, though not the hope of the discovery of Truth. Because the vast majority of us believe that we know Truth, we

do not commit suicide. To the individual his strong, embedded, inherent sense of individuality keeps him going, bringing unto him joy and light and nectar in the measure of his capacity and intelligence. His individuality is his home, his castle in which he takes shelter from the onslaught of conflicting individualities around him. It is his blessing, his gift from God, his saviour, his final sanction for everything he does, his weighing scales for good and evil.

And yet, it is at the same time his curse, his doom, his fate, his share of untruth, his evil. It pulls him back at each step he would take forward; it prevents him from identifying himself with others. It makes his very existence, a ground for clash and conflict, for jealousy, envy, exploitation, engineered and cherished by other individuals. He occupies just so much space and time and energy; and if he were not there others would share it, however infinitesimal their share. Now that he is there, the others should exploit him by becoming his parents, children, friends, rulers, guides, entertainers. Squeeze him, sponge upon him, fleece him, "parasitize" him.

And the art of squeezing, sponging, fleecing parasitizing is called variously by pleasant and unpleasant names, love, government, religion, patriotism, cosmopolitanism, sympathy, charity and so on.

What has the poor fellow to do but in his heart of hearts to set down every other individual, man, god or beast as essentially his enemy. But try as he may, he cannot exercise the supreme prerogative of individuality unchecked, infinitely and eternally; he enters, in his imagination, into a contract and labels that social contrast as co-operation. And thus he joins and shares in the riot and revel of boisterous or subtle mutual

exploitation. Each agrees to exercise his individuality on the other in a most pleasant, tolerable, agreeable, artistic manner—children agreeing to besprinkle each other with mud, each trying to do his worst. A double game of conservation and plunder made pleasant by gradual smoothings—out, which are a natural consequence of frequent conflict or contact.

That is the Truth for the individual, the twofold urge which sends him out in the morning and brings him back at sunset, which throws him into the whirlpool of waking and extricates him up into the fairy-valleys of dream. In society, in work, he touches *Mâyâ*; in solitude, in meditation he contacts his self, the Truth, the Brahman.

The Untruth is, however, too much with him; it penetrates his aloofness, his dreaming, his meditation. The control of the mind is almost a physical impossibility with the ordinary individual. He may not be conscious of a mind at all, at his stage of development. It is necessary to know "What is Truth?" for the benefit of the animal-man, too, as also for the animal and vegetable and other creation. The whole Truth, the great Truth, the one Truth for them is their relative, finite, solid self the composition of which they are unaware of.

What is Truth has here to be restated as What is the Self? Like Truth Self is sought after only by the intelligent, by the advanced, by those dissatisfied with Untruth, with non-Self, by those who are prepared to stand apart and be witnesses or seers of the Self and Truth. You cannot see Yourself unless it be in a third, outer thing, the mirror, the lake, the sea.

The father or the husband sees himself as child through (or in) the mother or the wife. It is only in action that the individual can see himself; it re-

quires the whole eternity and infinity for the individual to discover himself. Thus we have come back, spun the circle. The individual can only know the truth relative to himself, his measure; and his measure, his self, he must find in action in endless space and time, in relation to the whole as well as in relation to his individual reactions to it. In simpler language the search for Truth for the individual resolves itself into ceaseless work and rest, war and peace in ever-growing circles of contact, family, tribe, nation, universe; home, factory, garden; village, town, country; earth, stars *en sequence*.

And what is most important to notice, at any point in history, is that the Truth for the individual will only be co-extensive with his finite life, his particular stage of growth. Man as man can

know Truth partially, relatively; whatever at any time he calls Truth is only relative Truth, serving the purpose of Absolute Truth just as the individual himself, though individual, for the moment when active, considers himself the One, the Supreme, the Final in the plane of individual consciousness. Man, if he wants to vision the Brahman, should continue loyally to serve the Mâyâ, marching forward towards Her and looking longingly back on Him, till the circle completed, the game over for him, the Mâyâ dissolves in, recedes into the Brahman and he, backward and forward, looks only at Brahman, at himself—nay, Brahman looks at, resides in, Brahman. But that can only happen *after* eternity, which is a contradiction in terms—after eternity.

(To be continued)

STE. THERESE OF LISIEUX

BY PEGGY DAVIDSON

In 1582 at Avila in Spain, a branch of the Order of Mount Carmel was founded by the learned and mystic Ste. Teresa. The main Order from which the branch was sprung had become lax, but in the new foundation poverty, penance and meditation were carried out in a very austere fashion.

Early in the nineteenth century a convent of this Order was established in the small town of Lisieux in Normandy, one of the provinces in France. In this convent there lived the beloved "Little Flower of Jesus", Ste. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Ste. Thérèse was born into a family of extraordinary piety and spirituality on January 2, 1873 in Alençon. She was the ninth child of Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin. Four of the children died

in their infancy. The five remaining girls were all dedicated to a life of renunciation and religious service as nuns.

Little Thérèse was taught by her family to believe that the bliss of heaven could only be achieved after the cessation of mortal existence. Wishing her mother, to whom she was deeply devoted, to be happy—she hoped that her mother would soon die.

From the first she was enveloped with love. As she was the youngest child, her mother, father, and sisters poured all their affection upon her. Her home environment was burning with religious enthusiasm. In her autobiography she says that if it had not been for her home surroundings she might have become very wicked, for she was wilful,

headstrong and impetuous. But even as a very young child she exerted great self-control.

She had, even from infancy, a great love of nature. All the beauties exhibited by nature raised her soul to ecstasy. The stars, especially the diamond-like brilliance of Orion's belt had a great fascination for her. The sea, with its moods and its glittering blue expanse thrilled her; and the white, dazzling radiance and purity of snow seemed most attractive to her. But it was flowers that she particularly loved, her favorite flower being the rose. It is because of her great fondness for flowers that she is known as the "Little Flower".

When she was only four years old, her dearly beloved mother Mme. Martin died. This was a great sorrow to her and for several years her natural gaiety of disposition left her. From being lively, spontaneous and exuberant, she became so sensitive that a word and often a look could make her burst into tears. She could not bear to meet or be noticed by strangers. She was only at ease among those of her own family. Her older sister, Pauline, who later became Prioress of The Carmel of Lisieux, she had made "little mother" to her.

Thérèse's spiritual growth soon started. As a little child her religious instinct had shown itself in her construction of minute altars in a recess of the garden wall, and in making an altar in her own room which she decorated with flowers and tiny candlesticks. From when she was very small she had been taught to pray, and prayer became very natural and necessary to her. She also had taught herself to meditate. It was not the Hindu type of intense and directed meditation, but a kind of deep musing, in which nature

and herself seemed to be in closest communication and kinship with God.

Her first impression of the nearness of God came to her in the midst of a thunder storm, as it does to many, but unlike others, she was unafraid. She was gloriously happy, God's presence seemed to pervade everything.

She was also exceedingly happy after her first confession. After she had received absolution and the priest had exhorted her to be devoted to Our Lady, she returned home more light-hearted and happy than ever before.

Yet, like those who have a great capacity for joy and an intense sensitivity, she also suffered deeply. By nature timid and indisposed to romp and play like other children, she suffered greatly from the hands of her elder classmates in school. She was not a spoilt child; at home she had been corrected for faults. As she had an imperious temper and could stamp her foot in fury, this was necessary. But the little kindnesses of home were a real necessity to her. And Pauline, her "little mother" was soon to be removed to the Carmel of Lisieux.

"I beheld life as it really is," she said, "full of suffering and constant partings, and I shed most bitter tears."

However, she already began to feel convinced of her vocation. She felt, beyond any doubts, that it was her destiny to become a nun. She also felt that the Carmel of Lisieux to which her sister had retired was "the desert where God wished me also to hide." This certainty brought Thérèse a wonderful peace.

Her conviction induced her to go and see the Mother Prioress at the Carmel. She contrived to have a private interview with Mother Mary of Gonzaga who listened to her disclosure and expressed her belief in Thérèse's vocation but told her that postulants were not received

at nine years of age, she must wait until she was sixteen.

Under the strain of parting with her "little mother" who was now Sister Agnes of Jesus, and the accumulated disappointments of being refused entrance to Carmel, her health gave way. She became gravely ill. She had constant acute headaches. She had shocking hallucinations, uttered terrifying cries and spoke the most horrible, delirious nonsense. Her family feared that she would become deranged, if she survived.

In the hours when her pain was less severe, she delighted in weaving garlands of forget-me-nots and daisies for a statue of the Virgin Mary which stood in her room.

One day she had a serious relapse and could not recognize any of her sisters who were then attending her. Finally, utterly exhausted, and finding no help on earth, she sought her Heavenly Mother's aid and entreated her with all her heart to have pity on her.

"Suddenly the statue became animated and radiantly beautiful—with a divine beauty that no words of mine can ever convey. The look upon Our Lady's face was unspeakably kind and sweet and compassionate, but what penetrated to the very depths of my soul was her gracious smile. Instantly all my pain vanished, my eyes filled, and big tears fell silently, tears of purest heavenly joy."

She decided that she would tell no one, for if she should, her happiness would leave her. But her Cousin Marie, who later became Sister Mary of the Eucharist at Carmel, had herself been praying earnestly before the statue of the Virgin Mary and noticed Thérèse's gazing fixedly at the statue and her transfigured expression. She guessed the grace that Thérèse had received and pressed her with inquiries.

And Thérèse, astonished at finding her secret already known, gave in to her tender solicitations and told her everything. She was begged to take her secret to the Mother Prioress at the Carmel. She did so, and the Mother Prioress listened patiently and sympathetically. Afterwards the nuns plied her with questions and the questions were such that they wounded Thérèse and gave her a feeling of guilt. They made her feel as though she were telling a falsehood. The result was as she had foreseen. For years, the remembrance of the vision caused her very real pain and turned her great happiness into sorrow.

Ste. Thérèse was now growing into girlhood, her childhood's love of nature continued but she had also acquired a love of art. Her sister Pauline, who was her "little mother" used to show her pictures depicting the lives of saints and that of Our Lord. These pictures suggested so many thoughts that they cast Thérèse into a kind of ecstasy.

In reading she also took delight, preferring it to games. She loved tales of chivalry and in her admiration for the patriotic deeds of the heroines of France, especially those of Jeanne d'Arc, she longed to do as they had done. But she discovered that they weren't always true to the realities of life.

"Our Lord made me understand that the only true glory is the glory which lasts for ever; and that to attain it there is no necessity to do brilliant deeds rather should we hide our good works from the eyes of others and even from ourselves, so that 'the left hand knoweth not what the right hand does.'"

