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"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।"

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

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, BOMBAY, 1927

After the night meal all have gathered in Mahapurushji's room to have his holy company. There is absolute silence. After a while Mahapurushji began to talk of Swamiji (i.e. Swami Vivekananda). 'Swamiji spent many days with Chhabildas here. He visited many places around here at that time. Chhabildas was a member of the Arya Samaj. He didn't believe in God with form. He used to have many arguments with Swamiji on the subject. One day he said to Swamiji, "You argue that worship of God and image-worship—all these are right. Well, here I make a declaration: If you can convince me of the correctness of worship of God with form by adducing proof from the Vedas, I will then resign my membership of the Arya Samaj." Swamiji emphatically replied, "Oh yes. I can very easily do that." For days together after that, he continued to explain to Chhabildas passages from the Vedas which distinctly support worship of God with form. Swamiji was a man of extraordinary genius. In the end Chhabildas was compelled to accept the view of God with form and so, to keep his promise, he resigned from the Arya Samaj.

'While staying here Swamiji visited places like Poona. Ordinarily he would not travel by train. But when he did so, he travelled first class. He would invariably refuse offers of monetary help. But if anybody insisted too much, he would then say, "All right. Buy me a first-class railway ticket." He often had stomach-troubles, and so a first-class compartment, having good lavatory arrangements, suited him very much. Once, I think, he was going to Limbdi, being invited by its ruler. As usual, he was in the first class and was lying on a berth with his upper body bare excepting for an under-garment. There were some respectable-looking men in the compartment. Seeing such a half-clad monk occupying a berth, they were completely upset and began to make all kinds of remarks among themselves in English. They said monks were the ruin of India, and things like that. Unconcerned, Swamiji lay and listened. But when they went too far, it became impossible for Swamiji to keep quiet. He started up and began arguing with them right away.

'He said, "What do you mean? Have the monks ruined India or saved her? Just consider for a moment what Buddha, Shankara, and Sri Chaitanya were to India and what they have done for her." He went on eloquently, showing from history how the monks

had saved India, and, refuting all their arguments, completely silenced them. Swamiji's learned English and his reasoning so impressed the leader of the party that he invited Swamiji to be his guest. Of course Swamiji could not accept the invitation, for he had already accepted the invitation of the ruler of Limbdi to be his guest. The ruler of Limbdi had great respect for Swamiji.'

After a while a monk asked Mahapurush Maharaj, 'Maharaj, who has given you the name, Mahapurush?'

Maharaj: 'Swamiji used to call me by this name.'

Monk: 'Why? Is there any special reason?'

Maharaj: 'Yes, there's. Even after coming in contact with Thakur I had to pay occasional visits to my home, as I was already married. But I hated it very much. I would merely pass a night, calling on God all the time. This would make my wife weep bitterly. So I appealed to Thakur to free me from all ties. He taught me a few practices and said, "Why fear? I am there; think of me and do these practices. There will be no harm even if you sleep with your wife in the same room. Rather it will intensify your renunciation." Thakur taught similar practices to Rakhal Maharaj also. By doing those practices I was saved from all troubles. One day I mentioned this to Swamiji in course of conversation. He was very much astonished and remarked, "How wonderful! This is the mark of a Mahapurush (a great soul). You must be a Mahapurush." Since then he began to call me Mahapurush. Now all call me by that name. Before this Swamiji used to call me Tarakda.[1]

'One day, at Balaram Babu's, Swamiji was calling me Mahapurush. Hearing this, Baburam Maharaj's mother said, "How is that? *Mahapurush*[2] lives in trees. What kind of Mahapurush is he then?" Swamiji explained to her saying, "He is not that kind of Mahapurush. He is a Mahapurush in the literal sense (i.e. a great soul)." '

BELUR MATH, JUNE 1927

Afternoon. Mahapurush Maharaj was standing on the eastern verandah of the Math building. He was watching, with great interest, feats demonstrated by the members of an athletic club of Calcutta. Other monks and devotees also were there. Mahapurush Maharaj had meanwhile sent a monk to get some sweets from the market. Referring to a boy's feat of muscle-control he said, 'This boy has given an excellent show.' Then, addressing the boy, he said, 'Do more of these things, my boy. Make more progress. And observe strict continence Even in these matters of the body you require continence. That is the secret of success in everything you do. I would attribute most of our degradation to lack of continence.' Afterwards he saw to their being fed sumptuously and went upstairs.

He was very pleased with the feats. So he asked those who were nearby, 'Do you take regular physical exercise?' Some of them replied in the affirmative. Mahapurushji then continued, 'You ought to take physical exercise daily and regularly. That is the first step towards spiritual attainments. You must make the body strong. '*Mens sana in corpore sano*—a sound mind in a sound body. Only a sound body can possess a sound mind. Think of the physique that Thakur's children possessed. Swamiji, Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), Niranjan Swami, Sarat Maharaj—they were all great athletes. Swamiji, Maharaj, and a few others took regular courses in athletics. Among us only Yogin Swami and Baburam Maharaj were comparatively weak. Unless you have a strong body how will you stand the strain of austerities and intense meditation? You are young men, you ought to take exercise. I don't mean you have to be athletes. Only keep the body fit. The mere monastic form won't do. The Upanishads say, "One must be young, good-natured, and studious. Also active, and sound in health and strong." Then only one is qualified for the knowledge of Brahman. Swamiji used to say, "namby-pamby, won't utter a word of protest even if slapped seven times—how can such men ever attain spirituality?" That is very true. If the body is sickly, all your attention will then be absorbed by it. How will you do meditation or study or work? Further, unless the body is strong, it can't stand the impact of high spiritual realizations. Either you go off your head or break down in health altogether. Moreover, you are the soldiers of Thakur and Swamiji.

[1] Tarak was the name given to Mahapurush Maharaj by his parents.

[2] Here it refers to spirits.

How much work you have to do in the world! Swamiji liked those who had strong physique. Because he himself possessed a very strong body, it was possible for him to create a stir all over the world in such a short time.'

THE CONQUEST OF SIN

By the Editor

Even if thou be the greatest of all sinners thou canst cross the ocean of sin (in which thou art about to be drowned) with the help of the life-boat of knowledge.—Gita, IV. 36.

I

Religion promises to save man from all sin. Except to congenital idiots or to men who have received the grace of God in full measure and gone beyond the dual throng of right and wrong, virtue and vice, the question of sin and its conquest is an ever recurring, painful, and pressing one.

The problem often agitates human beings in two ways. The first is the commission of sins, that is, of those acts which either conscience, social morality, or revealed religion prohibits. The second is the failure to do those right actions which are dictated as good and meritorious by one's own conscience or the moral laws of one's social group, or as spiritual laws by the religious book or authority to which one tenders allegiance.

Now, there is the instinct of self-preservation in every living organism. As an extension of this instinct rises the natural desire in every man to do only those things which he considers, in the light of the knowledge he possesses, to be conducive to his welfare in this world or in a future one. Another assumption on which we all act is that our welfare and happiness lie partly, if not fully, in our own hands, and that as a result of one's personal efforts one can improve one's lot in life. We desire and expect to enjoy the good fruits of the actions we do. We all want to reap a pleasing and successful harvest from what we have sown. Outgrowing the innocent irresponsibility of childhood, we enter into the responsible life of the adult with its hopes and fears, its rewards and punishments. But with this sense of responsibility come all our joys, and, alas, all our sorrows also. Arguing from our ordinary experience, we conclude that the sower of wheat does not harvest tares, and if *we* have harvested tares it must be because *we* have sown tares. Thus we come to the conviction that *our* miseries are due to *our* sins, and *our* happiness is due to *our* good actions. Before we attain our majority, society also dragoons us into the idea that we have duties to perform towards *ourselves*, towards *our* neighbours, towards *our* community, towards *our* country, towards *our* God. The moment after we enter into the threshold of responsible adult life, we are continually struck back and forth like a shuttlecock between the two ideas of doing the right and avoiding the wrong. In the measure in which we fail in our virtuous duties and succeed in doing wicked deeds does society brand us as more or less sinful; and we also gradually come to believe in our sinfulness, and feel ashamed and worried and desire to be freed from the evil consequences of our sinful deeds. In our heart of hearts we find it difficult to believe that we are sinful, but somehow we find we do things which we regret afterwards because they entail unpleasant consequences. What an immense importance we attach to the words 'good' and 'bad'! From the cradle we unconsciously learn to apply them to things 'permitted' or 'not permitted'. Very few persons stop to enquire 'permitted by whom and why?' Seldom do we analyse why a thing is called good or bad but we sheepishly accept the implications of these appellations by somebody else, and entertain in our minds a vague feeling of goodness or badness when such words are used. Thoughtlessly we often condemn others or ourselves and become emotionally upset and feel we are lost.

II

Sin is generally distinguished from crimes and offences recognized by the civil or criminal law. We generally use the term for those

offences by which a person seems to fall short of a course of conduct which is recognized as spiritually appropriate for him in his station in life. And many are the forms that sin may take. There are venial sins and mortal sins; sins committed openly and those committed secretly. Besides the sins of commission, there are the sins of omission. Then there is *original* sin, which led to the Fall of Man and his liability to death—for Christians, for according to traditional Christianity all men are born sinners! Then there are the sins of heresy and unbelief for which orthodox Christians and Mohammedans prescribe the expiatory rite of sending the sinner to hell by burning or murder before he dies a natural death. There are also modern sins like that of Negroes aspiring to marry white girls, the punishment for which is lynching.

The ancient Persians had a sin-codex or a catalogue of sins with the expiatory acts prescribed for the cleansing of each sin. The Jews had also a similar code, as evidenced by *Leviticus*. The Hindus also had and have expiatory acts for any and every sin in the world. They have a regular section of their *Smritis* devoted to this topic, and it is called the *Prayaschitta Kanda*. But Hindus do not believe that man is a born sinner. According to them the human soul is pure and perfect, but through ignorance it finds itself in strange situations of sin. Sin is something external to the soul and can be removed or destroyed by proper expiatory acts. The catalogue of sins is so great that a man will have to spend his whole life in expiatory acts if he is truly conscientious.

III

Sin-consciousness primarily arose in man when he felt he had done something which estranged him from his God, and tended to break the natural relation of communion between himself and his God. Non-observance of rituals became, in the higher religions, a sin against God's holiness and love. Man also felt from early times that this communion with God could be restored by the earning of the forgiveness of sins.

In all dualistic or theistic religions all sins or offences displeasing the Personal God who is worshipped have to be atoned for. The nature of this atonement depends however upon the nature of the worshipper as well as that of his God. The less civilized and educated the worshipper, the cruder and more savage are the forms of atonement. Or, as the Hindus will put it, atonement will be *tamasic*, *rajasic*, or *sattvic* according to the nature of the sinner. Also much depends upon the nature of the God worshipped. If the God is conceived as cruel or blood-thirsty, naturally He will have to be propitiated by offerings acceptable to His nature. Hence the prevalence of sacrifices of animals and of even human beings in order to win God's favour or to avert His vengeance or punishment for sins against Him, and establish once more the relation of worshipper and worshipped mutually benefiting each other. But in some cases the God worshipped is so cruel that He sends those sinners with whom He is displeased to 'eternal damnation' or hell-fire (*Josh.* vii. 24; *Jer.* li. 62); or the sinners are so incorrigible by nature, like Satan himself, that God has no other go but to punish them severely. (Gita, XVI. 19, 20).

IV

All of us want to follow the line of the least pain and that of the greatest pleasure. The growth of sophistication and cleverness enables us to have new ways of avoiding pain and of increasing our pleasures. Though sincere amendment is the best way of conquering sin, very few of us are equal to such a heroic step. For repentance and amendment we often want to substitute expiation, whenever possible, in some form or other. We fall down a degree lower when we want somebody else to do the expiation on our behalf, and we are willing to pay liberally to be saved from the evil consequences of our sins. So we seek out ascetics and holy persons who may vicariously take our sins and save us.

The Jews invented the ritual of the 'scapegoat' which bears upon itself all the iniquities of the people, and is then sent into the wilderness. Some such idea also seems to lie behind the setting free of a marked bull after the death of a person among brahmins in some parts of India. From such practices developed the idea of vicarious atonement which plays a large part in the religious life of most people, especially Roman Catholics and Hindus. It is believed that the sinner can be cleansed if somebody else makes vicarious penance for him. The sale of Indulgences in medieval times is an instance in point. There was scarcely a devotion or good work of any kind for which Indulgences could

not be obtained. In 1456, the recitation of a few prayers before a church crucifix earned a Pardon of 20,000 years for every such repetition In 1450 Thomas Gascoigne, the great Oxford Chancellor, wrote: 'Sinners say, nowadays, "I care not how many or how great sins I commit before God, for I shall easily and quietly get plenary remission of any guilt and penalty whatsoever (*cujusdam culpae et poenae*) by absolution and indulgence granted to me from the Pope, whose writing and grant I have bought for 4d. or 6d. or for a game of tennis."' Whatever the orthodox theory on the subject might have been, the Pope or his delegated agents were supposed by the common people to have the power of absolution and remission of sins, past, present, or future, as they were considered to represent God on earth.'

Another but less well-known instance of vicarious suffering is that furnished by the Sin-Eater, a man who, for a trifling payment, was believed to take upon himself, by means of food and drink, the sins of a deceased person. This custom was once very common in England and in the Highlands of Scotland, and obtains even now in some parts of Central Europe. Each village had its official Sin-Eater. A similar custom obtains among the brahmins in India.

Hindus believe that by offering appropriate gifts to brahmins or other holy persons or temple-gods various sins can be expiated or merit acquired which may stand in good stead in the future. The Brahmins are supposed to be pure and are believed to take up the sins of those sinners upon themselves and burn them up by their penance and superior knowledge.

Such ideas are gradually extended. The whole nation may suffer for the sins of the ruler, and the ruler is supposed to take upon his shoulders the burden of the sins of his subjects. The Jews believed that the nation suffered for the sin of the individual (*Josh.* vii. 10-15) and the individual for the sin of his kinsfolk (2 *Sam.* xxi. 1-9; *Deut.* v. 9-10); or of the nation (*Ezek.* xxxi. 3, 4). Finally the servant of Jehovah is conceived as atoning for sinners by his sufferings and death.

The Jewish idea has been taken over by Christians, and of Jesus Christ, it is said, 'He is the propitiation for our sins'. Finally the doctrine is developed in Christianity that salvation is possible to the sinner *only* by the belief that Christ died so that man may be cleansed from sin, and that the sinner must identify himself with Christ by faith in order to be saved. As the Westminster Confession declares: 'The Lord Jesus Christ, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal spirit once offered up to God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.' Article Thirty-one of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England says, 'The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world.' But how was the justice of the Father satisfied? The early Church Fathers held, *inter alia,* that Christ paid a ransom to Satan to induce him to release men from his power. Others considered it a satisfaction to God's honour rather than a ransom or penalty so that the outrage of man's sin is made good. Some others, unable to square up their ideas of the nature of God with these views, hold that Christ atoned by offering up to God a perfect confession of the sins of mankind and an adequate repentance for them, with which divine justice is satisfied, and a full expiation is made for human guilt. Still others say that Christ died not to 'propitiate' God, but to reconcile man to God; his death manifests righteousness and thus reveals the heinousness of sin; it also reveals the love of God and His forgiveness for the sinner; thus men are moved to repentance and faith, and are able to effect their salvation. Some people, unable to appreciate the necessity for such a cruel death as that of the Crucifixion, suggest that vicarious penitence and not vicarious suffering is the key to atonement. Emphasis is laid on the mystical self-identification of Christ with the sinner.

As a corollary to the vicarious penitence or vicarious suffering, whichever you may prefer to it, of Christ are the sins of 'heresy' and 'unbelief'. These are the subtlest but most cruel of the forms in which man cloaks his individual or tribal self-love and his hatred of his enemies. Men in earlier times could not even conceive of a God who could favour their enemies as against themselves, His declared worshippers and supporters. Even in Europe

each village will fight for *its* black doll of the Virgin against *that* of the next village. Only in a small percentage of humanity is the idea well developed that God, by His very nature, should be the God of all. In most religions God begins as the God of a particular tribe and often ends there. The Hebrew God, like the Vedic Gods or the Greek Gods, was supposed to interfere effectively in battles in which the fate of *his* worshippers was being decided. Christians and Mohammedans generally believe that *their* God will reserve paradise for them, while he will send all unbelievers and heretics to hell to be roasted there for ever in its sulphurous fires. What can be a more ludicrous spectacle than that of some *Christian* nations praying to *their* God to give them victory as against other *Christian* nations, not to speak of non-Christian nations! And if God can roast sinful people in hell-fire, it was but just and proper that his worthy worshippers should burn or murder heretics and unbelievers by the thousands to give them in this life itself a foretaste of the punishment that is in store for them when they give up their ghosts! How many innocent people have atoned for these sins of heresy or disbelief by a cruel death! The Albigensian heretics, forming almost the entire population of part of the Rhône valley were practically exterminated in A.D. 1200 by the orders of the Pope Innocent III. The Holy Inquisition is reported to have burnt or executed over 35,000 people between 1481 and 1834. Fifty thousand French Protestants were massacred on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572 Even in this twentieth century we have remnants (or shall we say revivals?) of heresy-hunting, in the more backward American States, carried out by the fiercely Protestant secret Ku Klux Klan Society. Where, on account of the spread of civilization and tolerance, heresy-hunting is become out of date, a new sin, the sin of belonging to coloured or inferior races is being manufactured, of which Jew-baiting and Negro-lynching are glaring instances. In human society these are some of the worst and most ineradicable forms in which sin itself masquerades under the form of righteousness.

V

The multifarious forms in which the consciousness of sin in men manifests itself are an indication of the deep-rooted nature of man's consciousness of his imperfections, and of the deep human urge to rise upwards to complete purity or freedom from sin. To believers in a Personal God the complete destruction of sin can come only through the grace of God, and this necessarily implies a faith in the redemptive powers of such a God. This is one of the reasons why Christians, to whom God is a Person, cling so tenaciously to the faith in the redemptive power of Christ. Take away this prop and the edifice of Christianity crumbles down Science has been destroying the foundations of the Christian Faith by questioning the unique features of the Crucifixion and by characterizing them as myths. Some obvious questions also arise for which no sane or reasonable answer can be given by Christians. If the way to beaven is only through a belief in Christ, what then has been the fate of the millions who lived and died before Christ? Did the All-merciful Father consign all those souls to eternal hell-fire, for evidently the Father had not been propitiated, and divine justice had not been satisfied before the crucifixion of Christ? Again what about the salvation of millions of human beings who do not believe in Christ and have not even heard of him? To Christians believing in only one life for man on this earth, the vast majority of men and women must be sent to eternal damnation by All-merciful God, because it has fallen to their lot to be non-Christians. The absurdity of an intolerant and untenable religious belief can go no further. And yet what a strange spectacle we see of educated Christian missionaries, trying, by fair means or foul, to convert ignorant 'pagans' to such a creed! The followers of Mohammed as the only true prophet, of Rama or Krishna or Vishnu or any other God or Goddess as the *only* saviour, cannot but become bigots. And such bigots send not only others to hell but end by themselves going there even in this very life, for intolerance is a hellish thing. It is indeed a cruelly idiotic conception of God that makes Him send the majority of mankind to perdition. The fact seems to be that God is not to blame, but our conceptions about Him.

VI

Vedanta, however, while recognizing the useful elements in all religions, shows us a permanent way to solve the problem of sin. So long as we recognize good, we have to recognize evil. Ordinarily, when the element

of virtue or goodness seems to be predominant we call the action good; and actions are sinful when what we consider evil or sinful seems to take the upper hand. But actions are neither good nor bad in themselves except with reference to the supreme ends of human life. For example, absolute continence is a virtue for monks, but not for married people, in both Catholicism and Hinduism. But Protestantism and Mohammedanism seem to condemn it as an evil and against the intentions of God as expressed in the laws of biology. But Catholic and Hindu monks have expressly repudiated the necessity of submitting to this biological law, because they have caught glimpses of a higher law which says that voluntary and intelligent renunciation of carnal pleasures is the first step in the higher life of the spirit. Sin is called पातक in Sanskrit, that is, it is that which makes you go downwards spiritually. The fundamental basis for the classification of sins has therefore been from the standpoint of spirituality or godliness. All that makes for godliness is virtue; the opposite is sin. For those who do not believe in God, mental harmony or wholeness of personality may be the standard. To the Vedantist the standard is the Pure Self in all things. Anything which makes you forget your real nature is sin. Wilful destruction of one's own body is not so suicidal a crime as this forgetting of one's real nature. And what is this real nature of the self?

It is indicated by such words as: greater than the greatest; subtler than the subtlest; immanent and yet transcendent; immortal; beyond the reach of sense-perception; ever pure; ever free; the seer, the subject of all experience; of the nature of pure consciousness, existence, and bliss. The self is not born, and does not die; it is not the body, senses, mind, or intellect but beyond all these, transcending them and yet infilling them all. 'He who has perceived that which is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, without taste, eternal, without beginning, without end, beyond the *mahat* and unchangeable is freed from the jaws of death.' (*Katha*, I. iii. 15). Again, 'He who knows the bliss of that Brahman (or Self) from which all speech with the mind turns away unable to reach it, he fears nothing. He does not distress himself with the thought, Why did I not do what is good? Why did I do what is bad?' (*Taittiriya*).

How can it be said that the wise man who knows the real nature of the Self is freed from all sin? Sin implies a sense of responsibility as doer, a sense of guilt of having done wrong things or failed to do the right ones and the innate belief that the doer will have to suffer the consequences of his deeds. That is how we all get caught in this world: we feel we are human beings, with duties to perform, with ends to achieve. We identify ourselves with our limited human capacities and consider ourselves happy or miserable, virtuous or sinful in the measure in which we succeed in trying to attain our limited ends. The weakness or strength of our instruments, like our bodies and our minds, we consider as our own weakness. But none of these are a real part of ourselves. These come and go. But the self is unchanging and only by the realization of its real nature do we lose all fear of being bound by our little hopes and fears, our puerile sins and virtues. Just as a man, waking up from dreams, both sweet and bitter, does not consider himself blessed or guilty, happy or miserable thereby, so waking up in the true nature of our self, we shall find that all these ideas of good and evil, guilt and innocence, morality and immorality are all but experiences which do not affect our real nature. Even in the waking state we do many acts in hotter moments, for which we are ashamed when we return to our normal senses. We say we are *beside* ourselves with anger or with passion. That is to say, these are external to us and have only overpowered our true nature for a moment. Similarly are the ideas of all other imperfections really external to us. We have to increase our knowledge, and take our stand on our true self. Then shall we know that misery and sin are external to us and no part of us whatsoever; we shall cease to feel their sting; just as the blindness of blind men does not affect the sun's shining, so do our ignorant conceptions of ourselves not affect our true nature. This is a knowledge that has to be cultivated as sedulously as anything else. This knowledge is gained more and more by self-control, by not being slaves to the demoniacal desires for possessions and enjoyments. Above all one must acquire faith in the possibility of such knowledge, a faith based on the prima face

case made out for it by the unanimous testimony of all truly great religious leaders. Such faith is a fundamental pre-requisite for initiating conscious activity of all kinds in whatever direction.

To those whose minds are inclined to the conception of a Personal God a similar act of faith is necessary for redemption. The goodness and omnipotence of the Personal God have to be taken for granted, or believed on authority. What the dualistic or theistic religions have to do is not to discard faith in their God and His saving power, but to enlarge their ideas of the nature of God as the God, not of one sect or creed or race, but the God of all the universe, who appears in diverse Incarnations and is not without a witness, in every age and every land, to His power, glory, and mercy. Vedanta says that man is, in his real nature, pure and perfect. Sin is destroyed, misery is removed by a realization of this divine nature. The dualistic religions posit a God separate from man. This God also is conceived as perfect and pure, almighty and omniscient, and taking a special interest in the saving of man, His creation. So long as men and women in the average are what they are they will certainly desire to find some means of escape from the evil consequences of their own sins, those tormenting imps born out of lust and greed, the twin enemies of man's peace and happiness. To all such some kind of ritualistic expiatory act which promises to give relief will always be a psychological necessity. It may take the form of saying of prayers, the giving of gifts to the church, the temple, or the mosque; it may be the paying of priests to do *puja* or to say mass on behalf of the sinner. The maintenance of monks, the feeding of brahmins and *sadhus;* fasting and abstinence from sexual satisfaction for a definite period; the reading of holy books like the Ramayana, the Bhagavadgita, the Bible, or the Koran; the telling of beads; pilgrimages to holy places; the confession of sins, openly or privately; the worship of saints living or dead; the financing of funds to convert the 'heathen', such are the innumerable forms which this urge for expiation may take. But such expiations are good only if they are effective in not only effacing the sense of personal guilt of the sinners but also in producing real amendment. Otherwise they become mockeries. Each man will, of course, have to be his own judge in these matters of what is beneficial to him.

But it seems to us that in order to reach the highest, man should not seek a sanction for any of the motives of action except in his own true nature. The highest character, the greatest freedom is developed when a man does what he considers right because it is his nature, not from fear of anything external to him. For is not the whole world but a manifestation of the infinite Self that he is truly? To reach this end the worshipper of a Personal God must love God for His sake, because He is so lovable, and not from hopes of rewards and favours. He must learn to see the face of his Beloved in *all* things, those that are called good and those that are called evil. Only thus can he be freed finally from the consciousness of sin and its implications.

By repeating a hundred times, 'I am a sinner', one verily becomes a sinner. One should have such faith as to be able to say, 'What? I have taken the name of God; how can I be a sinner?' God is our Father and Mother. Tell Him, 'O Lord, I have committed sins, but I won't repeat them.' Chant His name and purify your body and mind. Purify your tongue by singing God's holy name.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN THE WEST*

By Swami Atulananda

Through the newspapers Swami Vivekananda's fame was heralded all over America. And after the Congress a lecture bureau invited him to make a lecture tour through the United States. The Swami accepted the invitation hoping thereby to create a universal interest and sympathy for the religious ideas of the Hindus, and to correct the mistaken notions the people of America held about his motherland.

We must remember that all along during his sojourn in the West the Swami remained the true patriot. To raise India in the esteem of the West was one of his main objects while abroad.

During this tour the Swami spoke in numerous cities preaching Vedanta and the glories and greatness of Indian culture. It was a strenuous life, lecturing in one city, then on the train, and lecturing in another city, day in and day out, always travelling, always speaking. Wherever he appeared in public the halls were filled to their utmost capacity. His audiences were kept spellbound by his eloquence and wisdom.

However, the Swami discovered (after a while) that the lecture bureau was not dealing honestly with him. Furthermore, he felt that the time had come to begin his real spiritual work. This could be done with individuals only, not with the masses. He, therefore, severed his connection with the bureau.

But this did not mean that the Swami took rest. His work went on with renewed vigour. From everywhere invitations came pouring in for the Swami to lecture. Clubs, ethical societies, religious organizations from all over the States implored him to give speeches and to hold classes.

Hundreds of liberal-minded persons felt that the Swami was a prophet with a new message. Scholars, scientists, and millionaires vied with each other in doing him honour. He was lionized by society, and numerous receptions were given in his honour.

But in the midst of all this popularity the Swami's heart bled for India. The guest of honour in magnificent mansions, entertained in royal style, bathing in luxury, showered with praise, the Swami instead of feeling happy, often felt miserable. He thought of the masses of India dying by the millions for want of a handful of rice. His bed of down seemed to him a bed of thorns. Name and fame and wealth seemed to him a mockery. And in the middle of the night he would call out, 'O mother, how can I help my country? How can I feed the hungry? How can I raise the masses?' Thus he passed nights in tears while the papers were singing his praise, and the most distinguished persons in America courted his friendship.

The Swami now gave a series of lectures in Brooklyn, opposite New York City. The large lecture hall was packed to overflowing. Doctors and lawyers, judges and teachers, and many ladies came from all parts of the city to listen to his strangely beautiful and eloquent exposition of the Hindu religion. This series of lectures constituted the real beginning of his more serious work.

At the earnest request of some sincere students the Swami went to live in New York City. Here he held classes every morning and evening. And on Sundays he gave public lectures.

The work was now on the right footing. The Swami came into close contact with earnest seekers after truth. Then he instructed privately in yoga practices and meditation. He himself radiated spirituality. In his sweet, melodious voice he chanted the sacred *mantrams* of the Vedas, thus creating in his classes an atmosphere of peace and holiness.

To meet the Swami personally was to love and revere him. For it was his wonderful personality that spoke clearer even than his words. One could not but realize that one stood in the presence of a brilliant mind, a loving heart, a dynamic force, a superman, born to be a world-teacher.

* Concluded from the April number.

But now the great success with which the Swami met everywhere created jealousy in the hearts of some self-interested persons. They began to spread scandalous reports about him. But the Swami remained serene and unmoved in the midst of these unwarranted attacks.

Fearlessly he delivered his message leaving the results in the hands of divine Providence. To work he had the right, this he knew, but not to the fruits thereof. He worked untiringly, looking neither backward nor forward, fired with only one ambition, to preach the truth and nothing but the truth. He knew that the world stood in need of his teaching and he gave it freely to every one who wished to accept it. Obstacles only served to make him more determined.

The Swami had to meet all kinds of people. Sometimes he had to answer stupid and irritating questions. Some ignorant persons knew nothing about India. They held the crudest notions about the Hindus. All they knew was that the Hindus were heathen. But the Swami's brilliant wit soon silenced them.

Once after a lecture he was asked if Hindu mothers threw their babies in the river to feed the crocodiles. 'Yes,' the Swami said, smiling, 'when I was a baby they threw me in the river too. A big, fat crocodile swallowed me up. But like your Jonah of the Bible I came out again after three days.' The entire audience roaring with laughter applauded the Swami's ready wit. And the questioner turned red with shame.

On another occasion a woman asked if the Hindus burned their widows. The Swami turning on her in scorn, replied, 'Madam, we never burned witches as you Western people used to do'.

But the Swami also met with wonderful personal experiences. Sometimes he had to deliver as many as twelve lectures in a single week. It was a terrible physical and mental strain. He sometimes felt that he had depleted himself intellectually, and he could not think of new subjects to speak about. So it happened once that on the day before an announced lecture, his mind seemed totally devoid of ideas—a common occurrence with public speakers and authors. What was to be done? 'What shall I say in my lecture tomorrow?' the Swami thought, 'I shall have to address a vast audience. How shall I meet the situation?' Discouraged, he retired for the night. And then, as he lay stretched on his bed, in the middle of the night he heard a voice speaking to him. It seemed to come from a long, long distance, and was hardly audible. He listened attentively. Then the voice came nearer and became louder. At last it seemed to be right beside his bed. And the Swami heard in clear, distinct words the outline of a most interesting lecture. This lecture he delivered on the following day. And the audience was charmed.