She was now thirteen years of age and the time for her First Communion was approaching. Her "little mother" had written a short book in preparation for Ste. Thérèse's Communion three months

before the event; and another sister spoke to her every evening arousing her ardour and telling her of the imperishable riches which are within our daily reach and of the folly of seeking the perishable riches of this world.

The last days of preparation were spent in retreat at the Abbey School. These days were to her a source of great joy—joy which she felt that she could not have experienced in any but a religious house.

The number of the children in the class to receive their First Communion was small. Each of them received individual care; motherly affection was shown them by the mistresses.

“At last there dawned the most beautiful day of all the days of my life,” she writes, “How sweet was the first embrace of Jesus! It was indeed an embrace of love. I felt that I was loved, and I said, ‘I love Thee and I give myself to Thee forever.’ Jesus asked nothing of me, and claimed no sacrifice; for a long time. He and little Thérèse had known and understood each other. That day our meeting was more than simple recognition; it was a perfect union. We were no longer two. Thérèse had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the immensity of the ocean. Jesus alone remained. He was the Master and King. Had not Thérèse asked Him to take away the liberty which frightened her? She felt herself so weak and frail that she wished to be forever united to the Divine Strength.

“And then my joy became so intense, so deep, that it could not be restrained: tears of happiness welled up and overflowed.” My companions were astonished. No one knew that all the joy of Heaven had come into one heart, and that that heart—exiled, weak and mortal—could not contain it without tears... Joy alone, a joy too deep for words overflowed within me.”

At her Second Communion she was again filled with inexpressible happiness.

Shortly afterwards she went into retreat in order to prepare for Confirmation. The imperative aspirations were now becoming an insistent need. Her supreme ambition had from childhood been “to love God as He had never been loved before.” She would love Jesus—even madly. Love alone drew her. She felt that she was born for great things. She was fourteen and longed to enter Carmel. But she felt great pain at having to persuade her father to let his youngest—perhaps his best-beloved—girl go where he could only see her occasionally and then only under severe restrictions.

During the feast of Pentecost she went to her father whom she saw sitting in the garden, and silently sat by his side, her eyes already wet with tears. He looked at her and, tenderly pressing her to his heart, said, “What is it, little Queen, tell me?”

Through her tears she spoke of her all-consuming desire to enter the convent of the Carmelites. He too wept but did not try to dissuade her. He merely pointed out that she was still very young, but finally yielding to her entreaties, gave his consent.

After having obtained this, she thought that she could enter the convent immediately but to her dismay was told that she would not be able to enter the convent until she had reached the age of twenty-one. She went with her father to the Superior of the convent—a priest, but no amount of entreaty could make him change his mind. She could only get over this obstacle by visiting the Bishop of Bayeux. In order to make herself appear older she put up her hair! But that and all the eloquence she could command left the Bishop non-committal, though kindly disposed. He must refer, he said, to

the Superior of the convent. This, of course, was fatal to her desire as he had already refused. Her only resource was to appeal to the Pope himself, and this she determined to do.

A pilgrimage from Lisieux was starting to Rome and she and her father joined it. They arrived there in November, 1887 and with the other pilgrims, obtained an audience with the Pope. To obtain the permission to enter Carmel, she would have to ask the Holy Father; and the mere thought of addressing the Pope himself in the presence of Arch-Bishops, Cardinals and Bishops made her tremble.

"Leo XIII, wearing a cassock and cape of white, was seated on a dais, while round him were grouped various dignitaries of the Church. According to custom, each visitor, kneeling in turn and kissing first the foot and then the hand of Sovereign Pontiff, finally received his blessing. At this moment two guards would place their hands on the pilgrim's shoulder as a sign to rise and pass on to the adjoining hall, thus leaving the way clear for the next.

"No one uttered a word, but I firmly determined to speak, when suddenly the Vicar-General of Bayeux, who was standing to the right of His Holiness, announced in a loud voice that he absolutely forbade anyone to address the Holy Father. On hearing this my heart beat wildly, as if it would break. I looked for counsel to Céline (her sister), and she whispered: 'Speak'.

"The next moment I was on my knees before the Pope. After I had kissed his foot he extended his hand. Then raising my eyes, which were blinded with tears, I said imploringly: 'Holy Father, I have a great favour to ask of you.' At once he bent down towards me until his head almost touched my own, while his piercing black eyes seemed to read my very soul.

'Holy Father,' I repeated, 'in honour of your jubilee, allow me to enter Carmel at the age of fifteen.'

"Surprised and displeased, the Vicar-General said quickly: 'Holy Father, this is a child who desires to become a Carmelite, and the Superiors of the Carmel are looking into the matter.' 'Well, my child, do what the Superiors decide.'

"Clasping my hands and resting them on his knee, I made one last effort: 'Holy Father, if only you were to say "Yes" everyone else would be willing.' He looked fixedly at me, and said clearly, each syllable strongly emphasized; 'Well, child! Well. You will enter if it be God's will.'

"Once again I was going to plead when two of the Noble Guard bade me rise. Seeing, however, that the request was of no avail and that my hands remained resting on the knees of His Holiness, they took me by the arms, and with the help of the Vicar-General, lifted me to my feet. But just as I was being thus forced to move, the dear Holy Father placed his hand gently on my lips, then, raising it, blessed me, while his eyes followed me as I turned away.

"My sorrow was indeed crushing. Nevertheless my soul remained in peace, inasmuch as I had done all that lay in my power to respond to my Divine Master's call."

Courage and an indomitable spirit could scarcely have gone further . . and they had their reward, for on December twenty-eighth a letter was received from the Bishop, by the Prioress, saying that Thérèse was to enter the convent immediately.

The convent which Sainte Thérèse was about to enter is run on lines of great austerity. The building is without ornament and is gloomy. Inside are straight, white-washed corridors and

cold cells, each nine feet square, bare and furnished with a wooden bed having a straw mattress, a jug and basin, a stool, a table and a plain wooden cross. In it there were about twenty-nine nuns. In the morning they would rise at five o'clock and retire at ten p. m. Most of the day would be spent in prayer, Bible study, services, meditation and private prayer. Some time would be allotted to manual work. Twice a day there was an hour's recreation. All the time the strictest silence was to be observed, conversation being allowed only at recreation and then under direction. Never again would Thérèse be allowed to leave the convent walls. She would never again see the green hills and trees which she so dearly loved—(in Carmel she could see but a little space of sky) never would she see the home which had for her the tenderest associations. Her father and sisters could only see her at minute intervals and under the greatest restrictions. The old spontaneous intimacy of daily intercourse would be gone. Gone, also, would be any hope of enjoying the love of a man and bearing a little one. All these deep and legitimate enjoyments of life she would have to forego forever. Still the life of a Carmelite nun held the deepest attraction for her. Neither the joys of home nor nature could equal the joy of prayer and constant thought of our Lord.

After a last look at her dearly beloved home, she set out with her father and sisters. At the convent they all attended Mass.

"At the Communion, when our Divine Lord entered our hearts, I heard sobs on every side. I did not shed a tear, but as I led the way to the cloister door the beating of my heart became so violent I wondered if I was going to die. Oh! the agony of that moment!

One must go through it to understand it.

"I embraced all my loved ones. Then I knelt for Papa's blessing, and he too knelt as he blessed me through his tears. To see this old man giving his child to God while she was still in the spring time of life was a sight to gladden Angels.

"At length the door closed upon me, and I found a loving welcome in the arms of those dear Sisters who, each in turn had been to me a mother, and likewise from the family of my adoption, whose tender devotedness is not dreamed of by the outside world. My desire was now accomplished, and my soul was filled with so deep a peace that it baffles all attempt at description.

"Everything in the convent delighted me, especially our (my) little cell. I repeat, however, that my happiness was calm and peaceful. . . I was, indeed, amply rewarded for all I had gone through, and it was untold joy that I kept repeating: 'Now I am here forever.' "

The transition was not easy for her. For the first weeks she suffered greatly. The Mother-Superior treated her with severity, the Novice Mistress made her do a great deal of manual work.

From the confessional and from spiritual direction she obtained no comfort in those first days. Kind though the Sub-Prioress was in her spiritual guidance, words failed the poor little Therese when she tried to speak of the trouble which oppressed her.

At the end of her year of novitiate when she expected to make her profession—that is, take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—she was told by the Mother-Superior that she must not think of it for another eight months. She fell into a state of utter spiritual desolation. She often slept during meditation. Her darkness of soul be-

came so intense that only one thing seemed dear : she had no vocation and must return to the world. On the eve of the day appointed for her profession, the most furious uncertainty that ever she had in her whole life raged within her. In her despair she at last gained courage and first told the Novice Mistress and then the Mother-Superior what was going on in her soul. The former laughed at her fears and the consolation of the Mother-Superior dispelled all her doubts.

The next morning she was filled with heavenly joy and in great peace took her vows. Jesus was now her spouse and she could ask any favour of Him. She would seek naught but Jesus. Above all, she asked for love—infinite love. She felt that time could never remove her happiness. And that evening, as she looked up into the glorious starlit dome of the sky, she was filled with supreme happiness and thought that before long she would be united with Jesus in eternal bliss. It must have been at about this time that she had what she called a “transport of love”, when she remained for a week far removed from the world.

“It is,” she writes, “impossible for me to explain it, but it seemed as if I went about my work with a body other than my own; and that a veil had been cast over all earthly things. But I was not then consumed by a real flame; I was able to bear it all, without expectation of seeing the ties that bound me to life give way under the weight of joy; whilst on the occasion whereof I speak, one minute, one second longer, and my soul must have left my body.”

She had several repetitions of this experience in later years, each time her ecstasy becoming more intense. She always protested against being asked to describe them.

“I would not and could not have told all,” she would say. “Some things lose their fragrance when exposed to the air; and one’s innermost thoughts cannot be translated into earthly words without instantly losing their deep and heavenly meaning.”

The sublime heights of spiritual enjoyment were the most truly real things in her life. But in her daily life in the community there were many irritations and annoyances. Sometimes she would see the defects of a Sister. Another Sister would get on her nerves and she would be tempted to go a long way round to avoid meeting her. Again, when she was allowed to speak on spiritual subjects with some other Sister she found that, after all, the conversation did not attain the desired end of exhorting them to an ardent love of their Divine Spouse. Then another Sister fidgeted continually with her rosary, and Ste. Thérèse was bathed in perspiration in the effort to prevent herself from turning around and with one glance silence the offender.