At another time the Swami heard in the night two voices discussing the very subject he had chosen for a lecture. These phenomena the Swami explained as wider functionings of his own mind. His own mind was acting as his guru.

During this period of his life Swami Vivekananda had wonderful psychic powers. But these he did not use unless there was real need for it. He could change the whole trend of a person's life by a mere touch. He could read a person's mind and could know his past and future. And he could heal diseases.

These powers came to him unnvited. He told his disciples not to work for psychic power but to give all their time and energy to the realization of God. Far greater than these powers was the Swami's grandeur and unspeakable beauty of soul and character. In these he transcended any person his disciples had ever been acquainted with.

One of the most beautiful experiences the Swami had during his first visit to America was his visit to Thousand Island Park. But before he went there he spent several weeks at the home of an American friend (in Percy, N. H.). Here he spent his time in quiet and solitude in the beautiful forests surrounding the place. With only the Gita as his companion he was all day in the woods giving himself to meditation. Here his soul rose to spiritual heights as he but seldom had reached before. Here he prepared himself for the work that awaited him at Thousand Island Park.

One of the Swami's students owned a cottage at Thousand Island Park, the largest island in the St. Lawrence River. She offered the use of it to the Swami and as many of his staunch admirers as it would

accommodate. This appealed to the Swami, and he agreed to go there.

It was a charming spot far away from the noise and bustle of cities. The only sound heard there was the sweet song of birds, and the gentle sighing of the wind in the trees. In this scene of enchantment the Swami and his disciples spent seven happy weeks.

Only the Swami's truest friends were with him, twelve in all. These the Swami looked upon as his disciples. He initiated them by giving them *mantram*. Five took the vows of lifelong *brahmacharya*,. and two were given *sannyâsa*.

Never was the Swami more gentle, more lovable than during these weeks. It was a perpetual inspiration to be with him. The disciples lived in a constant atmosphere of intense spirituality.

One day the Swami suddenly left the little group and retired to his room. A few hours later he returned. He had written the 'Song of the Sannyasin,' one of his masterpieces, a song burning with the spirit of renunciation. His teachings during these days were published afterwards, and can now be found in the book called *Inspired Talks*.

The seven weeks at Thousand Island Park were one of the freest and greatest periods in the Swami's life. And there, one night, alone on the bank of the St. Lawrence River, in a mood of supreme ecstasy he entered into *nirvikalpa samâdhi*. This he did not reveal at the time. But afterwards he spoke of it as one of the most sublime moments of his life.

Having fulfilled his great work of training and initiating disciples at Thousand Island Park the Swami returned to New York, and then he made preparations to go to England where he had been invited. He sailed for England in the middle of August 1895.

Here again his success was phenomenal. But wishing to place the American work on a firm basis he returned to New York in December of the same year. The work in New York during his absence had been carried on by his disciples.

The Swami's visit to England, though a strenuous experience, had been most pleasant. He returned to New York in splendid health and spirits. Together with his American disciple Swami Kripananda he made his headquarters in 39th Street. They occupied two spacious rooms which could accommodate one hundred and fifty persons. But when the Swami opened his classes the rooms were at once so crowded that there was not even standing room left. So a huge hall was rented with a seating capacity of over one thousand and five hundred. Here the Swami gave his lectures. These lectures created a wave of enormous enthusiasm. Young men and women came to the Swami to receive *mantram*. And one devout disciple, Dr. Street, took *sannyâsa*. Thus in one year the Swami made three American *sannyasins*.

The very heart of American civilization was now roused. Thousands of persons accepted Vedanta as their religion. The Swami's lectures on Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga created such an interest that they were published, and they sold by the thousands.

Then, in February 1896, the Swami consolidated his American work by organizing the Vedanta Society of New York. After this came another lecture tour, to Detroit and other cities in the United States. And when the Swami returned to New York it was only to make himself ready for a second visit to England to systematize the work there. He sailed from New York on April 15, 1896. This ended his first visit to America.

On his arrival in England a pleasant surprise awaited the Swami. He found there his *gurubhâi*, Swami Saradananda, who had come from Calcutta at his call. It was a joyous meeting. Swami Saradananda could give him all the news from India, and they spent hours and hours planning for the future. All his old friends in London welcomed Swami Vivekananda most heartily. Many persons of distinction visited him, and new people became his steadfast followers.

In May the Swami opened his classes. His whole soul went in his work. He gave his new students an entirely new outlook on religion. Some who came as sceptics became his faithful workers and helpers in spreading the cause.

After a season of continuous work in London the Swami was well-nigh exhausted. He, therefore, gladly accepted the invitation of some intimate friends for a holiday-tour on the contiment of Europe. The party went to Switzerland, into the snow mountains, to

Italy, Germany, and Holland. After six delightful weeks they returned to London.

Swami Saradananda, in the mean time, had gone to America to conduct the work there. But now Swami Abhedananda had arrived from Calcutta. He had come at the urgent call of Swami Vivekananda to continue the work in London as Swami Vivekananda himself longed to go back to his motherland.

Swami Abhedananda was successful from the beginning; so Swami Vivekananda was satisfied to leave the work in his charge. And on December 16, 1896, accompanied by his faithful disciples, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, and Mr. Goodwin, he undertook the return journey from Europe to India. When the steamer reached Colombo on January 15, 1897, it was three years, seven months, and fourteen days since the Swami had seen his motherland.

What joy to stand once again on Indian soil! Before the Swami sailed from England, a Western disciple had asked him, 'Well, Swami, how will you like now your motherland after three years' experience of the luxurious, glorious, and powerful West?' And the Swami's reply had been, 'India I loved before I came away. Now her very dust has become sacred to me, the very air is now to me holy, it is the sacred land, the *tirtha*, the land of pilgrimage, where every soul must be born to pay the final debt of *karma*.'

Yes, Swami Vivekananda loved India! The very name, India, was sweet and sacred to him. For India he lived, for India he had laboured in the West, for India he was ready to die. He loved her rich, and he loved her poor, the learned and the ignorant. He loved her Rishis, her art, her philosophy, her sacred scriptures. He loved India's past, he loved her present, he dreamt of and laboured for her future.

Now he was home again! Of the wonderful reception his countrymen gave him, it has been recorded in the book called *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* with which most of us are acquainted. Two years and a half were spent in India. Then the urge came again, the call to revisit the West, to conquer new lands, to bring light to new souls. This second visit to Europe and America was of much shorter duration, but not less important.

The Swami sailed this time from Calcutta on June 20, 1899. He was accompanied by Swami Turiyananda and Sister Nivedita. They reached London on July 31, and two weeks later the two Swamis started for America. On arrival at New York Mr. Leggett took them at once to his beautiful country-home on the Hudson River, one hundred and fifty miles from New York. Here Swami Abhedananda joined them and later Sister Nivedita. As Swami Vivekananda's health was far from satisfactory he sent Swami Turiyananda to New York, but he himself took rest till November 5. When he came to New York he was received with great enthusiasm at the permanent home of the Vedanta Society.

The Swami's friends, seeing him in such poor health, deemed it necessary that he should spend the winter in a milder climate. So they arranged a trip to California. The Swami left for California on November 22, breaking his journey at Chicago where many receptions were given him. He arrived in Los Angeles in the beginning of December.

It was Swami Vivekananda's first visit to California. He was delighted with the beautiful scenery and the soft, mild climate. In California the roses were in bloom, and the air was scented with orange blossom. He was in the land of eternal summer and perpetual sunshine.

Hundreds of people who had read his books now were anxious to see and hear the author. The Swami lectured almost daily in Los Angeles and adjacent cities. From Los Angeles he went north to San Francisco, the largest city in California. Here he lectured again, held classes, started a Vedantic Society and visited neighbouring cities till May. While in San Francisco he received a gift of one hundred and sixty acres of land for a place of retreat for students of Vedanta. This place is now known as the Shanti Ashrama.

The Swami now received an invitation from Paris to attend the 'Congress of the History of Religions' to be held there in July 1900. So he returned to New York and from there sailed for France where further fame awaited him. He was never to see America again.

He was in France till October, and after visiting once more different places in Europe he came back to India in December 1900. His work in the West was finished. The roaring lion of Vedanta had delivered his message.

Materialistic philosophy was gaining ground everywhere in America at the time when Swami Vivekananda arrived. Science and philosophy had undermined the foundation of the Christian Churches. The Western nations had begun to doubt the long-established doctrines of their own Faiths. This tide of materialism the Swami stemmed with the glorious message of Vedanta.

He taught his Western disciples how through meditation they could get a vision of their own real Self, the *âtman*, ever free, beyond all desires, self-established in its own glory. He taught them how to rise above religious sectarianism and superstitions. He kindled in their hearts love for all divine Incarnations. He taught them to adore all world-saviours as divine messengers of light. Thus he broke down the barriers which different Churches had established.

He accomplished the Herculean task of popularizing Vedanta in the West. He pointed to the ancient culture and ideals of his own land. He brought home to the prosperous West the fact that she had something to learn from poor India. He taught the Christian world that there is another religion which surpasses their own in philosophical depth and spiritual intensity. And in doing so he raised India in the estimation of foreign nations. He roused in strangers sincere love for his own country. He established a better understanding between East and West. He brought the entire world closer together.

As a result of the Swami's visit to the West the world is now enriched with that mass of invaluable literature known as *Complete Works of the Swami Vivekananda*, a collection of his recorded lectures and conversations, his letters and writings. These works, at least in part, are now translated into different languages, and all the civilized nations can now study them and draw from them their inspiration.

In Swami Vivekananda's teachings the world has received food for earnest thought for centuries to come. To these teachings the world will turn for light and guidance to settle the great problems that, in the future, will face humanity.

Even as the lion bold and fearless, even as the wind never caught in a net, even as the lotus not touched by water, even so Swami Vivekananda passed through this world, the bull of his race, a prince amongst men. To that great world-teacher, the father, the friend, the guide of humanity we look for wisdom and inspiration.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION: ITS IDEAL AND OBJECTS*

By Swami Virajananda

It is a pleasure to meet you annually to review the achievements of the Mission in the past, to make fresh and united resolves for the future, and to be inspired for all time by the realization that the hands of Sri Ramakrisbna and Swami Vivekananda are guiding us in all our efforts. From the Secretary's report you have learnt that the Mission has made some progress during 1944 against tremendous odds. This has been possible because of the inherent strength of the message of Swamiji and your active faith in it. I use the phrase 'active faith' deliberately. For, what Swamiji wrote about the Ramakrishna Math is equally true of the Ramakrishna Mission: 'This organization is his very body, and in this organization itself he is ever present.' The true worship for the members of this organization consists in active participation in all its undertakings, and not in being mere believers in its goodness, and passive spectators of its successes and failures. Sri Ramakrishna is guiding and will ever guide his Mission. But he expects us to be willing partners in this divine *lila* (play) Our faith in Sri Ramakrishna and his Mission must be galvanized into active service for him in his diverse human forms. Short of this, mere love, admiration, or sympathy for organized activity will not lead us much beyond the traditional psychological attitudes and expressions of devotion for the Lord. Swamiji could not recommend these as *yuga-*

* The Presidential Address at the Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission 1945

dharma (the religion of the age). When he said even of the Math that it should not be reduced to a *thakurbari* (temple) of the *babajis* (Vaishnava sect), he could not certainly mean that the members of his Mission should be indulging in empty complacency. How emphatically and with what deep pathos the blazing words of indignation poured out of Swamiji's lips! 'There is too much talk, talk, talk! We are great! We are great! Nonsense! We are imbeciles, that is what we are!' All the utterances of Swamiji lead but to one conclusion: he wanted his followers to translate his message into intense action for serving the poor, the illiterate, and the helpless.

These are some of the ideas that are foremost in my mind as I address you at this moment of passing hurriedly in review a year of stress and strain through which the Mission has just passed. I am conscious of and admire the united effort of the Mission. But I cannot remain satisfied with that alone; for the questions of Swamiji still ring in my ears and make me ill at ease: 'Do you feel that millions are starving today and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark could? Does it make you sleepless? . . . Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin? Have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies?'

I am more impressed by the urgency and all-consuming demand of Swamiji's message as I look at the world at war. Nations are at death-grips with each other, and it appears to a superficial observer as though religion has failed and the devil has taken possession of the world. Swamiji foresaw this state of affairs and found an antidote for it in the elevation of human relationships to a higher divine plane, which was to be brought about by a more active religion, intimately connected with and inspiring life as a whole and in all its multifarious manifestations. He wanted a religion that would not confine itself within the four walls of churches, mosques, monasteries, or temples, but would spring into life at every meeting of human beings, in every walk of life, more so in contacts between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the learned and the ignorant. The salvation of mankind lies in recognizing the real worth of humanity and worshipping it with all the energy and devotion that man can command. For, says Swamiji, 'Where should you go to seek for God? Are not the poor, the miserable, the weak, gods? Why not worship them first? . . . Who cares for these tinsel puffs of name?'

Struggle for power, oppression of the weak, and exploitation of the poor will stalk the world so long as men are not filled with divine love for all beings. Swamiji's message has thus a greater possibility than we yet visualize. It was no flattering self-complacency when Swamiji declared that the West was waiting for the message to come from the East. But the West understands action better than words, achievement more than philosophical disquisition. Swamiji was, therefore, careful not to indulge in oratory alone, but he gave practical direction to his conviction. To us of the Ramakrishna Mission he has left this invaluable heritage, and on us has devolved the responsibility of not only keeping his words ablaze, but of inspiring others with them; not only to believe in their potency, but to make them real in our own lives; not only to seek for personal salvation, but to help others to manifest their inner divinity. All this implies unstinted devotion to the Mission, of which you are members. When a handful of persons resolve to achieve anything—and we are a handful, to be sure—they have to intensify their resolve to the last sacrifice. All faltering, all diffidence must be cast to the winds, because capacity for service grows by use, and no good work can be entirely lost.

One thing I must make perfectly clear here. My appeal today is not to this assembly as a whole, but to each individual member of the Ramakrishna Mission. Organizations are good in so far as they protect and help the individuals to manifest their divinity. But they are a hindrance in so far as they rob individuals of their initiative and personal responsibility. The vital thing today is to keep alive the idea and the spirit of the human individual, of individual responsibility, and of creative work against the high tide of mechanization and centralized despotism which threaten to throttle the soul of man. Swamiji was fully alive to the need of organized activity when he said, 'To make a great future India, the whole secret lies in organization, accumulation of power, co-ordination of will. Being of one mind is the

secret of society.' But he was careful to add : 'It is character that pays everywhere.' 'The basis of all systems, social or political, rests upon the goodness of man. No nation is great or good because Parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good.' My appeal, therefore, in the first instance, is not to the Ramakrishna Mission as a whole, hut to its members as individuals. You should not lay the flattering unction to your souls, 'the Mission is prospering and is doing all that is humanly possible. Of what avail is our little help?' On the contrary, you should ask yourselves when you sit in meditation, in your chapels, whether you have done your whole duty by the Mission and the poor, the ignorant, and the helpless for whose service the Mission stands. I do not deny that the Mission has worked creditahly during its short life. But this is insignificant in comparison with the immense task set before us by Swamiji. We are to change the outlook of the whole world by our practice as well as profession. The contrast between the prodigiousness of the task and the very little progress made thus far impels me to beseech you, with all the fervour I can command, to be up and doing, even at untold and unrecognized personal sacrifice, to prove yourselves worthy followers of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji. Men, money, moral excellence, and spiritual inspiration---all are needed in this uphill task. No sacrifice can be too great, no offering can he too premature. I am sure, friends, that in asking you to do this, I do not ask too much, but only voice the feeling that is uppermost in your own minds. I cannot do hetter than conclude by putting you in mind of the inspiring words of Swamiji to his young disciples: 'I love you all ever so much, but I would wish to see you all die working for others.'

A MEDIEVAL SAINT: DADU

By Swami Lokeswarananda

Medieval India witnessed an interesting phenomenon : she saw for the first time an attempt—and a fairly successful attempt at that—at reconciliation between Hinduism and Islam. And oddly enough, this attempt was initiated not hy intellectual India but by what may roughly he called India of the ignorant masses.

Before this, Hinduism and Islam were regarded as irreconcilable. They were like two poles asunder. To the Mussalmans Hinduism was mere idolatry, a mass of blind superstitions. Its ideals, its practices—everything was repugnant to them. It was the very contradiction of all they held dear and sacred in Islam. The Hindu reaction to Islam was of course a hit different. The Hindus have all along been tolerant. They have heen used to all kinds of vagaries in the religious world. Within their own fold they have seen all manner of ideals and practices. They have not treated any with contempt. Far less have they tried to smother any. To them everything is welcome provided it originates from a sincere and earnest quest for the truth. And they know they must allow for differences in tastes and temperaments. They do not treat religion like a strait jacket to pin down man to fixed beliefs and dogmas. This explains why there is this amazing diversity in the Hindu religious thought. Moreover through all this apparent diversity they try to seek a real unity. So they were not essentially hostile to Islam. Rather they were curious and interested. Here was a new pattern of religious thought and they wanted to examine it and see if there was anything in it they could accept with profit. In course of time perhaps they would have absorhed and assimilated Islam as they have done myriads of such ideas and ideologies through countless ages. In that case the Mussalmans would have been today only another sect in the Hindu fold.

But this was not to be. Unfortunately—yes, unfortunately—Islam strode into India with the sword of a political conqueror. It did not come purely as a religious move-

ment. It came as an attack, an assault. It was an attack on the political integrity and the religious freedom of the Hindus. This fact made the whole of Islam suspect to the Hindus. And being politically conquered they could not but feel a sting of humiliation in accepting Islam. It hurt their pride. Hence, though so unlike themselves, they assumed an attitude of sullen indifference; they would have no truck with it. And to prevent defections they hardened the caste rules and made social ostracism the price of accepting Islam. Almost an unprecedented step in Hindu history, and how deplorable!

Thus a barrier came to be established between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. It did not of course extend so far as to make social intercourse impossible between the two communities. Also it did not deter their representative theologians from engaging now and then in healthy debates under the auspices of Moghul courts. And true to the Indian traditions these debates were always characterized by an atmosphere of friendship and good humour. Nevertheless the barrier remained and the idea persisted that Hinduism and Islam were fundamentally different, nay, even antagonistic to each other and reconciliation between them was thought impossible.

Against this background of religious conflicts and confusions appeared a great mystic who addressed himself to the task of bridging the gulf between Hinduism and Islam and also partially succeeded. This was Dadu. Born a Mussalman he accepted a Hindu as his guru. By this very fact he brought Islam and Hinduism nearer to each other. He practised a religion which did not answer to any rigid type. It was neither Islam nor Hinduism. It was something constituting the common core of both. It was the essence of religion.

It was his chief endeavour to synthesize, to harmonize all religious views. This he did by emphasizing that the contents of all religious ideals were the same though their forms differed. To him 'Hindu' and 'Mussalman' were arbitrary and artificial labels and they surely had no sanction from God. When accused of breaking down the barriers between the Hindus and the Mussalmans his emphatic reply was that such barriers had no right to exist, for man was the same man everywhere and God the same God in every religion and there was no sense in creating barriers among men which, far from helping, hindered their progress towards God. To him religion was intensely personal and it must vary according to individual tastes and requirements.

It was more by conduct, by his own personal example, than by his teachings, that he brought about a reconciliation between Hinduism and Islam. Religious disputes arise when the fundamentals of religion are forgotten. Dadu stressed as well as embodied these fundamentals. And what are they? They are: God alone matters and nothing else. And to attain Him what is necessary is love and sincere longing of the heart. Quarrels about creeds and dogmas are foolish; they are the idle sport of intellectual fools. Dadu himself is the best example of all these. He is the example of a man attaining to the highest spiritual grandeur aided solely by the devotions of a longing heart. For his was an approach to God not through the devious ways of scholarship, not through dry contentious intellectualism, but through a burning faith, through an all-devouring love.

Details about Dadu's origin are a matter of dispute. Many stories are current and it is difficult to tell which are correct and which are not. Nevertheless it is fairly established that he was born of a poor Mohammedan family somewhere in the forties of the sixteenth century and by caste he was a cobbler. As a boy he showed nothing remarkable, nothing that bore any promise of what he was to be in future; he was like any other boy of his station. At the age of eleven he met in his village Buddhan (Briddhananda), a Hindu monk of Kabir's school, and this marked the turning-point of his life. Evidently Buddhan was able to see into the tremendous possibilities of the boy and was impressed; so he singled him out from among a host of other boys and taking him aside instructed him about God.

What exactly he told him we do not know, nor how Dadu reacted to it. We do not know also how Dadu passed the next seven years before Buddhan visited him again. Outwardly, it is possible, he simply drudged at his family trade as he had been doing before; but, inwardly, it may be presumed, the seed planted by Buddhan in his

heart must have been growing, drawing nourishment from those hidden sources of which only Buddhan was aware. So that by the time Buddhan came again, he was ready in his own conscious mind to take a real plunge into spiritual life. Buddhan, too, must have been waiting for this happy development and when he came again, he lost no time to give Dadu fuller instructions about God and to introduce him to the secrets of the esoteric life according to his school. And we know what was Dadu's reaction this time : as soon as Buddhan left, Dadu discovered he could not live the life he was so long living—the life of a petty workman earning an honest pie and being content with it. He felt a call—an irresistible call, the same to which many have succumbed, beginning with Buddha. This made him throw down his tools, snap all ties with the family and rush out into the big wide world in quest of truth. Roaming about ceaselessly he visited innumerable places and wherever he was he took care to contact sages of different cults and to study their ways. He was like an ever thirsty traveller drinking at whatever fountains he met on the way.

He was equally at home with the Hindus as well as the Mohammedans, with the Shâktas as well as the Vaishnavas, with the Buddhists as well as the Jains. He was like a sturdy plant thriving alike in all climates. He, however, did not commit himself to any particular creed or dogma. For he had no use for any man-made institution. Nor was he to be bound down by any fixed belief or custom. He was a true universalist that accepted everything and rejected nothing. Nevertheless he believed in one God-head and in the ultimate identity of the individual soul with that God-head. In this he was on a par with the Vedantist.

How Dadu acquired such broadness of outlook it is difficult to say. Of course Kabir to whose school his guru belonged and who influenced him more than any other single individual, held similar views. Still they were not so pronounced in their comprehensiveness and width of vision. It must have been Dadu's own intuitive experience of truth coupled with wide travels and close observation that lent such catholicity to his character. He brought about a synthesis not only between Hinduism and Islam but also among other warring creeds of the time. And this he did not by a process of mere juxtaposition or that more grandiosely called eclecticism but by realizing as well as upholding that common truth underlying all the varying creeds and by emphasizing the organic harmony that naturally exists between them. It is a great thing to do at any time and it is wonderful Dadu did it as early as the sixteenth century.

At the end of his long itinerary we find Dadu settled somewhere in Rajputana. He had married some time or other and here he lived a quiet life with his wife and children. A quiet life but not too quiet, for Dadu's fame soon spread far and wide and people began to flock to him in numbers. He received all with equal courtesy and tried to solve their doubts. Some came to test and some to tease only, but Dadu was unruffled and they went away tremendously impressed. Some, again, came to tempt or to threaten, but Dadu went on, unswayed, with his teaching of the truth and guiding the genuine seekers. Hindus as well as Mohammedans came and sat at his feet and many became his ardent followers. Among his visitors were common men as well as royalties, and among the latter there was Akbar the Great himself. And how interesting reads the story of his interview with Akbar ! It reveals the characteristic qualities of both the great souls and it is a matter fit to be recorded in some detail.

Dadu, emperor of the spiritual world, is in his ramshackle house surrounded by his admirers. A messenger from Akbar, the biggest emperor of the temporal world of the time, arrives to say that Dadu is wanted. 'The Emperor wants me ? What have I to do with him—I, a poor fakir ? Excuse me, I can't go.' This was Dadu's reply. No sign of elation at such an unexpected honour, no indecent hurry to oblige the emperor !

Soon the messenger comes again. This time he knows better what to say. He says the emperor wants to meet him because he wants to profit by having a religious talk with him. So will he please accept the invitation ? Dadu replied he would, but he could not go and meet the emperor in Delhi. His significant excuse was that he lived in a world altogether different from the emperor's and if he went to the emperor's world, he would not be himself any longer. To this Akbar sent a clever reply, full of understand-

ing, full of that nobility of spirit of which only he was capable. He said it was not his intention that Dadu should go to Delhi. He had sense enough to understand how foolish it would be to take him out of his environment. It would be like taking a piece of rock from the Himalayas and trying to judge their beauty and grandeur from it. But it was, at the same time, Akbar's misfortune that he was an emperor. If he went to Dadu's place, a whole host of ministers and courtiers would then rush to the place and defile its simple native beauty. So would he mind coming over to Fatehpur-Sikri, that city which Akbar meant to be a seat of deep spirituality? Fatehpur-Sikri suited Dadu quite well for he would often go to places around it, and he readily agreed. Accordingly, the time and place were fixed for the meeting.

They met in the quiet deserts outside the city and they met for forty days! It was like two master minds closed in grips with each other. They discussed almost everything bearing on spiritual life and they differed and argued and fought. Together they journeyed far into the spiritual realm, Dadu guiding and Akbar always doubting, questioning and challenging. It is well-known that Akbar, though illiterate, was a profound student of philosophy and was himself a mystic of a sort. His thirst for knowledge was great and he was no bigot to refuse to add to his knowledge from new or even from alien sources. It is this fact that explains why he felt impelled to seek an interview with Dadu, and to secure it he would let no false prestige stand in the way.

In the discussions that took place Dadu must have been impressed by his keen intellect, his deep understanding as well as his wide range of vision, and he must have felt glad at heart to be able to share his spiritual knowledge with him. Akbar, too, with his shrewd understanding of what was genuine and what was spurious, must have been struck by the rich contents of Dadu's spiritual experience, his great wisdom, his catholicity and, above all, his wonderful synthesis of all seemingly antagonistic and contradictory creeds and dogmas. And he drank in his words instinct with the living experience of reality. When, in course of discussions, Dadu incidentally pointed out to him that no creed, however perfect and comprehensive, can embody the full truth, 'just as no bird can contain in its beak the whole of sea-water', it must have given Akbar the shock of a new discovery and in this perhaps lies a partial explanation of that large-hearted toleration which characterized Akbar's treatment towards religions supposed to be hostile to Islam.

At last they parted and they parted the best of friends. Each conceived great admiration for the other and their exchange of ideas continued from a distance. It is difficult to say what influence Dadu had on Akbar. Who knows if his deep indrawn moods, his religious ecstasies and his increased abhorrence of bigotry which were all so prominent a characteristic of Akbar's last days were not the outcome of his contact with Dadu?

Dadu founded a sect named after Brahma and its chief articles of faith were: conquest of ego, prayer, indifference to conditions of body and mind, and love for all. It was a truly non-sectarian sect, for it was open to all and it preached and practised nothing with the least hint of narrowness of outlook. It had on its rolls Hindus as well as Mohammedans, and all enjoyed equal rights, and there was no question of change of religion on the part of those who sought its membership. It was not intended to replace any existing religious ideology but to supplement it, to broaden it, and to free it from all tendencies to collectivize everything stultifying the individual taste and requirement. It did not enjoin any complex rituals and ceremonies or anything tending to interfere with normal pursuits of life. It left every individual free to choose his own mode of approach to God, laying down the only condition that he should not infringe the articles of faith quoted above.

By necessity, but one would like to believe more by choice, Dadu did all his teaching through the popular dialect of Hindi. Among his disciples were men who were deep scholars of Sanskrit; still Hindi continued to receive special preference and thanks to this, Dadu's spiritual wisdom did not become a close preserve of the learned and its wide diffusion among the masses became possible. In addition, his disciples translated many Sanskrit books into Hindi in order that common folks might derive their benefit. It was, in short, the interest of the common folks that was always put in the forefront and in

every sense the movement became a real people's movement.

Another feature of the movement was that, besides Dadu, it drew inspiration from various saints, ancient or contemporary, and it became a sort of common pool to which all sects of all religions contributed their share. The idea was to help man advance in his spiritual struggles and not to create a hard crystallized sect centring round a particular personality or principle, so that, rather than co-operate, it would compete with the innumerable sects already existing. That is why sayings of saints belonging to different sects were carefully collected, preserved, and read with the same respect as Dadu's own sayings in the monasteries dedicated to him.

Names of Dadu's prominent disciples are on record and they include both Hindus and Mohammedans. His own son, Garibdas, was a disciple and, after Dadu's passing away at an approximate age of sixty, it was he who was chosen leader of the movement. Some of his disciples were brilliant men, and their gifted writings greatly influenced the religious thoughts of the time. It must be said to the credit of Dadu's disciples that, unlike what has happened in the case of most saints, they did not tamper with his utterances trying to improve upon them or to suit them more to the popular taste. Not only that; they also remained loyal to their spirit and tried to live up to them.

As time passed, the movement gathered in volume and more and more men came under its influence. As Dadu's catholic ideas seeped into popular minds, the old atmosphere of religious rivalry disappeared and a general sense of understanding and sympathy towards religions other than one's own became wide-spread and habitual with the people. Partly because of its catholicity and partly because it had fulfilled its purpose, the movement lost its distinctive role and eventually disappeared. The services rendered by it and its originator, Dadu, can never be overrated for if, until recent times, relations between Hindus and Mohammedans or between one sect and another, Hindu or Mohammedan, have been friendly and sympathetic, it can be safely concluded that it has been largely due to Dadu and his movement.*

* Largely based on Prof. Kshiti Mohan Sen's *Dadu*.

RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

By R. E. R. Lees, I.P.S.

It is only just over one hundred years ago that Ramakrishna was born, which is a short time relative to the many centuries that have elapsed since earliest civilized times. Thus the memory of him is still fresh and his teaching remains unclouded by theories and quarrels of theologians. Although his disciples have all since died, disciples of his disciples live today, who can give us true, untarnished accounts of his personality, his preaching, and his daily life, instilling the breath of life into reverence of him and discussion on his teaching, his philosophy, and his divine inspiration. Ramakrishna was a man uncontaminated by the worldly things that constituted the world of his time. His life was a great demonstration that even in this age, so cluttered with evil and with the unnatural effects of industrialization and financial dependency, divine realization can be attained by one whose religious devotion is sincere and whole-hearted. Anyone who has heard or read of his life and teachings is impressed above all by the directness and simpleness of his philosophy and the broad and completely unsectarian spirit which pervades it. The life of Ramakrishna has thrown new light on many principles of religious thought and practices, but he is and always will be associated primarily with the manner in which he fought against sectarian doctrines and dogmas, and taught that all religions are but paths that lead to realization of the infinite force behind all creation viz. God. In the attainment of this end Ramakrishna himself followed in turn the practices of all religions and found that they all led him to God-consciousness, and through each he could attain *samadhi*.