She had two of her own sisters in the convent and it might be thought that their companionship would be a compensation to her for the separation from home and for all these petty disturbances. The contrary was the case. The rules of solitude and silence were strictly observed in the convent. There was no relaxation and gaiety among them. They only met at recreation and she keenly felt having to restrain her affection for them. Then she fell ill through having worn for too long a small penitential cross, the points of which had entered into her flesh. It was to her a matter of honour never to complain or alleviate the pain she suffered or to make religious life comfortable and agreeable. And the Mother-Superior acted strictly on this principle. Ste. Thérèse’s companions in the Novitiate,

seeing how wan she seemed, tried to obtain a special dispensation for her from early rising. But the Mother-Superior would yield to no such request. "A soul of such mettle," she said, "ought not to be dealt with as a child; dispensations are not meant for her. Let her be, for God will sustain her."

Things now became clear to Thérèse. She might not be a pillar of the church, nor a great martyr—but the body must have a heart; and she would be that heart—that heart inflamed with love.

Beside herself with joy she cried out, "O Jesus, my vocation is found at last—my vocation is love." This was the way she found to God. This was the path to perfection. The little way. The way of little sacrifices, of little kindnesses. And it was an ordinary way which everyone might follow.

Nor was it from any littleness of soul that she chose the little way. Only the greatest soul could see the greatness of the little way.

She became Mistress of Novices, and through guiding others she learned much. Nothing escaped her. She was often surprised by her clear-sightedness. She would have preferred to suffer a thousand reproofs rather than inflict one, yet she felt it necessary to cause pain at times, and her novices thought her severe. She had to fit herself to every soul. To some she could confess struggles, to others she had to be firm and never go back on what she had said. A single word might destroy all that had been accomplished.

God she regarded as pure Spirit. No human eye could see Him. But one day, as Ste. Thérèse was watching in the garden with one of her own sisters, she stood still to watch a little white hen sheltering her chickens under her wing. Her eyes filled with tears. She had realized the tenderness of God—the mercy of God. She could not tell all

that stirred her heart. But may we surmise that in that moment she had sensed the Motherhood of God? That, in that tender, self-sacrificing, sheltering mother-love, common to animals and birds as well as to women, she had divined in a flash an essential characteristic of God?

She had for some time corresponded with young missionaries in order to give them courage in their work and took great pleasure in so doing.

So the years passed in the convent. But all the time the austerity of the convent rule was telling on Ste. Thérèse. She had entered the convent with a delicate constitution, the food was most unpalatable to her digestion and the want of a fire in winter caused her the greatest physical suffering. In 1891 an epidemic of influenza broke out. She had a slight attack, but she had nursed the worst sufferers; and already knew what death was at close quarters. In April, 1896, when she was twenty-three, she had the first warning of the end. She had a hæmorrhage in the night. The next day was Good Friday when severe penances had to be practised. She kept her sufferings to herself, and it was only in May, 1897, that even her own sisters knew of her illness. She was then put on a more strengthening diet.

For some months the cough ceased. Then she took a serious turn for the worse—as it proved, for the worst. She would continue to take the community exercises, but at night, when she returned to her cell, she would ascend the steps with great difficulty, pausing for breath after each step. Utterly exhausted she would take a full hour to undress. Even then she had only a hard pallet on which to lie. The night was full of pain. But when asked if she would not like some help during those hours, she said she was delighted

to suffer alone. "When painful and disagreeable things come my way, instead of looking gloomy, I greet them with a smile. At first I did not always succeed. Now it has become a habit."

On September thirtieth came the end. Looking on her crucifix she said, "Oh . . . I love Him . . . my God, I . . . love . . . Thee."

A little later she suddenly sat up. Her eyes shone with unutterable joy and so she passed away—with the joy of that last rapture imprinted on her face.

She was twenty-four years old. She had always thought that she would die young. She had almost wished it. When the chaplain asked her if she were resigned to die, she replied that she needed more resignation to live.

Yet at this time a profound change took place. One evening, just before her death, her sister—Mother Agnes of

Jesus, went to see her. Thérèse said with great joy;

"Mother, some notes from a distant concert have just reached my ears, and the thought came to me that I will soon be listening to the music of Paradise. Yet this thought gave me only a moment's joy. For one hope only fills my heart—the hope of the love I shall receive and the love I shall be able to give. I feel my mission is soon to begin—my mission to make others love God as I love Him—to teach souls my little way. *I will spend my heaven in doing good upon earth.*"

Along with the little way she had followed—the way of childlikeness—she would help others to go. And such a lead others have gladly followed. This is the precious result of her short, heroic life.

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

BY DR. M. H. SYED, M.A., PH.D. D.LITT.

Matter is negative. It is not. It is only an appearance, a passing show with no substance in it. It is not, because it is fleeting, evanescent, elusive, illusive, ever changing and transforming. The Spirit, on the other hand, is affirmative, positive, ever-present, self-existent. It always is. It is above change and transformation, without a beginning or an end.

True power, potentiality, substance, virility and glory lie in Spirit. In the everlasting struggle between Spirit and matter, self and not-self, light and darkness, right and wrong, real and unreal, it is the Spirit that always wins.

History of the world bears witness that in the long run right alone has triumphed and the evil and vicious sides

of our nature, in spite of apparent successes, have met with failure eventually. So long as we yield to the forces of matter, it holds us in bondage and appears to dominate us for the time being, but no sooner do we assert our spiritual independence than we find it submissive and subservient.

It is the same with a woman, a symbol of Prakriti, as long as a man is fascinated by her charm and enamoured by her beauty, she captures his heart and has her own way in everything; but the moment he is awakened to his sense of manliness and independence and asserts his own will, he, in most cases, wins her. By nature Prakriti is powerless, poor and empty. It is not very difficult to conquer such a foe. If once its hollow-

ness is understood it becomes easier to subdue its surreptitious forces that appear almost insurmountable.

* * *

Children alone are *human* in the true sense of the word, for they have no caste, no creed, no religion, no sense of colour, racial or national prejudice. They are free from all narrow and cramping considerations. They love freely such beings as love and caress them. They know no convention and conform to no social laws. They are capable of silently speaking through the language of emotion. I make this contradictory and paradoxical statement from my close personal experience of children whose language I did not know. I loved them as my own children and they richly responded to my love.

* * *

I care only for the approbation of the few, and not of the many, because in all countries the number of sensible, thoughtful, reasonable, and truly honest people, is few and far between. They do not judge hastily and without due consideration. They think for themselves and know how to form an opinion. They are mostly guided by reason and less by emotion or sentiment. The many have no opinion of *their own*. They are usually affected and influenced by the thoughts and feelings of stronger and more virile people and simply echo their thoughts and views. In one place Ritcher says, "Most people judge so badly; do you wish to be praised by children?"

* * *

"I respect a man for his qualities and not for his birth. That is to say, that man is superior in my eyes, whose inner man has been developed or is in the state of development. This body, wealth, friends, relations and all other worldly enjoyments that men hold near

and dear to their hearts, are to pass away sooner or later. But the record of our actions is ever to remain to be handed down from generation to generation. Our actions must, therefore, be such as will make us worthy of our existence in this world, as long as we are here as well as after death."

* * *

In His infinite mercy God has so ordered our life and its reward and punishment that we are required to suffer only as much as we can possibly endure in one single span of life. No man is burdened only with pain and sorrow devoid of all pleasure. Every one has to experience an amalgam of both pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, alternately or together, just in exact proportion to the misery or happiness he caused to others.

Sometimes people seem to be overwhelmed with series of misfortunes and heaps of calamities, and in such a moment of gloom and darkness despondingly think that the all-compassionate Supreme Being is unmindful of them and that He is too exacting. If they could get a faint glimpse of the storehouse of their past Karma—and the result of their dark deeds, inhumanities, and cruelties, they would feel comforted to no small extent that justice is meted out to them with as much consideration as is compatible with the divine immutable law.

As a matter of fact Divine Ministers who dispense with our Karmic results, adjust things in such a way as not to cause undue strain, and unbearable pressure. That is one of the reasons why some of our good or evil actions do not bear immediate fruit because they have to be fitted with other parts of past and present Karmas. If we calmly look at our life we find that there is com-

paratively less pain in it than we imagine.

* * *

What is it that brings about cataclysmic changes, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil, in the outer Universe?

Is it the result of the accumulated national and collective Karma of the people inhabiting this world or is it due to the sheer beneficent divine will who knows best what is good for the evolution of humanity?

It is rather hard to say exactly which is which. This much is certain, that the evolver, manifestor or the Creator of this universe has some definite purpose in evolving or generating it. As the final cause of our being He naturally must be concerned with the general well-being of His manifested Universe. But He is manifesting Himself through an immutable Law as an expression of His Divine Will. This Law, it is obvious, He must uphold and maintain. When once it is accepted that the destinies of nations, fates of individuals, trend of evolution of the human race as a whole, is subject to, and guided by this law, it is not illogical to suppose that periodical changes in the outer world, must also be in accordance and in harmony with this law, which brings about necessary transformations, catastrophes, social or political upheavals as a result of human actions because it is

the human beings mostly that are affected for good or evil by them.

* * *

If it is natural for a father to love his children dearly it must be more natural for the Supreme Father of all of us to love us still more, and to be ever watchful of our well-being. Truly speaking, we have no existence apart from Him. We live and move and have our being in Him. He being all-pervading, omniscient and omnipresent, the slightest thought of Him is noticed and recognized. Any attempt on our part to be drawn towards Him is richly rewarded.

* * *

He is ever responsive and fully attentive to our call and devotion. He is ever with us, within and without us. Sometimes a true devotee is impatient and wrongly supposes that the Compassionate One is perhaps unmindful of him and causes him undue and unnecessary pain of separation, oblivious of the fact that no spiritual energy is lost and no step onward to approach and realize Him is wasted.

When every earthly attraction is wholly overcome and every mundane fetter is broken, our hearts' love is undivided, devotion completed and we are morally and spiritually fit and strong, He shall surely show His Divine Form to us, as He vouchsafed it to the wondering and admiring gaze of Arjuna.

THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA

BY PROF. S. N. BHATTACHARYA, M.A.

There is much popular misconception regarding the term *Mâyâ*. In the following few pages I shall try to examine the phenomenon, *Mâyâ*, in the light of the great Vedântist Sankara and his

followers. The most fundamental doctrine of this school is what is popularly known as *Mâyâ* or as Sankara prefers to call it *Adhyâsa*. The entire system may be said to stand on this single

prop, and if it fails the whole structure falls to the ground. But the popular idea of this Mâyâ, viz. a synonym for "nothingness", is far from what the Sankara school means by it.