Can his religious philosophy be of use in this present modern world? Is it practicable

enough to be of use to us who are entangled in a world more divorced from religion than ever before by the results of our own material creations? The answer can be found in Ramakrishna's own reply when he was asked whether God-realization could come without giving up the things of the world. He replied: 'You do not have to give up everything. You are better off where you are. By living in the world you are enjoying the taste of both the pure crystallized sugar and of the molasses with all its impurities. You are indeed better off. Verily I say unto you, you are living in the world, there is no harm in that; but you will have to fix your mind on God; otherwise, you cannot realize him. Work with one hand and hold the feet of the Lord with the other. When you have finished your work, hold His feet to your heart with both your hands.' This was an allegorical utterance, but how fine a thought and how simply it can be fitted into the everyday life of any one of us. The simpleness of Ramakrishna's teaching is one of its most appealing aspects. Here was not an intellectual speaking with the voice of abstruse intellectuality but a man expressing basic religious principles in language a child could understand and illustrating them with parables taken from everyday things and occurrences to impress them on our minds. His teachings were not the impracticable dreams of a visionary but suited to this world of turmoil, a balm to any troubled heart ready to listen and assimilate his truths. And all the way through his philosophy was the underlying principle of toleration and understanding. His very thesis of unity of religions in itself is a philosophy of toleration. And without a spirit of toleration the world of tomorrow will be as full of wars and bloodshed as is the world of today. This is one of the most important practical lessons which can be learnt by reading of Ramakrishna.

The present-day manner of living has tended to make modern man less God-conscious. We live, especially in large towns, surrounded on all sides by things of our own creation and are dependent so much on all the effects of industrialization that we become unmindful of the world forces under which we live. It is only at times of extreme peril or great unhappiness, when modern inventions are of no use, that the large majority of people turn to God, sceptically maybe, but as a last resort, and pray to Him for assistance. This spirit is even more common in Western countries where industrialization has reached greater heights than in this country. Here the countryside still predominates and the vast majority of people still live by tilling the land, still live in daily contact with the natural bounties of God. To that portion of the world sunk in materialization the call of Ramakrishna comes as a beacon of hope and freedom from the bondage of material dependency. It may be noticed that Ramakrishna was directly influenced by beauty of nature and would plunge into *samadhi* on seeing a beautiful or colourful scene or landscape. This inspiration to God-realization is present for each and every one of us if we open our eyes and mind to it. The call to realize God through the visual signs of the world forces that surround us, is a means of salvation to mortals bound to the earth by materialism. In a delightful and imaginative book, written by Algernon Blackwood, the thoughts of a visionary on reading a leader in a newspaper were expressed as follows:

> The pompous flatulence of the language touched bathos. He thought of the thousands who had read both columns and preened themselves upon that leader. He thought how they would pride themselves upon the latest contrivance for speeding their inert bodies from one point to another 'annihilating distance'; upon being able to get from suburbs to the huge shops that created artificial wants, then filled them; from the poky villas, with their wee sham gardens, to the dingy offices; from dark airless East End rooms to countless factories that pour oht semi-fraudulent unnecessary wares upon the world, explosives and weapons to destroy another nation, or cheapjack goods to poison their own—all in a few minutes less than they could do it a week before. And then he thought of the leisure of the country folk and of those who knew how to be content without external possessions, to watch the sunset and the dawn with hearts that sought realities; sharing the noble slowness of the seasons, the gradual growth of flowers, trees, and crops, the unhurried dignity of Nature's grand procession, the repose-in-progress of the Mother Earth.

It is this direct call to the opening of one's mind to the forces of nature, to the world force which we call God, to which all may resort whether overburdened by worldly duties, whether sick or in poverty, whether weak or strong, which is one of the strongest appeals of the teachings of Ramakrishna.

One word concerning the terrible world war in which we are engulfed today. Had Ramakrishna been alive he would have believed that it is by divine will that we are forced

to fight, that evil must be combated so that finally good and the forces of God will be free to reign in the world. This is expressed by a modern English poet who wrote :

'He who has lost soul's liberty
Concerns himself for ever with his property,
As, when folk have lost both dance and song,
Women clean useless pots the whole day long.
Thank God for war and fire
To burn the silly objects of desire,
That from the ruin of a church thrown down
We see God clear and high above the town.'

God-consciousness and realization is what Ramakrishna can teach us, whether we be Muslim, Hindu, Christian, or of any other religious denomination. Sri Aurobindo finished one of his smaller works with the following words, and this cannot be better ended than with them.

The goal marked out for us is not to speculate about these things, but to experience them. The call upon us is to grow into the image of God, to dwell in Him and with Him and be a channel of His joy and might and an instrument of His works. Purified from all that is evil, transfigured in soul by His touch, we have to act in the world as dynamos of that divine electricity and send it thrilling and radiating through mankind, so that wherever one of us stands hundreds around may become full of His light and force, full of God and full of *ananda*. Churches, orders, theologies, and philosophies have failed to save mankind because they have busied themselves with intellectual creeds, dogmas, rites, and institutions, with *achara, shuddhi,* and *darshana,* as if these could save mankind, and have neglected the one thing needful, the power and purification of the soul. We must go back to the one thing needful, take up again Christ's gospel of the purity of mankind, Mohammed's gospel of perfect submission, self-surrender, and servitude to God, Chaitanya's gospel of the perfect love and joy of God in man, Ramakrishna's gospel of the unity of all religions and the divinity of God in man, and, gathering all these streams into one mighty river, one purifying and redeeming Ganges, pour it over the death-in-life of a materialistic humanity as Bhagiratha led down the Ganges and flooded it with the ashes of his fathers, so that there may be a resurrection of the soul in mankind and the *Satya Yuga* for a while return to the world. Nor is this the whole object of the Lila or the Yoga ; the reason for which the Avatars descend is to raise up man again and again, developing in him a higher and ever higher humanity, a greater and yet greater development of divine being, bringing more and more of heaven again and again upon the earth until our toil is done, our work accomplished and *sachchidananda* fulfilled in all even here, even in this material universe. Small is his work, even if he succeeds, who labours for his own salvation or the salvation of a few ; infinitely great is his even if he fail or succeed only partially or for a season, who lives only to bring about peace of soul, joy, purity, and perfection among all mankind.

MONOTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM

By Prof. Abinash Chandra Bose, M.A., Ph.D.

I. Monotheism

It is usual to consider monotheism as a form of faith superior to polytheism. In fact some have formulated the view, in accordance with the theory of progress, that polytheism perfects itself into monotheism, —that men start by believing in many gods, but finally come to the conclusion that there is only one God. A close examination, however, of the two rival cults from the point of view of practical religion and not of abstract thought, and a comparative estimate of the principles on which they are based, will go to prove that the usual view held about them is not quite accurate; that polytheism and monotheism as religious faiths are not really inferior and superior stages of theism, but two different modes of approach to the divine idea. It will appear that they represent two different patterns of thought.

Let us consider primarily the simple proposition that the difference between polytheism and monotheism is that the former believes in many gods and the latter in one God. A little thought will show that the difference is not one of number only.

First, monotheism is the belief in a personal God. Hence one who believes in an impersonal Divine Being is not a monotheist in the technical sense of the term. Those who quote the famous *Rigvedic* verse that says that 'the One Being the sages call by many names' do not sufficiently realize that here 'the One Being' (*ekam sad*) is in the neuter, standing for the Divine Essence

and not for a Divine Person and hence is not the same as contemplated by monotheism. *To the monotheistic creeds, God is a Person and not a metaphysical Essence.*

Secondly, as a Person the monotheistic Divinity cannot be of either sex. He must be male. One who accepts a Single Divinity as Mother or Maiden is not a monotheist in the practical sense of the term. Thus to the monotheist the Divinity is not only a Single Person, but also a male Person. *Therefore the distinction between Monotheism and Polytheism is not one of number only but of gender also.*

Thirdly, the monotheistic Deity who is a male Person cannot be a Person of any age. He cannot, for example, be addressed as a Child—as the *Rigveda* addresses its Deity in one or two places: 'The hymns kiss the Child, worthy of Laudation'—*shishum rihanti matayah panipnatam*—Rig., ix. 85, 11; or He cannot be addressed as a youth (The Veda addresses Indra as 'the youthful friend'—*yuvâ sakhâ*). *The monotheistic Deity is not only a Person, and a male Person but must be conceived as an Elderly Person.*

Fourthly, as an Elderly Person, the monotheistic Deity cannot be made to stand in any relation to man. He can be addressed only as a Father. One would not be a monotheist if he were to think of his God as a brother or any other relative. Supposing Agni in the following Vedic verse stands for the ultimate Being, He would not be the typical monotheistic God, because the relations in which he stands to man are more than one—

agnim manye pitaram agnim âpim
agnim bhrâtaram sadamit sakhâyam
(*Rig.*, vii. 7. 3.)

'Agni I deem my Father, my Kinsman,
I deem Him my Brother, my Friend—
for ever.'

Thus the monotheistic God should be conceived not only as a Person and a male and Elderly Person, but also a Father.

Fifthly, the monotheistic Deity cannot exist anywhere. He has His special abode—heaven. He is the Father who is in heaven. He may go wherever he likes, but heaven is the place of divine residence.

This conception has far-reaching implications. Perhaps this makes the most essential difference between monotheism and polytheism; that *monotheism contemplates the Divine in Heaven and polytheism the Divine in the universe.*

In monotheism God and man belong to two entirely different planes: God is holy, man is sinful. But in polytheism there is but a thin dividing line between the Divine and the human, the immortal and the mortal. The human may become the divine, the mortal the immortal.

Sixthly, the monotheistic Deity is not only a Father, who lives in heaven, but a Father who rules from heaven—a Divine Patriarch. The relation in which He stands to man is that of a Monarch to whom all homage is due. Hence the worship of the monotheistic Deity reproduces the technique of honouring the monarch—of bending and bowing, kneeling and prostrating to Him. The regularization of such acts at stated hours or days is in keeping with the periodical demonstration of loyalty to the monarch. *Thus monotheism is monarchical theism.*

The whole ideology of monotheism is based on the conception of monarchy. It makes a theocracy. Heaven is the royal abode of God where He, the king, sits on His throne. Innumerable servants carry out His orders. He sends his messengers, appoints vicegerents. He takes the best of His subjects to His heavenly court. The worst of them are flung into the dark prison-house, hell.

As king He claims unstinted allegiance and homage. The subjects must offer their respects publicly and ceremonially to satisfy His royal position. They must stand in dread of Him. He cannot be spoken of lightly.

Seventhly, the monotheistic Deity is not only a Monarch, but, being a single Deity, is an Absolute Monarch. In the typically monotheistic creeds, God, the only Monarch, is without a rival; and every earthly being is His sole subject. *Here monotheism adds the idea of imperialism to that of kingship.* Being the only Ruler, the king of heaven is jealous of rivals. He alone should receive the homage and no other. To offer homage to any but the God of Heaven is to be unfaithful to the king. No wonder that the worshippers of the monotheistic Divinity thought that nothing could please the

Monarch better than to subdue and destroy those who offered their homage and worship to persons or objects other than this Imperial Ruler, the God of heaven. The Pharaoh Ikhnaton, the founder of monotheism in ancient Egypt, seems to have thought that just as he, by conquering a number of tracts, became their emperor by eliminating their local rulers, so should the God he worshipped become the only object of worship for all his conquered peoples to the exclusion of their local deities.

Eighthly, the monarchical conception of the King of Heaven has carried with it the idea of the perpetual Enemy to Him, of the anti-God or Satan (Hebrew for 'adversary') who is constantly engaged in tampering with the loyalty of the subjects of the Divine Monarch.

This has led to another idea, very far-reaching in its consequence. A man who did not believe in the God of Heaven was considered to be not only a non-believer and atheist, but, according to the conception of the anti-God, a person under the influence of God's enemy, and therefore a traitor for whom no punishment was too severe. Herein lies the explanation for the monotheistic conceptions of the infidel—the man of another religion, and of the heretic—the man who did not accept the monotheistic faith in its entirety. Modern people, especially those accustomed to philosophical religions based on thought and not belief, often wonder why there should be such intolerance in respect of intellectual persuasion or opinion—as to whether there is a God in Heaven or there is not; why men should be severely punished for conduct not involving moral turpitude. But according to the fundamental monotheistic conception, *non-belief or non-conformity is the greatest moral turpitude, because it is alignment with Satan, the Supreme Power of wickedness.* It was not only in medieval times that people like Galileo were persecuted for their opinion, but only about a hundred and fifty years ago, a great seat of learning like Oxford University expelled the poet Shelley and his companion for publishing the opinion that God was a Power pervading the universe and not a Person living in Heaven.

Ninthly, the conception of the God in Heaven who is the Absolute Monarch ruling over the earth has led to another development. How to know that there is a God living in heaven and what is His will that everybody must obey at the risk of His terrible displeasure? This question has led to the idea of the prophet as originally and literally understood. A prophet is a man who has come into contact with the God of Heaven, and been authorized by Him to declare His will. Hence in monotheism the ideas of God and the prophet—the human agent employed by the Divinity to communicate with mankind—are closely associated. *God is as His Prophet has reported Him to be.* None but those authorized by God can declare His will. Any view about God's will not based upon the prophet's report is spurious. Thus, for monotheism, the basis of religion is provided by the records left by the prophet about his communications with the Divine—what is technically called revelation. These records make the scripture. Again, monotheism accepts the interpretation of the scripture made by religious leaders. Such literature makes what is known as theology. Theology has not considered any question in the abstract, or independently (as philosophy does); it has depended upon what it has taken as fact. For example, theology would not entertain the question whether God can come on a mountain to meet a man and give a tablet to him; it will not allow any metaphysical discussion regarding the nature of the Divinity and the possible ways of its manifestation; it will stick to what it believes to be fact—that God did come and meet Moses and give him a tablet, and it will require others to accept the belief in an unquestioning way, because the authority on which the belief is based is, in its opinion, quite infallible.

Theology, then, does not keep any question open. It gives its definite opinion on things and wants it to be accepted without question. Thus monotheism demands belief: it rises or falls with the documents called the scripture and the interpretation of them offered by theology. Holding such a view monotheism quite naturally opposes science annd logic. Monotheisms have set their prophets above scientists and philosophers.

But they have not unanimously accepted the prophets. It is found that the followers of earlier prophets have not accepted the later.

Two attitudes are in evidence in monotheistic creeds regarding one another. One, found in the older creeds, refuses to accept the prophet of later religions: hence, to them, a new monotheism is a pretence—a case of heresy. Such was the view held about Christianity by Judaism, about Islam by Christianity, and about Bahaism by Islam. Another attitude, found in the newer creeds, is that while the old prophets are recognized, the new prophet is held to be a truer interpreter of the existence of the one Divine Being than the older prophets were. Thus though formally accepted, the older prophets are held to have only prepared the way for the newer. This view is almost as unacceptable to the older monotheisms as theirs is to the newer monotheisms.

Tenthly, a literal acceptance of the necessity of belief, which must be enforced to the exclusion of reason or knowledge, requires an agency to ensure such enforcement. Hence monotheism must build an *institution* that should control the daily life of its followers. This institution took a theocratic form. It was designed to be a world-state with the Representative of the Divinity—the Pope or Khalifa—at its head. Hence, owing to the imperialist idea taking a simple political form, monotheism worked with a definite programme of world subordination. Though the modern age and its growing secularism have dismissed the ideal as unnatural and undesirable, it still fires the imagination of certain 'religious' people (according to monotheistic ideology), especially those who are in the back-waters of modern life.

At any rate there are people following monotheistic faiths who find that their religion cannot flourish unless it is a state religion. The movement for the disestablishment of the State Church has not received adequate support in every country. In India we find fresh attempts being made by followers of monotheistic Islam to establish a State on the basis of their religion.

On the other hand polytheism has flourished through private enterprise and without the backing of the political power. It certainly demonstrated great vitality where, as in India, it could survive not only without a State, but even under a monotheistic government; and preserved itself with no power at its back except private devotion and private propaganda.

From the facts stated above, it becomes evident that the logic of the monotheistic position, taken in its entirety, is such that only one monotheistic creed can exist at a time. When two monotheistic creeds come into existence, with different prophets for them, and different reports (i.e. scriptures) regarding the King of Heaven, it is discovered that actually they speak about two different Gods, with different heavens for their abodes. In other words, a plurality of monotheistic creeds, though theoretically attached to one God, really means a state of competition between a number of rivals for the single Godhead; and when each monotheism attempts to found a world-state, subjugating others, the position becomes even more acute. Thus the irresistible conclusion is that even ideologically monotheism can remain true to its name only when there is one creed professing the doctrine. (We speak here of monotheism as a religious creed and not as the philosophical contemplation of a Single Divine Power.)

(*To be concluded*)

Be bold! My children should be brave, above all. Not the least compromise on any account. Preach the highest truths broadcas Do not fear of losing your respect, or of causing unhappy friction. Rest assured that if you serve truth in spite of temptations to forsake it, you will attain a heavenly strength, in the face of which men will quail to speak before you things which you do not believe to be true. People would be convinced of what you would say to them, if you can strictly serve truth for fourteen years continually without swerving from it.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

NOTES AND COMMENTS

To Our Readers

We draw our readers' attention particularly to *The Ramakrishna Mission : Its Ideal and Objects* by the President of the Math and Mission. It contains an inspiring and timely reminder to all not to rest on their oars but to go ahead and 'stop not till the goal is reached'. *A Medieval Saint : Dadu* is a description of a great soul who carried religion into practice in his life. *Monotheism and Polytheism* will be found interesting and instructive.

Uplift of Backward Communities

Presiding over the anniversary of the Madras Social League, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan of Travancore, advised social workers to effect a real change of heart in working for the uplift of the backward communities. He was of the opinion that the social and economic disabilities placed upon the backward classes by the high caste members of society were equivalent to sin for which the latter had to make full amends. The only proper amends, he felt, was to better the lot of the sufferers and to remove the evil of untouchability through active social work. But treating the depressed classes in a condescending manner, with occasional offers of economic advantages, will not bring the desired amount of success. As the Dewan has rightly put it, such work has to be carried on

> not by mere gifts, though they were useful in the present economic plight, but by a change of heart and spirit—a spirit which should be willing not to be patronizing but to be brotherly and sisterly towards others.

Hindu society has to rid itself of the bane of untouchability as quickly as possible. It is highly regrettable to find some sections of orthodox Hindus still unwilling to realize the immense harm it has done to the Hindu community as a whole. Deploring such callousness and lack of understanding of the spirit of Hinduism, Sj. Nalini Ranjan Ghosh, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha Conference, made a stirring appeal to all Hindus to unite in abolishing untouchability. He had no doubt that untouchability stood as a stumbling block in the path of Hindu consolidation. Moreover it has given a handle to antagonists of Hindu solidarity who are trying to drive a wedge between the higher castes and a large section of the illiterate masses and thus alienate the latter. He further observed :

> We are to remember that more often than not the insults that come from outside come through the loop-holes that are our own creation. . . . The so-called depressed classes or rather some of them have certain social disabilities. But they surely would have been eliminated in a natural way with the progress of society. . . . We cannot assimilate, but we do know how to reject and excommunicate But this was not the spirit of India.

We are glad to note that, owing to the untiring efforts of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Government of Travancore have introduced the temple-entry reform, and have offered help and encouragement to members of the backward communities in the shape of scholarships to students, well-established colonies with temples and tanks, and employment for the landless or homeless. Every true and enlightened Hindu will be grateful to the able Dewan of Travancore for his laudable attempt to eradicate the blot of untouchability from the Hindu escutcheon. The uplift of the depressed classes and the removal of untouchability were strongly advocated by Swami Vivekananda who held that unless the practice of untouchability disappeared there was no way to India's regeneration.

Communal Amity

As the destinies of the two great communities of India are closely linked together, the necessity for mutual understanding between Hindus and Muslims need hardly be emphasized. Speaking on communal unity at a meeting in Calcutta, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said :

> Today, we in India should follow the example of mutual readjustment on the basis of mutual reverence and mutual right. We must understand our responsibilities as Indians or as Muslims, but let us not be exclusive because we differ from one another.

By their very nature individuals are constituted differently. Yet we co-operate and work together in harmony. Communal differences are not in essence so very

irreconcilable as they are made to appear today. There is an underlying unity permeating the whole of India notwithstanding the apparent diversities of caste, religion, or class. The attempts of some public men to make religious differences prominent in order to gain their political ends are deplorable, for they do more harm than good to the country as a whole. Exhorting the Muslims to be true to their religious ideals of equality and brotherhood of every man, she observed :

> Man and man in India must work together not in mechanical uniformity but in the midst of diversity—that central quality of humanity....We are all chasing after the illusion of power, and we have forgotten that power is unreal and inimical to us unless there is co-operation among all sections of the people.

Hindus have been a tolerant community, concerning themselves with keeping their higher spiritual values unsullied, while the followers of Islam have taken to aggressive conversion, their converts coming largely from the ranks of the Hindus. But in the interests of communal unity and national solidarity either community will do well to refrain from forcibly converting members of the other community. This form of religious zeal, though looked upon by some as not reprehensible, creates mutual distrust between the communities, and stands in the way of a real understanding. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna we find the verification of the truth that the best in each religion can be imbibed and assimilated without changing faith.

In addition to their dissensions arising from the external formalities of religion, Hindus and Muslims in India are confronted with the fantastic theory that they are two distinctly separate 'nations', having very little or nothing in common. History or sociology seems to lend scant support to such a claim, which appears most unsound from an economic or practical view-point. This view is shared by many distinguished Hindus and Muslims. Nawab Mirza Yar Jung Bahadur, Agent of the Nizam's Government at Nagpur, pointing out the dangers of division, said :

> If religion is taken to be the basis of nationality, it will lead to absurd results. For example, if a Hindu who belongs to India for centuries changes his religion as a result of conversion, he will, by this rule, cease to be an Indian, which is absurd. Religion is no test of nationality.

He felt that any one who had settled down in India and made it his home was an Indian. It is very encouraging to find that there are many liberal minded Muslims like Mirza Yar Jung who consider themselves Indians. They always think in terms of unity and strive to bring about a communal rapprochement. The future of India depends largely on the friendliness and co-operation between the two communities. Hindus and Muslims will have to guard against disruptive influences, internal or external, which tend to incite mutual strife by raising unfounded apprehensions. The real teachings of the prophets and seers have to be re-interpreted in the light of changed conditions.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

INTRODUCTORY SYLLABUS OF LOGIC. By R. M. MAZUMDAR. *Published by Rupkatha Publishing House, 26, Sardar Sankar Road, Calcutta. Pp. 28. Price 12 As.*

The book under review contains, as the title reveals, the fundamentals of the introductory portion of Logic, being a synopsis of Prof. Mazumdar's lectures to the Intermediate classes. Beginners generally find Logic rather a tough subject. The author has tried to lessen the difficulty of students by discussing the problems according to a new method.

ICONOGRAPHY OF SRI VIDYARNAVA TANTRA. By S. SRIKANTHA SASTRI. *Available from R. Hari Rao, Cenotaph Road, Bangalore City. Pp. 46. Price Re. 1.*

Vidyarnava Tantra is a voluminous digest of many Tantras attributed to Vidyaranya whose identity is still the subject-matter of controversy. The learned author has discussed briefly the authorship and date of Vidyaranya by collecting together much of the available evidence from various sources The images are analysed and arranged in a useful manner, closely following the text of the *Vidyarnava Tantra*. The images are described under separate groups such as the Shakta, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Saura, Kaumara, and Ganapatya. The essential characteristics of each image are precisely pointed out. This small work, the result of detailed research by a scholar of repute, will serve as an excellent guide to students of Indian iconography in making a comparative study of the various Tantric texts.

KALYANA KALPATARU. (COW NUMBER). *Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pp. 88. Price Re. 1-8 As.*

The 'Cow Number' of *Kalyana Kalpataru* for the month of January 1945 contains a number of contributions by well-known writers, each article presenting a particular aspect of the worth and usefulness of the cow. There are as many as fourteen illustrations, two of them coloured. The annual number of the *Kalyana Kalpataru* is always eagerly looked forward to by innumerable readers, and its special features are a treat. But for the fewer number of pages and illustrations, which is inevitable under the present conditions, this special edition of the journal leaves nothing to be desired.

HINDI

KALYAN. (PADMAPURANANKA). *Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pp. 360. Price Rs. 4-3 As.*

We welcome this special, illustrated and en larged, annual number of the well-known Hindi journal *Kalyan*. It contains the *Srishti-Khonda, Bhumi-Khanda,* and some portions of the *Svarga-Khanda* of the *Padmapurana,* translated into lucid Hindi, in an abridged form. In addition there are some illuminating articles on the greatness and philosophical significance of the *puranas*. Ten coloured illustrations and sixty-five line drawings form a special feature of this issue.

BENGALI

BENOY SARKARER BAITHAKE. (IN MEETINGS WITH BENOY SARKAR). VOL. I. (SECOND AND ENLARGED EDITION). *Published by Chakravarty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 770. Price Rs. 6.*

Benoy Sarkar is nothing if not original. He is original in everything—in his outlook, in his approach to problems, in his interpretations, in his expressions. And in being original he is sometimes almost heretical. But one thing is certain: you may not like his views, but you simply cannot help liking the man. His sincerity, his scholarship, his wide sympathies—all these compel respect and admiration.

He is a staunch nationalist. Few can compare with him in his passion for all that is good and great in the country. But happily his nationalist sentiments do not make him blind to the merits of other countries. In him nationalism is perfectly poised with internationalism. He is one of those few who are able to rise above the prejudices of race, religion, or country. To him the human spirit is the same everywhere, and he is for giving ready recognition to its achievements wherever they may be found. His wide travels, with eyes open and a mind free from all bias have convinced him that there are great souls, great institutions, and great ideals in every country, and he wants India to draw from them any inspiration, any guidance that they are capable of giving. He believes in free give and take of thoughts between India and other countries, and his is a typical Hindu attitude which never scorns to accept and assimilate anything new and good that others may have to offer.

It is these qualities that make not only Sarkar lovable but also all that he writes. Here, in this book, these qualities are in ample evidence, though it is one dealing mainly with Bengal, the province of his birth. His pride in what Bengal has achieved during the past few decades is patent throughout the book. But when he appraises the achievements of other countries, there is no tinge of bias, and his praise and appreciation are most enthusiastic where they are deserved.

The book, novel in some respects, records Sarkar's views on varied topics. Being a popular teacher and an enthusiastic worker for every cause worthy of his support, he always attracts a large number of visitors. Some of them take the opportunity of their visits to ask him to expound his views on subjects in which they are interested. Six such visitors have compiled this book, each a separate section. Visiting him at different periods and at different times, during the years from 1931 to 1944, they used to assail him with all manner of questions; and the brilliant sallies they evoked from Sarkar so impressed them that they thought it fit to put them on record. It is out of such records that the book has grown It deals with almost every aspect of the renaissance-movements that Bengal has witnessed during the present century. This is what has led to the subtitle *'Vimsha-shatabdir Banga-samskriti.'* One gets in it a vivid picture of those personalities and those movements that have shaped Bengal as she is today. There is so much valuable information in it—valuable and rare. And everything is correctly assessed and treated as it ought to be. Throughout, the book is marked with a penetrating analysis and a fair and sound judgement. Much credit is due to the questioners themselves, for they know what to ask and how to draw out Sarkar. And they do not cease questioning him until they are satisfied that they have had all that Sarkar has to give. The talk is so interesting, so illuminating that one can never feel bored by it. Sarkar's views are remarkably fresh and full of suggestive value, so that even if one cannot accept them, one is bound, at least, to pause and consider them. And like so many other things about him, his language, too, is characteristically his own—extremely colloquial, full of new phrases and idioms, and always vigorous.

We shall be looking forward to the second volume of the book, which is to appear soon.

HINDI-SANSKRIT

ATMADARSHANAM. BY PT. RAMANANDAN SAHAI BRAHMAVIDYA. *Available from the author, Mahajani Tola, Fyzabad. Pp. 134. Price Re. 1-4.*

Atmadarshanam or 'The Philosophy of Self-revelation' is a well-compiled elementary treatise on Hindu philosophy, with Sanskrit text and Hindi commentary. The work is divided into four chapters, and the author has given apt quotations from well-known Hindu philosophical and mythological works in support of his textual exposition. The method followed is akin to other Vedantic *prakarana granthas,* and treats of the non-dual aspect of the Self. It will serve as an introductory book on Hindu philosophy, and will be welcomed by the Hindi-knowing public.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1944

The Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at the Belur Math premises on the 30th March, 1945. The following is a brief report of the work done by the Mission during the year 1944.

Centres : There were altogether 132 centres, including 65 Math centres. Besides, there were 11 sub-centres. These centres served all without distinction of caste, creed or colour and preached non-sectarian religious principles.

The above centres and sub-centres conducted no less than 459 permanent activities of various types.

Relief Work : Distress Relief was carried on chiefly in Bengal and North Travancore. In Bengal, from 50 or more centres a maximum of 864 villages and 15 towns were served. Relief work was also carried on in the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore. The materials distributed among the stricken people included 67,924 maunds of foodgrains, 83,107 pieces of cloth, 27,316 blankets, 13,989 shirts, 5,363 yards of shirting cloth and Rs. 16,165-2-3 in cash. Medical Relief was administered to 3,35,760 people suffering from Malaria and the after-effects of Malnutrition, and 9,01,129 patients, nursing mothers and children, were helped with special diet like milk, sugar, barley and multivitamin tablets. The total expenditure in cash on these relief operations was Rs. 4,44,542-6-3. Flood Relief was conducted by Bombay and Bhubaneswar branches.

To stabilize the disturbed state of labour test relief work was organized by many centres in Bengal. Carpenters, weavers, fishermen, etc., who had been thrown out of employment during the famine were reinstated in their work. Small cottage industries like paper-making, cane-work, and smithy were introduced. Works of public utility such as road-laying and tank excavation were taken up, thus affording employment to the able-bodied unemployed.

Similar works of reconstruction were undertaken in North Travancore also. Spinning, weaving, and coir-making were introduced which gave employment to many people.