Let us first examine the phenomenon, illusion, as it is understood by the Vedântists. The stock example of illusion is शुक्तिरजत or रज्जुसर्प, i.e., when a mother-of-pearl is mistaken for silver, or when a piece of rope is mistaken for a snake. A man notices a glittering substance and exclaims, 'here is a piece of silver' or rather 'it is silver'. Now this is a piece of knowledge, no doubt; but it is wrong inasmuch as it represents a thing as what it really is not, and also because some time after, on scrutinizing observation, the thing is found to be not silver but oyster. In examining this knowledge we shall have to consider how it is produced and whether this knowledge is an indivisible whole or it admits of parts.

To a man who is most attentively looking at a picture all other objects of the world may be said to be non-existent for the time being; in other words, all other objects are steeped in ignorance. In order to have a cognizance of them he must direct his senses to them. This is described by the Vedântists in their own way. They say that in every case of direct perception the mental light must be directed through one of the sense organs to the object of perception, so that the darkness of ignorance engrossing the object might be dispelled, and thus the चैतन्य (which may be loosely translated 'consciousness') pervading the perceiver might be brought into union with the unit of चैतन्य represented by the object. It should be remembered that we are speaking only of perception of external objects and not of internal emotions,

feelings etc. So before a thing can be cognized two conditions must be fulfilled:—(1) the mental light must radiate through one of the sense organs to the object, and (2) the ignorance keeping back the object from cognition must be destroyed.

Now let us see what happens in the case of a wrong perception like 'it is silver'. Does the mental light radiate and pass on to the object in front and thus dispel the abiding ignorance? If so, the object cannot but be cognized as such. But it is perceived to be what it really is not. So we are constrained to say that the abiding ignorance has not been removed. But it is also true that some kind of real knowledge of the object there is; otherwise how it would be possible to say 'It is'? So far, therefore, it is certain that the mother-of-pearl is truly perceived as *something*, i.e., the oyster is cognized to be one of a class called 'thing', but its differentiating characteristics are not known, and this ignorance or non-perception of the special properties gives rise to the false knowledge. When this ignorance is present there is the false perception, and when this ignorance is absent no silver is perceived. In short, the partial ignorance of the object (oyster) is the cause of silver-perception.

It should, however, be noted in this connection that the general perception of the object as 'It' is called आधार (the foundation or basis upon which the entire structure of silver-perception stands), the differentiating characteristic of the object, viz. its oysterness, is called अधिष्ठान (the object of ignorance), and the illusory silver is called आरोप (the thing superimposed). In the above exposition it will be noticed that the अधिष्ठान and the आरोप्य are not the objects of a single knowledge, for, in that case the perception would

assume a form like 'This oyster is silver'; whereas the **आरोप्य** and the **आधार** are objects of a single perception, for, the illusion is expressed as 'It is silver'.

It is so far certain, therefore, that not to know the differentia of the object is sufficient to give rise to the illusion, although the object is known partially, i.e., as 'something'.

But others again maintain that because the object in its most general aspect as indicated by 'It', is perceived as *not* distinct from the non-existent silver, or in other words, because the knowledge of the object as 'It' and the knowledge of silver are one and the same, it is not correct to say that the ignorance abiding in 'It' has really been dispelled, for had it been the case the knowledge of silver could not be declared wrong. So the ignorance about the object even in its most general aspect still persists. Yet it cannot be denied altogether that some kind of true perception takes place regarding the object. The explanation is:

Ignorance has two functions—one is to keep back a thing from our view and the other is to represent it as what it really is not. One is called **आवरणशक्ति** and the other **विक्षेपशक्ति**. Now by the knowledge of the thing as 'It' the **आवरणशक्ति** (the concealing function) only of ignorance abiding in the thing is destroyed, but the **विक्षेपशक्ति** (the materializing function) continues. So that practically the ignorance of the oyster as a 'thing' is the cause of the illusion. This is well illustrated by the reflection of a tree in water. The tree appears in a reverse position with the foliage downwards and the trunk upwards. The reflected image is recognized as that of a tree, and hence the **आवरणशक्ति** is absent. But so long as there is the reflection, the reverse posi-

tion of the tree continues. This contrary position is due to the **विक्षेपशक्ति** of ignorance abiding in the tree. By the way it may be mentioned that in the case of **जीवन्मुक्ति** (salvation while still living) too, the **आवरणशक्ति** of universal ignorance vanishes, while the **विक्षेपशक्ति** persists, and consequently the world-appearance goes on as before, only the man knows it to be an illusion, even as the reflection is recognized to be a tree in a reverse order. So according to these thinkers the oyster is pervaded by ignorance in both of its functions. By the knowledge of the thing as indicated by 'It' the **आवरणशक्ति** alone vanishes, while the **विक्षेपशक्ति** materializing in and through the thing still exists to give rise to the illusion.

The eminent thinker Nrisingha Bhatta, however, maintains that all that is involved in the illusion is a single indivisible piece of perceptual knowledge represented by the expression 'It is silver'. Excepting this wrong knowledge, there is no separate and independent perception of the thing even in its most general aspect and preceding the wrong knowledge of silver; and therefore to examine if any partial or full knowledge removes or not the ignorance is futile, there is no justification for admitting a separate perception in the form of 'It'. No one ever perceives that there are two pieces of knowledge, viz. (1) 'it' and (2) 'it is silver'. Nor does any subsequent event warrants us to infer an independent perception of 'it'. No universal concomitance can be established between the sense-perception of the object called 'it' and the appearance of silver. One may contend that without a sense-perception of the object, although as a *mere* thing, the appearance of silver is impossible. It may be true, but we are not prepared to lay

down that such a general perception of the object is absolutely necessary for the causation of the illusion; for, we can as well say that when there is actually no external object to be perceived, a defective sense alone is quite competent to produce illusion. Nor can we say that the thing must exist, be it cognized or not, before the illusion or rather the superimposition of silver, can take place; for, in that case superimposition should take place always and not occasionally, the necessary condition, viz. the existence of the thing, being always present. Nor can we say that the cognition of the thing, at least in its most general aspect, must precede any superimposition, for in the case of a white conch appearing yellow, for instance, the conch cannot be perceived without any colour, and yet that colour is surely not white. When it is perceived as yellow we cannot say that any independent and separate perception of the thing takes place before illusion. Consequently we are driven to the last alternative that a defective sense-application to the object is often all that is necessary to produce an illusion.

But how is it that only an oyster is mistaken for silver and not a piece of charcoal? There then must be something in the very nature of a thing that makes it a fit object for superimposition. Is it because of its resemblance with silver that an oyster is mistaken for silver? But, where there is no actual resemblance, an erroneous perception of it may be quite sufficient to produce the illusion; for instance, a really colourless sheet of water may be mistaken for a blue slab of stone. How is it then that an oyster is mistaken for silver and not a piece of charcoal? Is it due to the inherent nature of the thing? Take the case of a sheet of paper. It

is not mistaken for a rose. But, when it is cut into the form of a rose it is very likely that one would take it for a real rose. Had the inherent nature of the paper been the cause of illusion, it would have taken place even before it is shaped into a rose. Now, therefore, even if we admit that the perception of resemblance, real or imaginary, is a necessary condition of illusion yet it is not the cause. For this perception of resemblance is present even when there is no illusion; for instance, when we say 'oyster resembles silver'. It should also be borne in mind that one or more points of resemblance can be found out between any two objects.

It must, therefore, be admitted that the want of a more or less minute observation of the object—which may be due to a defective sense, carelessness, or anything whatsoever—is the cause of illusion. When such observation is present there is no illusion, and when it is absent the illusion takes place. So far then it is sure that illusion is due more to want of knowledge than to its existence in any form. In other words, illusion is due to the ignorance of the specific qualities of the object and not to the perception of resemblance. Resemblance of oyster with silver in point of brilliance etc. is perceived even when the illusion vanishes. But the knowledge of the specific qualities was absent then and is present now.

Now one may contend that if the ignorance about the specific qualities alone, and not the perception of resemblance, be the cause of illusion, why is it that superimposition of silver does not take place upon a piece of iron simply touched with the hand but not distinctly seen with the eyes? Our answer to this is that such superimposition may take place, though not

always as silver. The piece of iron may be mistaken for copper as well, and if it is felt only by the hand in a box containing silver coins it is also equally possible that it will be mistaken for silver. Where no illusion happens the reason has to be sought elsewhere, viz. absence of any defect in the sense and so on.

It is certain, therefore, that no subsequent effect warrants us to infer the perception of the object in its general aspect, as independent of and preceding the false knowledge. In fact there is only one single indivisible piece of false knowledge in an illusion.

Now a difficult problem arises. When a man mistakes a mother-of-pearl for silver he *feels* that he sees with his own eyes silver. Ocular perception is possible only when there is contact between the eye and the object so perceived. But here there is no silver in reality and hence there can be no contact with it. Yet it is felt to be actually seen with the eyes. The explanation given by a class of Vedântists is that the contact of the eye with the object upon which superimposition is made is sufficient for the supposed ocular perception of silver, for, during the illusion silver is identical with the object expressed as 'It', and appears just when the illusion begins, not a second earlier. But taking for granted that silver is identical with mother-of-pearl during the illusion, why should it be perceived as silver and not as mother-of-pearl? Some, therefore, maintain that silver is actually produced for the time being by an inscrutable force working in its own way, call it **माया** or **अज्ञान** whatever you like. The direct perception of silver cannot in any way be accounted for unless we admit the temporary creation of it. The individual conditions (such as, similarity

defective sense etc.), that are generally believed to produce the illusion, are, either singly or collectively, not sufficient to account for this peculiar conception. When a man perceives an oyster for silver he has, no doubt, an idea of a thing existing before him: the similarity of the thing with silver rouses in him the recollection of silver, and he exclaims 'it is silver'. But it has already been shown that neither the general idea of the thing nor the recollection through similarity can produce silver. It is not the knowledge of the thing in any form that begets silver, rather it is ignorance regarding the difference of the thing from silver that causes its existence. A non-existent thing is perceived to be existent; this can surely be not due to any form of true knowledge, nor is this due to an absolute want of knowledge, for, 'nothing' cannot produce 'something': yet something appears to come out of nothing. So we must have to be content with the simple statement that it occurs, when, rationally speaking, should not: beyond that our enquiry cannot proceed. A really satisfactory explanation of illusion no body has ever been able to give. The greatest Indian thinker Sankara, very clearly understood it and nowhere in his extensive writings he has attempted any explanation of **माया** or **अध्यास** or illusion. He simply lays down that it is '**नैसर्गिको लोकव्यवहारः**' that it is inherent, as it were, in man's nature to take one thing for another. We would, therefore, prefer to call his **माया** not a theory, but a simple statement of *fact*.