Medical Work : The Mission conducted 6 general and 2 maternity Hospitals, with a total of 488 beds. The total number of indoor cases was 10,133, and that of surgical cases including those of the Eye Hospital at Brindaban, was 3,428. The 49 outdoor Dispensaries, including the T.B. Clinic at Delhi, and the Eye Clinic at Karachi treated in all 14,20,703 cases during the year.

Educational Work : Work under this head included 1 Residential College, 3 Residential High Schools, 25 Secondary Schools and 11 M. E. Schools, with a total of 6,849 boys and 3,802 girls ; 55 Primary Schools with 2,173 boys and 1,446 girls ; 16 Night Schools with 1,088 students, 4 Industrial Schools with 346 students, and two centres for technicians having 669 mechanics and electricians under training. The Mission had 33 Students' Homes, which accommodated 1,236 students. A large Orphanage has been started at Rahara, in 24-Parganas.

Work among Women . Under this head the Mission conducted the Women's Department of the Benares Home of Service, the Maternity Hospitals at Calcutta and Taki, the Widows' Home at Puri, the Women Invalids' Home at Benares, the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras, the Sister Nivedita Girls' School at Calcutta, the Sarada Shiksha-Mandir at Sarisha (24-Pargs.), and the Girls' Orphanage at Karativu (Ceylon), etc.

Uplift of Backward Classes and Areas : The Ashrama at Khasia and Jaintia Hills and many other centres, both in rural and urban areas, served the masses in a variety of ways. Some of them organized tours with magic lanterns, gramophones, etc. The labouring classes in industrial areas had free access to the charitable dispensaries and hospitals as well as to the primary and night schools, some of which were specially conducted for them.

Spread of Culture and Spiritual Ideas : Almost all centres conducted libraries and reading rooms and organized public lectures and classes The Mission's monastic workers made contacts with distinguished scholars of foreign lands and carried the universal message of Vedanta to distant shores.

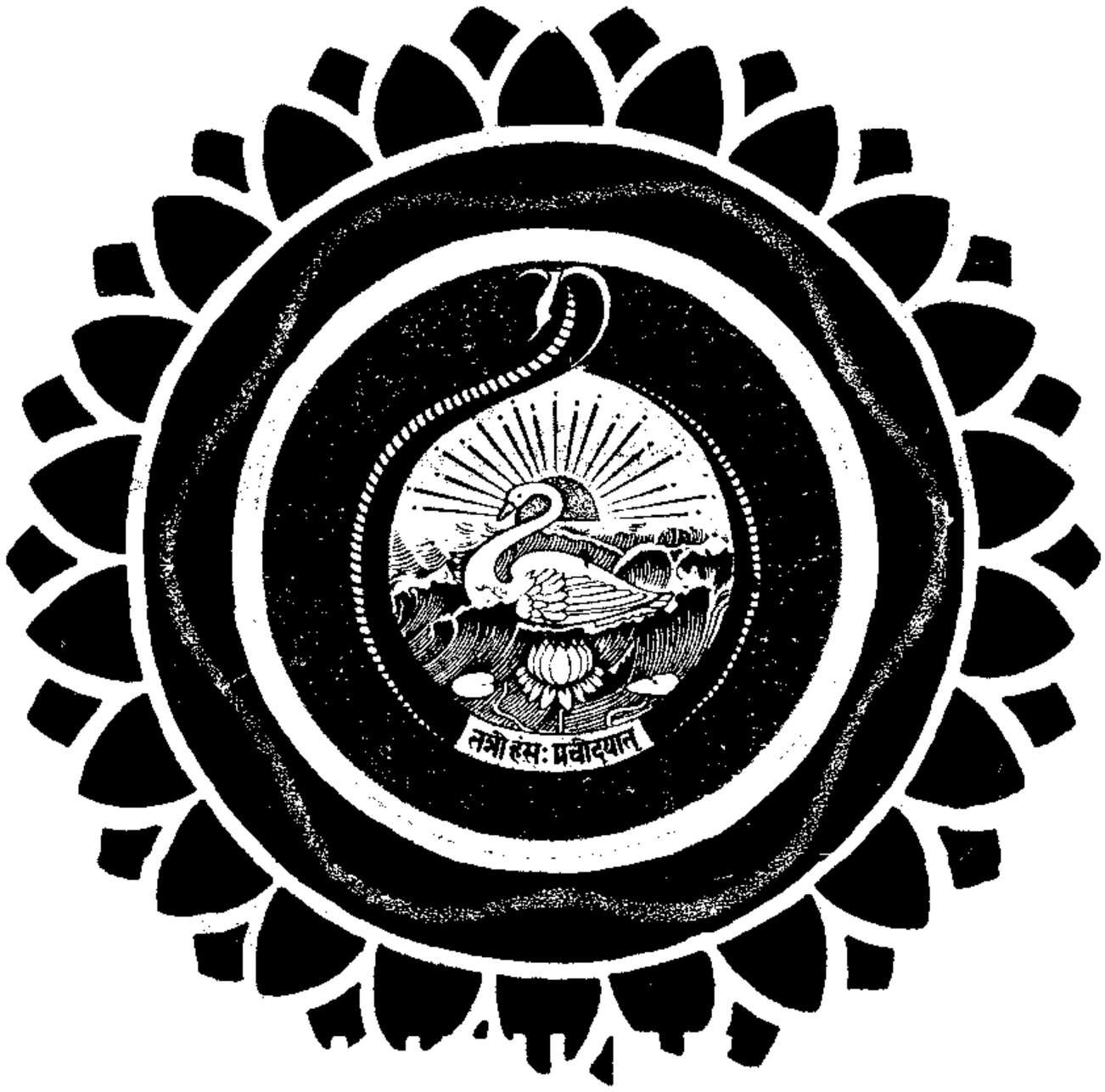
Foreign Work : In U S. A., Argentina, England, Mauritius, etc., the Mission carried on its cultural activities through 17 centres.

Finance : The Total receipts of the Mission in 1944 were Rs. 36,57,653-3-10 and the total disbursements Rs. 36,27,874-5-11.

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



PRABUDDHA BHARATA

GOLDEN JUBILEE NUMBER 1945

"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।"

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

1. You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of the day? So, O man, because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

2. God is formless and God is with form too, and He is that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone can say what else He is.

3. God with form is visible, nay we can touch Him, as one does his dearest friend.

4. The watchman can see with a dark lantern (bull's-eye) everyone on whom he throws its rays, but no one can see him so long as he does not turn the light upon himself. So does God see everyone but no one sees Him until the Lord reveals Himself to him in His mercy.

5. If I hold this cloth before me, you cannot see me any more though I am still as near to you as ever. So also, though God is nearer to you than anything else, yet by reason of the screen of egoism you cannot see Him.

6. God is in all men, but all men are not in God, that is the reason why they suffer.

7. He is born to no purpose who, having the rare privilege of being born a man, is unable to realize God in this life.

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

9. Pray to Him in any way you will, He is sure to hear you, for He hears even the footfall of an ant.

10. Let not despondency ever enter into thy heart; despair is the great enemy of progress in one's path.

11. As the dawn heralds the rising sun, so sincerity, unselfishness, purity, and righteousness precede the advent of the Lord.

12. Knowledge leads to unity, and ignorance to diversity.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

Hail Prabuddha Bharata! Heartiest greetings and congratulations on thy Golden Jubilee!

Brought into being by the will of Swami Vivekananda, the Patriot-Saint of Modern India, and nurtured in thy infancy by the loving care and devotion of his young disciples in Madras, and ofthy gifted editor, B. R. Rajam Iyer, thou wert, on his passing away, given up for dead when scarcely two years old. But the great Swami knew that it was but sleep, not death. He found thee a home in the bosom of the holy Himalayas amidst Pines and Deodars, in full view of the eternal snows pointing towards heaven. He infused a new life into thee with the sacred Mantram, "'tis but One," and sent thee forth with his blessings to proclaim to the world the shining ideal of Truth, Love and Oneness, till the Goal is reached.

So long as, O Prabuddha Bharata, thou keepest to this ideal, thou hast an eternal life, and thy mission of ushering in the glorious era of Awakened India, so dear to the heart of our beloved Swamiji, will be fulfilled.

God-speed to thee!

Swami Virajananda

Belur Math,
30th March, 1945

ON OURSELVES

By the Editor

We offer our thanks and greetings to all our numerous friends who have helped us in various ways in the bringing out of the Golden Jubilee Number of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, and who have been well-wishers and supporters of the cause for which the *Prabuddha Bharata* stands.

The *Prabuddha Bharata* tries to stand for what India was, is and will be. About India, Swami Vivekananda, one of her most illustrious sons, said:

'This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans, where the eternal Himalayas, rising tier above tier with their snow-caps, look as it were into the very mysteries of heaven. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first sprang up enquiries into the nature of man, and into the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, the existence of a supervising God, an immanent God in nature and in man, and here the highest ideals of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points. This is the land from whence, like the tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again rushed out and deluged the world, and this the land from whence once more such tides must proceed in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of mankind. It is the same India which has withstood the shocks of centuries, of hundreds of foreign invasions, of hundreds of upheavals of manners and customs. It is the same land which stands firmer than any rock in the world, with its undying vigour, indestructible life. Its life is of the same nature as the soul, without beginning, and without end, immortal, and we are the children of such a country.'

The *Prabuddha Bharata* wants the children of India to be legitimately proud of the greatness of their motherland, and to rise to their true heights and proclaim fearlessly the inspiring message of true spirituality, love and tolerance, so that the power-blind peoples of the world may see the folly of their ways and turn to the paths of real civilization and peace. Prof. L. P. Jacks truly characterized the civilization of Europe as the civilization of *power* and that of Asia as the civilization of *culture*. Contrasting these two he says:

'The civilization of power aims at the *exploitation of the world*, which is thought of as a dead or mechanical thing, existing that men may exploit it. That of culture aims at the development of man, thought of as the citizen of a living universe which can be loved, enjoyed and reverenced.'

India calls upon the world to desist from this inhuman exploitation of man, and to turn to the development of humanity the wonderful agencies of organization and scientific method. Each nation has a flag embodying its national ideals. Now the time has come for all humanity to have but one flag, the ochre flag of Renunciation and Service of Shiva in the Jiva, or as the Christians put it, of man made in the image of God. The world will be raised—'not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love.' The 'mild and gentle' Hindu is pre-eminently fitted by his innate tendencies to be the spiritual teacher of the world of the future. This is our heritage. We call on every Indian to take his stand on this heritage and carry forth once again the saving message of the divinity of the human soul fearlessly to the four corners of the world, and thus help to lay the spectres of ignorance, lust, greed, and racial superiority which threaten to make a hell of this fair earth.

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

By Sister Christine

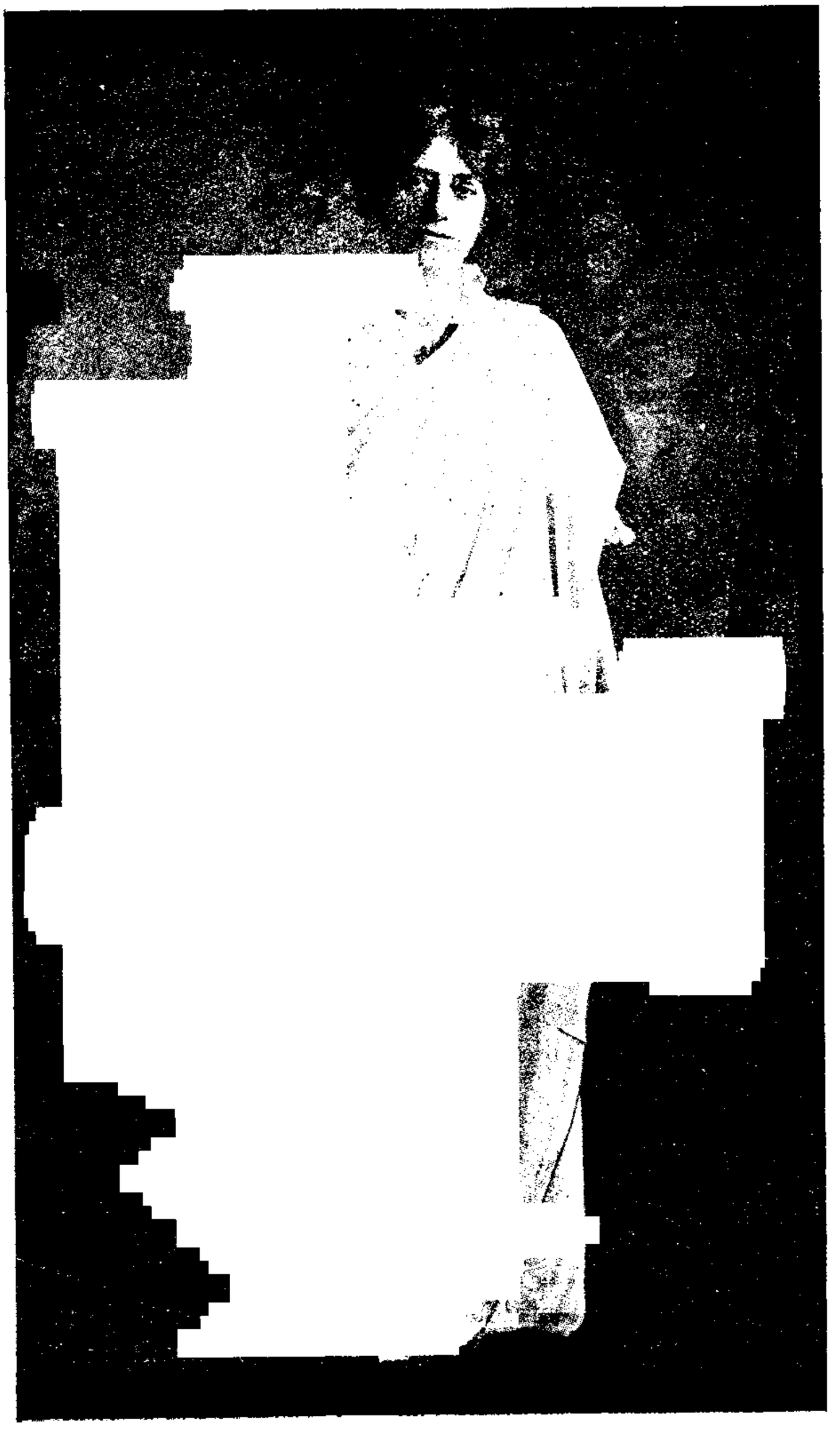
It often seemed to us that Swami Vivekananda was not consistent. For days together he would inveigh passionately against child marriage, caste, purdah, emotionalism in religion or some other subject, until he made us believe that there was no other point of view. Then quite suddenly, perhaps in answer to a facile acceptance of all that he had said, he would turn and rend those who agreed with him, demolish all his previous contentions and prove conclusively that the opposite was true. 'But, Swamiji,' someone said in distress, 'you said just the opposite yesterday.' 'Yes, that was yesterday,' he would reply, if at all. Never did he try to reconcile the two points of view or make any explanation. If we did not think he was consistent, what was that to him? As Emerson says, 'A foolish consistence is the hobgoblin of little minds.' He was looking at all the problems of life from a different vantage point. From his observation tower, the surrounding country looked different from what it did to us who were a part of the landscape. The most he ever said was, 'Don't you see, I am thinking aloud?'