Accepting the phenomenon **अध्यास** as a fact of daily occurrence and caused undoubtedly by ignorance, we might analyse a bit further the nature of ignorance itself. It cannot be a reality by itself. There is no doubt that it

exists for the time being, that it produces something perceptible by the senses, yet it is not a reality, for, what is real must be real for all times and be not susceptible to destruction by true knowledge. Nor again, it is an absolute unreality, in that case no illusion would have been possible, and there is no denying that illusion takes place. So ignorance is neither real nor totally unreal. But for the matter of that it is not absolutely non-existent, for in that case knowledge would not have the necessity of destroying it. But in fact knowledge does destroy it.

Hence, if one would try to establish ignorance by reasoning he must fail, for no one can establish a thing which has no reason to exist : nevertheless no body can deny its existence, although temporarily.

In this connection the following couplets would read very interesting :—

अविद्याया अविद्यात्वमिदमेव तु लक्षणम् ।
यत्प्रमाणमसहिष्णुत्वमन्यथा वस्तु सा भवेत् ॥ १ ॥

—The definition of अविद्या (nescience or ignorance) is that it cannot be estab-

lished by any means of knowledge and reasoning. Had it been capable of being so established, it would have been a reality, and as such never to be destroyed by knowledge or any other means.

सेयं भ्रान्तिर्निरालम्बा सर्वन्यायविरोधिनी ।
सहते न विचारं सा तमो यद्वद्दिवाकरम् ॥ २ ॥

—The phenomenon illusion is without any support and is opposed to all reasoning, even as darkness is to the Sun.

दुर्घटत्वमविद्याया भूषणं न तु दूषणम् ।
कथञ्चिद्घटमानत्वेऽविद्यात्वं दुर्घटं भवेत् ॥ ३ ॥

—That अविद्या cannot be established (by reasoning) is no drawback, rather it is an embellishment. For, if somehow it can once be established the very moment it ceases to be what we mean by it.

“Mâyâ is nothing but ignorance. The most convincing and in a way the only proof of its existence is Sruti corroborated by every body's experience”—so says the great Vedântist, Vidyâranya.

GOD AND I

BY DOROTHY KRUGER

You are the breath that lights the life
In earth and air and sea,
Enflaming it to fill the mould
Of humans, finally.

You are the heart by praise assailed,
By prayer of pure enticed.
The melting heart that drops the tear
Which holds a shining Christ.

The constant Consciousness are you
Of everything that is ;
You are the Self, and I am That,
Existence, Knowledge, Bliss.

I am the changeless thread that runs
Through changing forms of all.
To me the budding bodies cling,
From me the dried ones fall.

The lightning in the mind am I
That startles from their hooks
Such sabre-thoughts as cut men free
Even from bonds of books.

I am the honey pot of joy
The bee of love discovers;
I am the ecstasy that flings
The soul through eyes of lovers.

SIVA MAHIMNAH STOTRAM

OR

THE HYMN ON THE GREATNESS OF SIVA

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

ध्रुवं कश्चित् सर्वं सकलमपरस्त्वध्रुवमिदं
परो ध्रौव्याध्रौव्ये जगति गदति व्यस्तविषये ।
समस्तेऽप्येतस्मिन् पुरमथन तैर्विस्मित इव
स्तुवन् जिह्मे मि त्वां न खलु ननु धृष्टा मुखरता ॥ ६ ॥

पुरमथन O Destroyer of the demon Pura कश्चित् some one सर्व the whole जगत् universe ध्रुवं eternal अपरः some other तु while इदं this सकलं all i. e., the universe अध्रुवं transitory गदति says परः another समस्तेऽप्येतस्मिन् जगति in this whole world ध्रौव्याध्रौव्ये eternal and non-eternal व्यस्तविषये with different natures गदति says तैः by them विस्मितः bewildered इव as if त्वां Thee स्तुवन् praising न not जिह्मे मि feel ashamed ननु Ah खलु indeed मुखरता garrulity धृष्टा audacious.

9. O Destroyer of Pura, some¹ say that the whole universe is eternal while others² say that all is transitory. Yet others³ maintain that all these are eternal and non-eternal—having different characteristics. Bewildered⁴ as it were by them I do not feel ashamed to praise Thee. Indeed this garrulity indicates my audacity.⁵

¹ Some . . . eternal—The Sâmkhyans who say that the effect is as much eternal as the cause. The universe has come out of Prakriti. Prakriti is eternal, therefore the universe also is eternal.

² Others . . . transitory—The Kshanikavâdi Buddhists who say that everything is momentary.

³ Others . . . non-eternal—the Naiyâyikas who say that ether etc. are permanent ; the jar etc. non-permanent.

⁴ *Bewildered etc.*—When a person is bewildered he is not conscious whether he is making himself ridiculous by his words and deeds.

⁵ *Audacity*—I do not know Thy real nature, yet I am forced by my audacity to praise Thee.

तवैश्वर्यं यत्ताद् यदुपरि विरिञ्चिर्हरिः
परिच्छेत्तुं यातावनलमनलस्कन्धवपुषः ।
ततो भक्तिश्रद्धाभरगुरुगृणद्भ्यां गिरिश यत्
स्वयं तस्थे ताभ्यां तव किमनुवृत्तिर्न फलति ॥ १० ॥

गिरिश O Girisha अनलस्कन्धवपुषः having for body a pillar of fire तव Thy यत् which ऐश्वर्यं greatness तत् that उपरि on the above विरिञ्चिः Brahmâ अधः below हरिः Vishnu यत् trying utmost परिच्छेत्तुं to gauge अनलं unable यातौ became ततः then भक्तिश्रद्धाभरगुरुगृणद्भ्यां ताभ्यां to these two, praising Thee with devotion and faith यत् because स्वयं of thy own accord तस्थौ revealed Thyself, (अतः therefore) तव Thy अनुवृत्तिः worship किं whether न not फलति bears fruit ?

10. O Girisha, Brahmâ¹ trying above and Vishnu trying below failed to measure Thee who took the form of a pillar of fire. Afterwards² when they praised Thee with great devotion and faith, Thou revealed Thyself to them of Thy own accord, indicating whether³ Thy worship can go without bearing result.

¹ *Brahmâ etc.*—Referring to the story that Brahmâ and Vishnu once quarrelled between themselves as to who was greater. God Siva then appeared before them in the form of a column of fire. Brahmâ and Vishnu tried to measure the body of Siva to prove their respective supremacy, but both failed. At this in all humility they began to praise Siva who, being pleased with their prayer, revealed Himself to them.

² *Afterwards . . . accord*—God is far away from those who approach Him with pride and self-conceit. But He is easily realized by those who are humble and prayerful.

³ *Whether . . . result i.e.*—The worship of God can never be in vain.

अयत्नादासाद्य त्रिभुवनमवैरव्यतिकरं
दशास्यो यद्वाहनभृत रणकण्डूपरवशान् ।
शिरःपद्मश्रेणीरचितचरणाम्भोरुहवलेः
स्थिरायास्त्वद्भक्तेस्त्रिपुरहर विस्फूर्जितमिदम् ॥ ११ ॥

त्रिपुरहर Oh Destroyer of Tripura दशास्यः the ten-headed Râvana अयत्नात् easily त्रिभुवनं three worlds अवैरव्यतिकरं without any trace of enemy आसाद्य making रणकण्डूपरवशान् eager for war वाहन arms यत् that अभृत held इदं this शिरःपद्मश्रेणीरचित-चरणाम्भोरुहवलेः offering the cluster of heads as lotuses to Thy feet स्थिरायाः steady त्वद्भक्तेः of devotion to Thee विस्फूर्जितं result.

11. O Destroyer of Tripura that the ten-headed Râvana after¹ conquering the three worlds without a trace of enemies remained with arms eager for (fresh) war is due to the fact of his having great devotion to Thee—devotion which² prompted him to offer his heads as lotuses to Thy feet.

¹ *After war*—This indicates his great prowess.

² *Which prompted etc.*—There is a story that Râvana while worshipping Siva cut off one by one his nine heads and offered them to the feet of the Lord as substitutes for flowers. And while he was about to cut off his last head, Siva appeared before him

and offered boons. Râvana prayed for the restoration of his nine heads and invincibility in war, which were granted.

अमुष्य त्वत्सेवासमधिगतसारं भुजवनं
बलात् कैलासेऽपि त्वदधिवसतौ विक्रमयतः ।
अलभ्या पातालेऽप्यलसचलिताङ्गुष्ठशिरसि
प्रतिष्ठा त्वय्यासीद् ध्रुवमुपचितो मुह्यति खलः ॥ १२ ॥

त्वत्सेवासमधिगतसारं whose strength was got by worshipping Thee भुजवनं forest of arms त्वदधिवसतौ कैलासे to Kailasa, Thy abode अपि even बलात् with great valour विक्रमयतः applying अमुष्यः of him (Râvana) प्रतिष्ठा stay त्वयि अलस-चलिताङ्गुष्ठशिरसि on Thy moving with ease the tip of Thy toe पातालेऽपि even in the nether world अलभ्या impossible आसीत् became. ध्रुवं surely उपचितः affluent खलः wicked person मुह्यति becomes deluded.

12. When Râvana¹ extended the valour of his arms—whose strength was obtained by worshipping Thee—to Kailâsa, Thy abode, Thou moved the tip of Thy toe and he did not get a resting place even in the nether world. Verily, when affluent the wicked become deluded.²

¹ Râvana etc.—Râvana thought that instead of going to Kailâsa every day for the worship of Siva, he would pull down Kailâsa and place that in his kingdom. When he attempted that Pârvati, the consort of Siva, became alarmed. At this Siva moved the tip of His toe and Râvana was thrown away from heaven to the nether world. Even there his stay would have been impossible, had not Siva taken pity on him and lifted him up.

² Deluded.—The wicked persons on getting a good position in life become ungrateful to the persons through whose help their success was achieved.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The opening article of this issue gives the melancholy news of the Mahasamadhi of Swami Akhandananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at Belur Math, on 7th February, at 8-7 P.M. The article gives a brief life sketch of the Swami.

We have attempted, in the Editorial of this issue, a critical review of the inaugural lecture delivered by Sir S. Radhakrishnan before the University of Oxford as Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics. In the present condition of the world, showing the signs of an inward crisis, wherein the hope lies and on what depends the

future progress of mankind have been discussed at length in *Mankind in the Making*. . . . Dr. Mohan Singh is a well-known professor of the Oriental College, Lahore and the author of many English, Urdu, and Punjabi books. His recent publication, "Gorakhnath and Medieval Hindu Mysticism" is a valuable book in Hindu mysticism. In *What is Truth?* he deals with the conception of the Absolute in a scholarly and, at the same time, attractive manner. In the next issue, Dr. Singh will discuss the subject more elaborately in the concluding portion which will appear in the next issue. . . . Dr. M. H. Syed deals with some practical pro-

blems of our life and their solutions in his *Philosophical Reflections*. Prof. S. N. Bhattacharya belongs to the Behar National College, Bankipore. *The Doctrine of Mâyâ* attempts to remove some popular misconceptions regarding the term Mâyâ.

SAINTS AND LEGENDS

In the last January issue of *Ashrama Review* Prof. Gajendragadkar has attempted a 'brief rational account' of the life and teachings of Ramakrishna. We have no quarrel especially with the account which in spite of a few inaccurate statements is on the whole not to be found fault with. One egregious blunder must, however, be pointed out. Ramakrishna never met Rammohan Roy who died in 1833, while the former was born in 1836. Apart from it the Professor has prefaced his account with an uncritical dismissal of many well-corroborated facts in the life of the saint found in his biographies which he says are "full of superstitions of the worst kind". We agree with him when he says, "Miracles do not form the essential part of a mystical life . . ." Indeed, Vivekananda repeatedly asked his followers in letters and conversations to write a life of Ramakrishna, which would scrupulously avoid mention of all unusual events. But, this is not to say that what are popularly called miracles do not happen. It just shows that stress should not be laid upon inessential matters. To stress them is not only to put the common people off the scent but also to give a very wide charter for the encouragement of all manner of wild fancies. If, therefore, it is necessary generally to shun what appears to be mysterious to many, it is no less indispensable in the interests of truth and adequate and deeper investigations into the reality revealed in religious consciousness that the unusual should find

a place in a complete account of the life of a saint.

We turn next to the real point at issue. The professor is inclined to dismiss certain facts as myths because they pass his comprehension and appear to him to be psychologically and physiologically impossible. He disbelieves them because common sense and reason cannot account for them. It is an irrational attitude and is more appropriate for a nineteenth century materialist than one who believes in mystic experiences. Are not God and religion legends to many who preen themselves on their rationality? Are not our ordinary experience and reason bewildered by the mystical sense of an indivisible unity and timeless whole? Our capacity for belief is no criterion of truth. An air-ship is a legend to the savage, God is a myth to the Bolshevik. We cannot on that account throw facts of moral and religious consciousness overboard as subjective fancies and baseless fabrications. If in our present state of knowledge the deliverances of religious consciousness do not always cohere with the facts of ordinary experience, the task of the philosopher lies in harmonizing them in a different sort of schematization of the universe. Ordinary experience can no longer dictate the standard of reality in this twentieth century. Such snugness which common sense enjoyed till recent years in scientific circles, it has been deprived of. Says Mr. C. E. M. Joad, "I should hold, then, that the researches of the scientists are, equally with the perceptions of the plain man, the moral consciousness of the good man, the sensitivity of the artist and the religious experience of the mystic, revelatory of reality. Epistemologically they stand on equal terms. Such arguments as there are for supposing that any of these forms of experience is merely subjective, apply also to the others; but equally if

any of them gives us information about a world external to ourselves, so also do the others." It is bad for science, bad for an honest investigator of truth to shut his mind against uncomfortable facts. Mind is loth to move out of its old ruts. Much that now appears to the Professor to be physiologically and psychologically impossible will not strike him as very mysterious if he turns to books on medical jurisprudence or the new publication of Dr. Alexis Carrel, the Nobel Prize winner, entitled 'Man, the Unknown.' We do not ask him to turn to the lives of other historical saints and devotees. For, he has already made the gratuitous assumption that they are full of legends. Other aspects of the question and other points in the article cannot be noticed here now.

THE MODERN COMPETITORS OF RELIGION

Along with a growing sense of the truth of religious faith and its need for humanity there is today a scramble for the mantle of the prophet in all manner of odd quarters. The old enemies of religion, materialism and scepticism, may be said to be asleep today, at least in the field of higher speculations, but two still more serious rivals have raised their heads against it. They are the more insidious because they sail under false colours. Social service and æsthetic sense claim today the status of religion, and there is danger of the rich content of mystic experience being fully equated with a mere philanthropic ideal or a poetic vision of beauty. Religion is not opposed to social service; on the contrary, the latter is the very aspect of a dynamic spiritual faith. Yet, to endow the social ideal with an independent rank is, if the expression may be

excused, to make a very dull affair of religion and also in the end to rob the former of all significance and support.

A greater danger, however, comes from the side of the æsthete. Poets who claim to be seers delude the popular mind into rating the dim images of the Beautiful as fully revelatory of Truth in a religious sense. Doubtless, there is an æsthetic approach to God. Doubtless, too, is the fact that human love and artistic sense are of value to the religious soul as not only shadowing to us, however faintly, the face of the Beautiful but also as stepping stones to the highest religious ideal. Even then it is far from being true that the æsthetic enjoyment is a Svatantra, self-dependent and separate experience claiming supreme value by its own independent right. The æsthetic mystic loves to express himself in emotions, sentiments, and imagery which are likely to strike the uninitiated as prurient. This does not imply that he lacks either the rational or the ethical elements in his make-up. It just testifies to the dominance of the artistic note in his being. He is no worshipper of art for art's sake. Art, religion, and morality are mingled in his integrated being. To make æsthetics a cult for the sake of æsthetics and to 'elevate' it to a pedestal where it stands divorced from morality and competes with religion is to dupe men into believing in a new type of refined materialism. As Aldous Huxley remarks: "Where beauty is worshipped for beauty's sake as a goddess independent of and superior to morality and philosophy, the most horrible putrefaction is apt to set in. The lives of the æsthetes are the far from edifying commentary on the religion of beauty." Whether or not a 'horrible putrefaction' has already set in is a question which can be very much debated.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

GITA RAHASYA OR THE FUNDAMENTALS OF LIFE AND LIVING. BY A SADHU. *The Sanathana Dharma Printing Works and Publishing House Ltd. Ernakulam, 1936. Pp. xix + 235 + xx. Price Re. 1-8 as.*

The author's desire to add to the already large number of existing translations of the *Gîtâ* in English is his desire to share with others certain results he has achieved by his study of the book. A work like the *Gîtâ* is sure to start independent lines of thinking in minds which have not been paralysed by the weight of ponderous commentaries, though few have inclination or opportunities for recording them in writing. Here in the elaborate notes and explanations which follow the translation we have evidence enough of the author's looking at things not always from the conventional standpoint, and often they impress the reader by their cogency and clearness. One of his aims in writing has also been to demonstrate that "the *Gîtâ* makes its own admirable commentary and that no other commentary is needed." This is doubtless true, for an intelligent reader is sure to discover by himself how the teachings of the *Gîtâ* cohere with one another on essential matters to admit of any doubtful interpretations being put upon them. This task he has largely achieved. The introduction summarizes the metaphysical position of the *Gîtâ* about man, God, and universe—of course from the Advaitic standpoint. The book further has an appendix containing a few of the teachings of Ramakrishna. The writer brings to his task of elucidation an openness of mind and a broadness of spirit which are sure to appeal to free minds.

WORDS OF WISDOM. BY SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA. *The Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Second Road, Chamarajapet, Bangalore City. Pp. 182. Price, Indian Superior Edn. Re. 1-6. Popular 12 as. Foreign 3s. and 1s. 6d. respectively.*

The ideas contained in the book are intended for application in daily life. They are full of deep wisdom and will be helpful to spiritual aspirants.

BENGALI

GIRISH CHANDRA. BY KUMUDBANDHU SEN. *Calcutta University. Pp. 235.*

The contribution of Girish Chandra to the Bengali stage and dramatic literature is common knowledge today. He is not only without a peer in the comparatively small field of Bengali literature but also occupies, according to competent critics, a high rank in the wider sphere of dramatic art in general. Yet, till the publication of this work nothing but a few sketchy treatments of his contribution appeared, and an elaborate handling of the subject remained a great desideratum. The book before us deals with Girish Chandra's mind and art and comprises the Girish Chandra Lectures delivered at the Calcutta University in 1933.

Appropriately enough the author traces the development of Girish Chandra's mind and art upon a background which compactly sets forth the trend of Bengali culture since the first impact of Christianity down towards the middle of the nineteenth century which was the starting point of a new era and when Girish Chandra came to be born. Here are briefly recounted the adventure of Christian traders and missionaries, the foundation and development of Bengali prose thanks to missionary efforts, the opening of the flood-gates of foreign ideas which threatened to sweep away indigenous culture and civilization in the wake of the introduction of English education, redemption of Bengali culture by her religion, and the replacement of revolutionary ideology by the ideal of a sober reform towards the end of the period. Girish Chandra was born at the time when Bengal was just recovering from the daze into which it had fallen by coming in contact with the glamour of the West. His early life was thus cast in an atmosphere of revival and renewed interest in native creations of art. We are introduced to the various influences which moulded the mind of Girish, the character and affection of his mother, the state of contemporary dramatic art and stage, his extensive studies and deep love of knowledge. In the chapter on the development of Girish Chandra's dramatic genius we have besides an able account of the growth of his dramatic skill and ori-

ginality, a useful discussion on æsthetics and dramaturgy. The last lecture is devoted to the unfoldment of a new aspect in Girish Chandra's dramas. Girish caught the glimpse of a new life when he came in touch with Ramakrishna. Henceforth he devoted his talents not only to the amusement of his readers and hearers but also to the spiritual uplift of the general public and brushed aside all petty considerations of private glory. Religion became the central theme

of all his subsequent writings, and a new type of dramas came into existence which had their parallel neither in the West nor in the classical traditions of the past India. The various innovations, ideals, and emotive elements of his later dramas have been clearly indicated. The writer wields a facile pen; he writes with grace and clarity. The book is undoubtedly a worthy acquisition to the small group of works of enduring value in Bengali.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

TANJORE

The Religious Association, Tanjore, organized a week's celebration of the Birth Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna beginning from the 4th January, 1937. Throughout the week there were festive celebrations and educative lectures. "Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the Modern World" by Swami Nisreyasananda of the R. K. Mission, "Vedic Ideals in Practical Life" by Mr. Ramanujam Tathachariar, "The Ramakrishna Mission—Its Ideals and Activities" by Swami Nisreyasananda, "Christianity" by Rev. G. John David, "Saivism" by Sri Chidambar Swamiar of Trivadi, "Jainism" by Mr. A. Chakravarthi, "The Sophisticated and the Paramahansa" by K. S. Vaidyanatha Iyer of Kumbakonam College were some of the lectures delivered during the week. The celebrations of the week terminated on the night of Sunday, the 10th January, with a public procession, when a portrait of Sri Ramakrishna exquisitely decorated was taken round the four main streets of the city.

THE ALL-INDIA-BURMA-CEYLON ESSAY COMPETITION

The results of the All-India-Burma-Ceylon Essay Competition which was held under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary, have been out. Bona fide students of schools and colleges from all the provinces of India, Burma, and Ceylon participated in the competition which was held in as many as thirteen languages, namely, English, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Hindi, Sindhi, Urdu,

Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, and Kanarese. The subject for essay in English for college students was "Sri Ramakrishna's contribution to the social and religious life of India" and that for school students was "Sri Ramakrishna and His Teachings".

The following students have been found eligible for the prizes noted against their names. The awards will be given to the recipients sometime in this month at a public meeting to be held at the Town Hall, Calcutta, following the sessions of the Parliament of Religions.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

(Boys):—(1) Asoke Kumar Bhattacharya, Scottish Church College, Calcutta,—1st prize. (2) P. N. Vishwanathan, Elphinstone College, Bombay,—2nd prize.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

(Girls):—(1) Miss Banee Ghosh, University College, Rangoon,—1st prize. (2) Miss Vatsala H. Anjaria, S. N. D. T. College for Women, Bombay,—2nd prize.

SCHOOL STUDENTS

Bengali (Boys):—(1) Gour Hari Dhar, Annada H. E. School, Brahmanbaria,—1st prize. (2) Sudhir Kumar Kundu, Town School, Calcutta,—2nd prize.

Bengali (Girls):—(1) Miss Sushama Roy, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta,—1st prize. (2) Miss Shovarani Guha, Barlow Girls' School, Malda,—2nd prize.

Assamese (Boy):—Chittaranjan Das, Govt. H. E. School, Nowgong,—2nd prize.

Assamese (Girl):—Sm. Niharbala Das, Mission Girls' Training School, Nowgong,—1st prize.

Oriya:—Kalpataru Ota, Town Victoria H. E. School, Cuttack,—2nd prize.

Hindi:—Patiram, S. M. V. High School, Cawnpore,—2nd prize.

Marathi:—(1) Sharad Mulherkar, S. P. Hakimji H. E. School, Bordi,—1st prize. (2) V. D. Kulkarni, Maharashtra Vidyalaya, High School, Poona,—2nd prize.

Gujarati:—(1) Jatilrai K. Vyas, Bhavsinhji High School, Porbandar,—1st prize. (2) J. P. Raval, Hunter Training College for Men, Rajkot,—2nd prize.

Urdu:—Kalkaprasad Simtura, B. N. S. D. Inter College Cawnpore,—2nd prize.

Tamil:—(1) P. M. Veeraraghavan—Ramakrishna Residential High School, Madras,—1st prize. (2) K. Perumal, Board High School, Namakkal,—2nd prize.

Sindhi:—(1) Lokumal Kimabrai Notani, K. C. Academy, Bhiria,—1st prize. (2) J. C. Sipahimalani, N. J. H. E. School, Karachi,—2nd prize.

Telegu:—Avasarala Ramarao, S. R. H. School, Tuni,—2nd prize.

DIAMOND HARBOUR

In connection with the celebration of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary at Diamond Harbour a meeting was held on the 12th January last, which was largely attended by the people of the locality. Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar of the Calcutta University presided over the meeting. Swami Tejashananda and Swami Sambuddhananda of the Belur Math attended the meeting on special invitation and addressed it on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Prominent among others who spoke were Sjs. Rasharanjan Sen and Phani Bhusan Bose.

The president, in his usual terse and piquant way, explained to the people assembled the cardinal point of the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, which was to make superman of every man.

BANGALORE CITY

Reference was made to the assistance given by the Mysore Royal Family to Swami Vivekananda to go to America in 1892, to spread the message of Vedanta there by His Highness the Yuvaraja of Mysore, in his address while opening the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebration at Bangalore City. Continuing His Highness said, "We are perhaps at the beginning of a great epoch, drawing different sects, religions and nationalities together into a harmonious union of peace, love, and service of man in

a world sadly torn by selfishness, hatred, and war. We see Sri Ramakrishna's influence as a bright and distant ray of light destined to scatter the world's darkness, misery, and strife in no distant future."

The celebration which lasted for nine days was a conspicuous success, being attended by about three thousand people every day. The concluding day was a students' day when at the public meeting held under the presidency of the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Nageswar Iyer two local teachers and Swami Agamananda spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. On the ladies' day about three thousand ladies attended the function which consisted of a comprehensive and interesting programme. On the third day a picturesque procession was organized which went through all the principal streets of the city. As it proceeded it swelled so much in number that it took more than six hours to return to the place of its origin. On this occasion, some of the local newspaperers brought out special editions giving life-sketches of the Master and Swami Vivekananda and details of the celebration.

PATNA

The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary was celebrated for nine days in January last. The élite of Patna heartily participated in the various functions held in connection with the celebration.

On the first day, the celebration began with Puja and Homa at the local Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bankipore. On the second day, a public meeting was held at the Senate Hall at the Patna University under the presidency of Mr. Sachhidananda Sinha, the Vice-Chancellor. Prominent among those who addressed the meeting were the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Khwaja Muhammad Noor, Mrs. Dharamshila Lal, Bar-at-Law, and Swami Sarvananda. On the third day another meeting was held at the same place. This also was presided over by Mr. S. Sinha and addressed by, among others, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. B. Dhavle, Dr. P. K. Sen, Bar-at-Law, Dr. K. P. Jayaswal, Bar-at-Law, and Swami Sarvananda. On the fourth day, the celebration shifted from Patna city to Gardanibag where another meeting was held at the High School hall. On the fifth day, religious discourses, Bhajan, and demonstrations of physical feats were held at the Bankipore Ramakrishna Ashrama where a

ladies' meeting was also organized on the following day. On the eighth day, a big procession was organized which paraded all the principal thoroughfares of the city. The procession which consisted of a number of a caparisoned tuskers and a fleet of motor cars carried a big and well-decorated photo of Sri Ramakrishna together with those of other saints and prophets.

The celebration came to a close on the ninth day, with another ladies' meeting held at Gardanibag High School. A booklet containing the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna was distributed free among the public during the days of celebration.

RAIPUR

The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary was celebrated at Raipur in November last. local people and the Bengali residents there. The Celebration continued for four days and the programme consisted of a religious conference, Kirtan, Bhajan, procession, and the feeding of the poor.

At the religious conference Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and other faiths were represented by their accredited spokesmen. The speeches of Rev. Raliaram of Allahabad, Moulana Rauf, and Dr. H. N. Sinha of the Morris College, Nagpur, on Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism respectively, were greatly appreciated by the audience. The procession which started from the local Kalibari carrying life-size photos of the Master, the Holy Mother, and Swami Vivekananda, profusely garlanded, paraded all the important roads of the city. The celebration owed its success to the untiring zeal of Messrs. A. Biswas, R. D. Tewari, and D. L. Dubey.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY IN CALCUTTA

A MILE-LONG COSMOPOLITAN PROCESSION

The citizens of Calcutta witnessed on the 31st of January a mile-long procession of the representatives of different religious persuasions, which paraded the principal streets of the city, in connection with the Birth Centenary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. Thousands of people lined the entire route to see this unique phenomenon. Besides a big portrait of Sri Ramakrishna carried on a nicely decorated motor-lorry headed by mace-bearers and yellow-clad Sikhs, kripans in hand, there were many bhajana parties, musical concerts, batches of Sannyasins in ochre-coloured robes, dis-

ciplined bands of uniformed volunteers, and beautifully arranged pictorial representations of the significant mottos of various faiths as also of the founders thereof, which formed the salient features of this cosmopolitan procession. It started from the Chittaranjan Park at 1-30 P.M. and, proceeding along Raja Dinendra Street, Cornwallis Street, College Street, Bowbazar Street, Chittaranjan Avenue and Chowringhee Road, terminated at the Maidan at 4 P.M. A mass meeting was then held at the base of the Ochterlony Monument under the presidentship of Hon. Mr. B. K. Basu, Ex-Mayor of Calcutta, who paid a glowing tribute to Sri Ramakrishna and exhorted all to follow the synthetic ideal of love and service set before the country by the R. K. Mission and thereby to combat the canker of communalism eating into the vitals of the nation. Sardar Jamait Singh in a very stirring and impressive speech dwelt on the universal character of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the positive good the Mission had been doing to humanity irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar and Raja Kshitindra Deb Raimahshay also spoke very feelingly on the occasion.

EXHIBITION

An Exhibition of Indian Culture and Industries was organised by the Centenary Committee in the spacious ground of the Northern Park of Bhowanipore in connection with the Birth Centenary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. It was opened in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering by Sir Hari Sankar Paul, Mayor of Calcutta, on the 1st of February, and lasted for a month. The Exhibition was divided into four distinct sections, viz., Arts, Culture, Health and Industry. Of these, the Art House was opened by the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dwarkanath Mitter, the Culture House by Dr. Satya Churn Law, the Sheriff of Calcutta and the Health Section by Raja Bhupendra Narayan Sinha Bahadur of Nashipore. In this age when the Indian mind is struggling for self-expression, it was quite in the fitness of things that an Exhibition on such a grand scale had been held to open before the people a glorious vista of their magnificent achievements in the various realms of thought and activity and thereby awaken in them a spirit of emulation and a sense of self-confidence.

It would not be an exaggeration to say

SRI RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY PROCESSION AND EXHIBITION, CALCUTTA



A VIEW OF THE PROCESSION NEAR COLLEGE STREET MARKET



LADIES SECTION SHOWING THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN CULTURE AND HANDICRAFTS



A VIEW OF THE CROWD WHEN THE PROCESSION REACHED THE OCHTERLONEY MONUMENT IN THE MAIDAN



A VIEW OF THE STALLS AT THE EXHIBITION

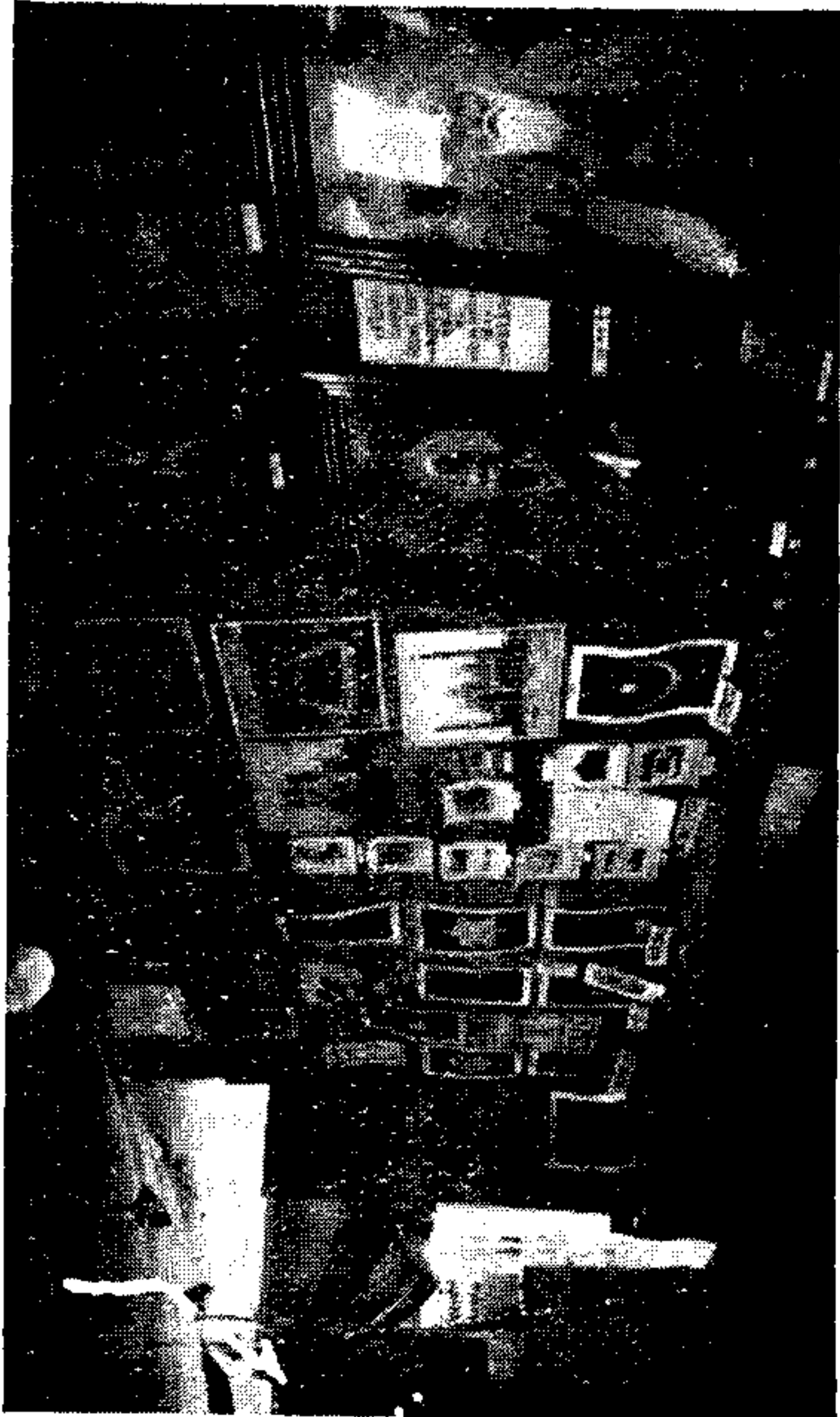
SRI RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY EXHIBITION, CALCUTTA



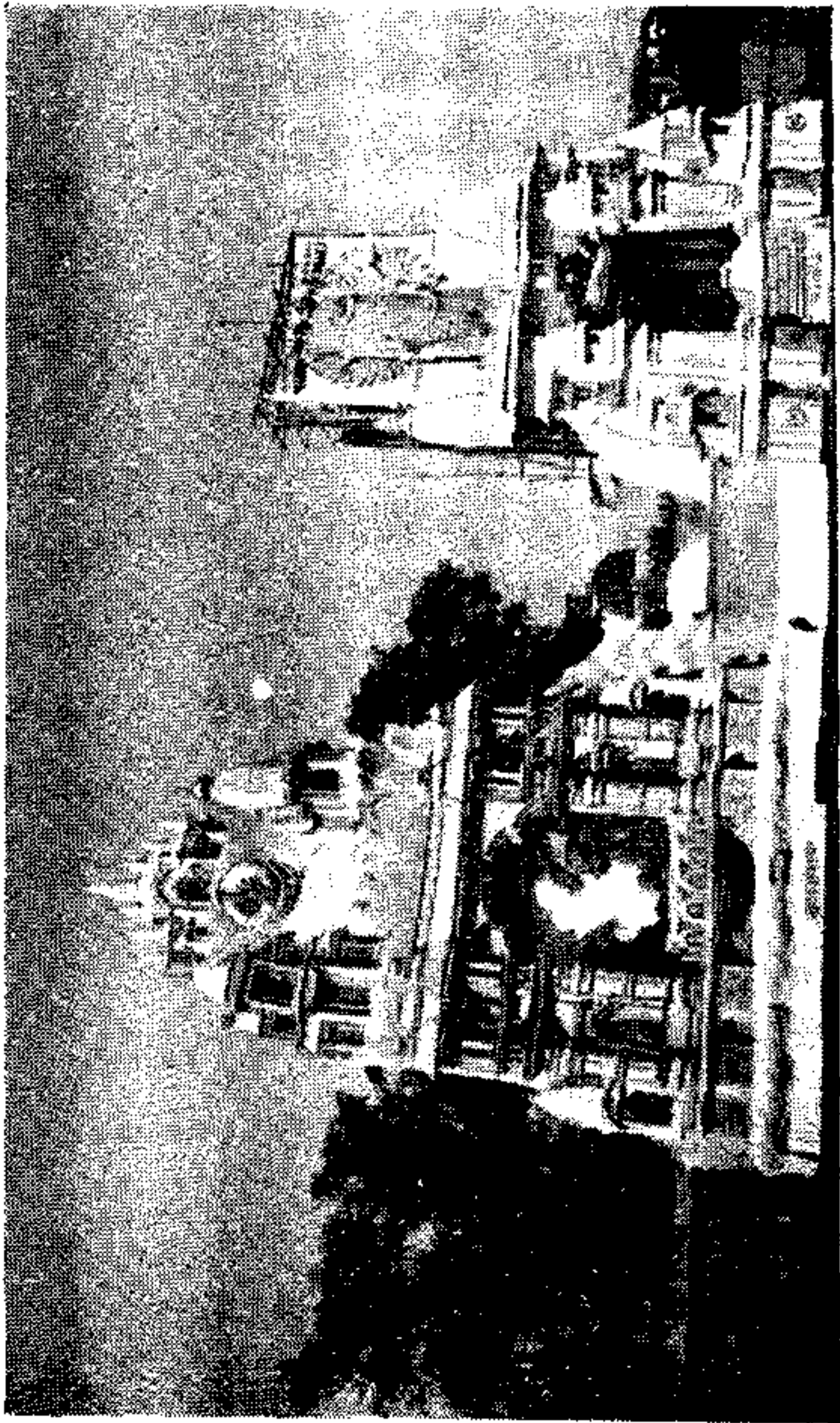
HEALTH SECTION: RAMAKRISHNA MISSION MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE SECTION



COMMITTEE STALL



CULTURE SECTION: RELIGIOUS GALLERY



STAGES FOR THE PUPPET-SHOW OF THE LIVES OF RAMA AND KRISHNA (60 ft. in height)

that all the sections were sufficiently representative and instructive. The cultural section displayed a historic evolution of Indian culture from the time of Mohenjo-daro up to the present age; whereas the Arts section replete with a sparkling variety of artistic productions of ancient, medieval and modern India unmistakably proved the high standard of excellence reached by the Indian mind in the realm of aesthetics. The fine industrial products exhibited in more than two hundred stalls equally demonstrated how India, in spite of her economic and other handicaps, had made a rapid stride in that direction, and could vie in this respect with any nation of the world to build up a rich and healthy economic life in the country in a better atmosphere. The Ladies' section which was opened by the Maharani of Santosh was adorned with a magnificent collection of fineries and products of exquisite workmanship and attracted the attention of all. It clearly showed how the skill and the creative genius of our Indian womanhood under favourable circumstances could work wonders and add to the richness of our industrial life. Besides the above, elaborate arrangements were made for spreading the knowledge about health and hygiene including maternity and child-welfare by means of illustrative charts and other means. The aim of this section was to open the eyes of our ignorant countrymen to the real causes of the appalling deterioration of their health, as also to the various means of combating the evil and improving the general health of the country. There was, besides, a long-drawn programme of entertainments for the visitors throughout the month, viz. the Janmashtami Chowkie of Dacca, jatra-performances, kirtans, lantern lectures, display of physical feats, talkies, radio, wrestling, boxing, archery, musical conference, etc., which were as interesting and refreshing as instructive and beneficial.

DR. M. WINTERNITZ

We deeply mourn the death of Prof. Dr. Moriz Winternitz, the renowned Indologist

of the Prague University (Czechoslovakia) died in January last.

Dr. Winternitz was born on December 23, 1863, in Horn, in Lower Austria. He had studied Sanskrit under the famous Orientalist, Dr. George Buehler. Dr. Winternitz was the author of many important works dealing with various phases of Sanskrit texts, his *magnum opus* being "History of Indian Literature". This latter work was originally written in German, and its improved edition in English is being published by the Calcutta University. Dr. Winternitz also helped Professor Max Müller in preparing the second edition of the *Rigveda*.

Prof. Winternitz visited India a number of times and made many friends here as well as in other lands. He was a visiting Professor of Visva Bharati at Santiniketan some time and also delivered several learned lectures all over India during his visits. He was a contributor to our journal.

THE INDIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Indian Research Institute intends to encourage systematic research work in Indian astrology. Mr. Brajendra Kishore Ray, M.A. has been working as a research student with such facilities as the Institute has been able to provide for him. The Institute will be glad if the public can afford to supply him with the following requisites:—(1) Name and address of the subject, if no objection; (2) The year, date, and time of his birth; (3) A critical estimate of his special gifts, habits, and nature; (4) Vocation; (5) Important incidents with the approximate times of their occurrence—the incidents should include, among other things (a) illness, (b) travel, (c) success and failure, their nature, (d) earnings or gains otherwise, (e) loss of money, property, or reputation, (f) quarrels and their results, (g) marriage and its quality, (h) birth of children, (i) bereavement or serious illness of near relations.

We have every sympathy for Mr. Ray and his researches in Indian astrology and wish him every success in his endeavours.



SRI RAMAKRISHNA