We came to know long afterwards that after weighing all the pros and cons, he came to a conclusion. This did not mean that he thought that one side was altogether right and the other altogether wrong, but rather that the balance was slightly in favour of the one and probably only so because of the needs of the time. Having come to this decision, he no longer discussed the matter but thought of some way to put his conclusions into practice.

Criticism he considered detrimental. Reform, he thought, did more harm than good because it always begins with condemnation. This was disintegrating especially in a country in the position of India where it is most important to restore the lost faith of the individual and the race. All change of value must be growth and could not be superimposed from outside. With his prophetic sense he could see the causes already at work bringing about the changes which so many felt to be necessary. Economic causes prevailed at this period. Very little thought was required to see how the growing poverty would affect purdah, caste, child marriage as well as other customs.

Some one ventured to oppose him one day, and he turned swiftly saying, 'What, you dare argue with me, a descendant of fifty generations of lawyers!' Then he marshalled his facts and arguments and spoke so brilliantly that some of us were convinced that black was white. But if one said to him, 'I can't argue with you, Swamiji, but you know that thus and thus is true,' to that he always yielded with amazing gentleness. 'Yes, you are right.' All of this was but a little fun, a little relief from the tension at which he and we with him were kept much of the time.

What amazed us was that he not only saw the problems clearly but found solutions for them—solutions that were quite unique. Every custom was traced back to its origin. In the beginning there was a reason for it; it filled a need. In time it became a custom, and, as is usual with customs, accretions like barnacles were added and militated against its usefulness. What was valuable and what was harmful in this or that custom was now the question. As certain conditions brought it into existence, were the present conditions such as to put an end to it? After all, these institutions are not peculiar to India, as most seem to think. The United States has been in existence as an independent nation not much more than one hundred and fifty years, yet there are already two distinct castes which are as rigid as it is possible to make them. A



SISTER CHRISTINE

recently. We read again and again of princesses married at twelve and we know that what the royal families did, the subjects imitated. In *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakespeare, Juliet is stated to have been just under fourteen at the time her parents planned her marriage to Count Paris.

Is it not evident that these customs grow out of the limitations of human nature and out of certain conditions which made them necessary at the time? Instead of condemning, Swami Vivekananda, after tracing them back to their source, following their history, and seeing clearly what undesirable things had been incorporated, tried to find first of all the corrective idea. In some cases this in itself would be sufficient. In others, the forces at work in India today would bring about the change. But there are cases, in which without implying any condemnation of the old a new institution must be created, which will gently, almost imperceptibly, in time displace the old.

Marriage is a great austerity. It is not for self but for *Samaj* —the society. There must be chastity in word, thought, and deed. Without a great ideal of faithfulness in monogamy there can be no true monasticism. There must be fidelity even when the emotion is no longer there. Chastity is the virtue which keeps a nation alive. To chastity he attributed that fact that India still lives while other nations no older than herself have sunk into oblivion.

Such an observation would lead to a recital of the rise and fall of the nations of antiquity. In the beginning of the national life, in its days of struggle, there was self-

Negro may be as blond as a Swede, but can never cross the barrier between the two races. And then India never lynched its depressed classes! Besides these two rigid castes there are many subdivisions less rigid, generally based on money. Is it not nobler to place highest the caste that is rich only in spirituality, than to make money the standard? Child marriage was practised in Europe until quite

denial, restraint, austerity. As the nation grew prosperous, this was replaced by self-indulgence, laxity, luxury, resulting in decay, degeneration, destruction. Babylon, Assyria, Greece, Rome—this is the story of each and all. But India lives. However individuals may fail, India had never lowered the standard.

Then thinking of the changes which will inevitably come soon, he questioned, 'Which is better? The arranged marriage of India or the individual choice of the West? But our young men are even now demanding the right to choose their wives.' Again—'Is intermarriage advisable? Heretofore, the worst of both races have produced an unfortunate breed. What if the best of the two races unite? It might produce a race of supermen. Would it? Is it advisable?' His country, always Swami's country! How to preserve this great race which has given to the world some of its most transcendental ideas, and is still the custodian of spiritual treasures of which the world outside stands in need.

Or he would turn to the question of child marriage. Was there any subject upon which he did not throw the rays of his luminous mind? It was a revelation to watch the concentration of this searchlight upon problems. A question or a chance remark was enough. He would jump up, walk rapidly to and fro while words poured forth like molten lava. His mind would seize upon a subject and he would not let it go until it had revealed its secret to him. It has been said that he upheld child marriage, caste, purdah. He has been accused of being untrue to the great principle inherent in his message. Those of us who saw him wrestle with these problems, know how far from truth this is. He who was roused to a very passion of chivalry at the sight of injustice, of suffering due to man's cruel domination, was he the one to add another link to the fetters which bind the helpless? He 'whose heart was like butter,' whose feeling for the downtrodden was a passion, whose mission it was to help those in bondage to attain the Great Freedom, how could one think that he would not prove himself the Master of compassion, the Deliverer?

Yet he had but little sympathy with reform and reformers. How could he be in harmony with a method which, while it tore up the evil by the roots, destroyed so much that was beautiful and precious in the process, leaving ugly barren places behind? Whatever changes were to be made in his country, must not be brought about by the loss of her self-respect or by loss of faith in herself. Denunciation of her customs and institutions, no, that was not the way. What perversity was it that made so many of his own generation see only evil in the land of their birth and unalloyed good in everything Western? How had this hypnotism come about? Could India have lived through the ages if this were true? The heart of India is sound. Evils there may be. Where are they not? Is the West free from them? Pacing back and forth, hour after hour, he would wrestle with the problems of India.

It is essential in all cases, but particularly in India at the present day, not to destroy faith and reverence. Can you eliminate the evil without bringing graver dangers into existence? There was neither child marriage nor purdah in ancient India—nor do they exist in all parts of India today. They are only in the provinces which have been under Mohammedan domination. What has it done? It has preserved the chastity of the race. Not only must women be chaste but men as well. The chaste woman must not so much as look at another man nor must she allow her face to be seen.

To him it seemed incredible that any man should look with contempt upon the institutions of his country or upon past institutions of which they were the product. But he was not blind to the other side. 'We are degenerating in physique. Is this the cause? What is the remedy?' Of the evils that followed in the wake of child marriage, he said

little. Were they not too well known? He did not say that they must be ended, for he never gave expression to what to him was obvious. Here was an institution that entailed suffering, that made for weakness, that was evil in some of its aspects. One cannot believe that after having faced the facts he did not at once try to find some way to eliminate all the undesirable elements. But was there any reason why he should adopt methods which would result in still worse evils. His was no stereotyped mind: then why expect of him stereotyped methods? Some of us were later to know why this subject stirred him so deeply.

After perhaps hours of thought on the subject, he would heave a deep sigh and say, 'Well, well, the economic pressure will bring about changes. This together with education will do much to end it. Education! We must educate our women! But not the kind of education that is open to them now. Heaven forbid. That would be worse than the existing evil.'[1]

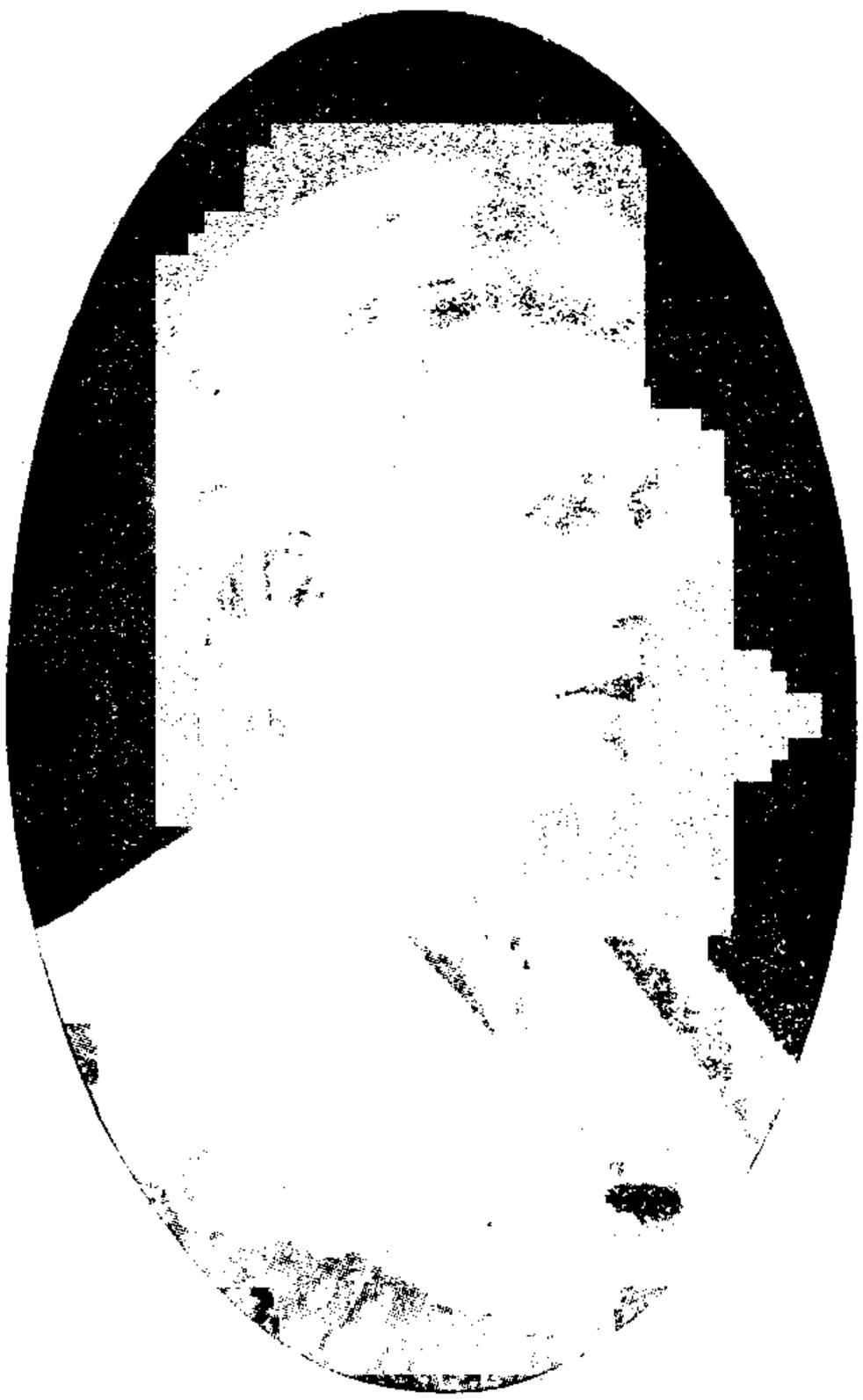
[1] All rights reserved.

MAYAVATI, THE HOME OF PRABUDDHA BHARATA

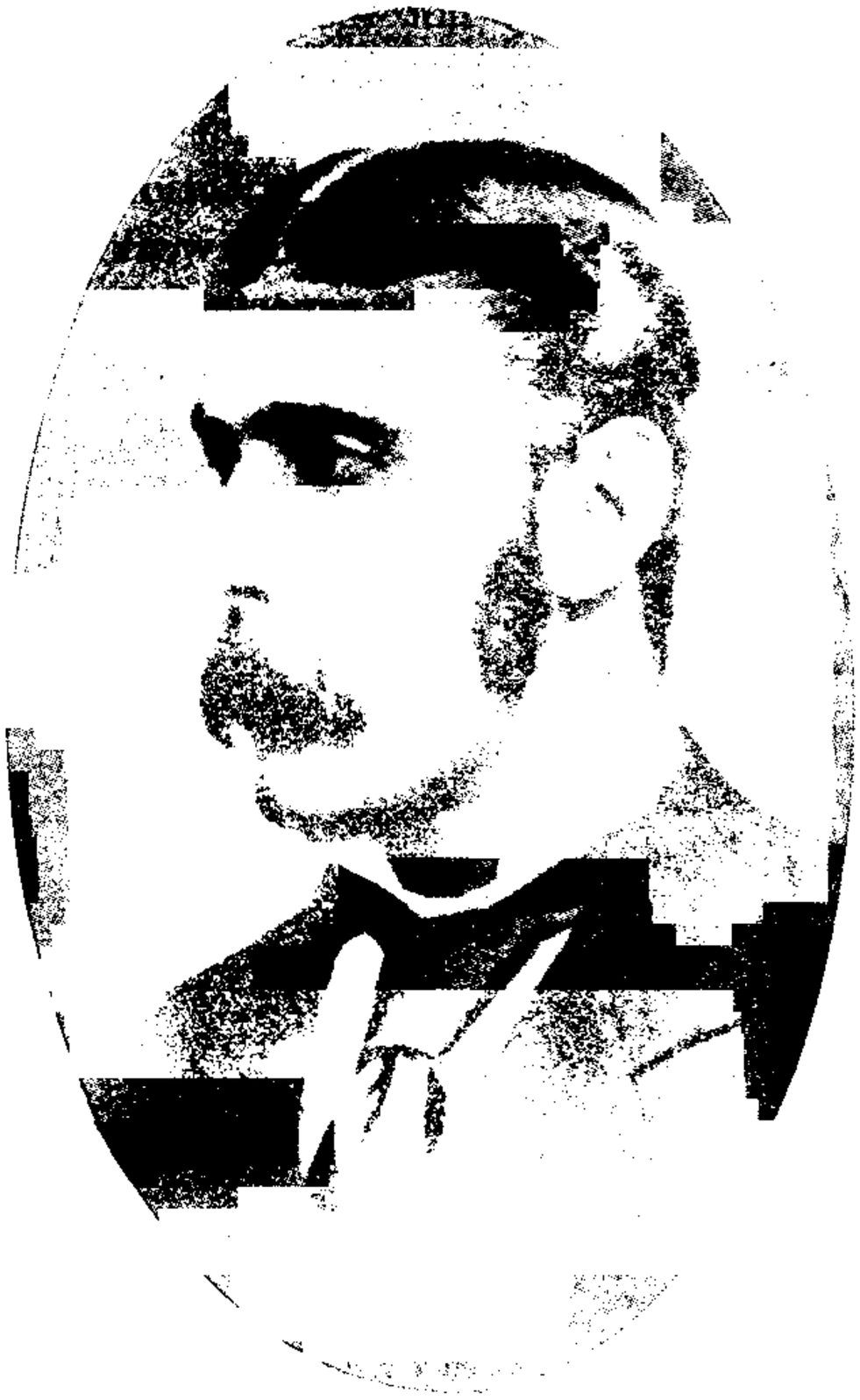
By Swami Madhavananda

Prabuddha Bharata has entered the fiftieth year of its useful life. My hearty congratulations to the staff and management on the celebration of its Golden Jubilee by a Special Number. During this long period, its life-current has not flowed in a uniformly even stream; there have been ebbs and flows. Started at Madras under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda, shortly after his unprecedented success at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, U.S.A., in 1893, it ceased to appear for a time in 1898, on the untimely death of its gifted editor, Mr. Rajam Iyer. But it soon re-emerged, gathering fresh momentum, as it were, at Almora, under the able editorship of Swami Swarupananda. When Captain and Mrs. Sevier, ardent English disciples of Swami Vivekananda, founded the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati, 50 miles east of Almora, in 1899, *Prabuddha Bharata* was transferred there. From that time on, Mayavati has remained its home, although it is printed and published from Calcutta since 1924. For the last fifty years it has been carrying from door to door the eternal, life-giving message of Vedanta, the universal message of the oneness of

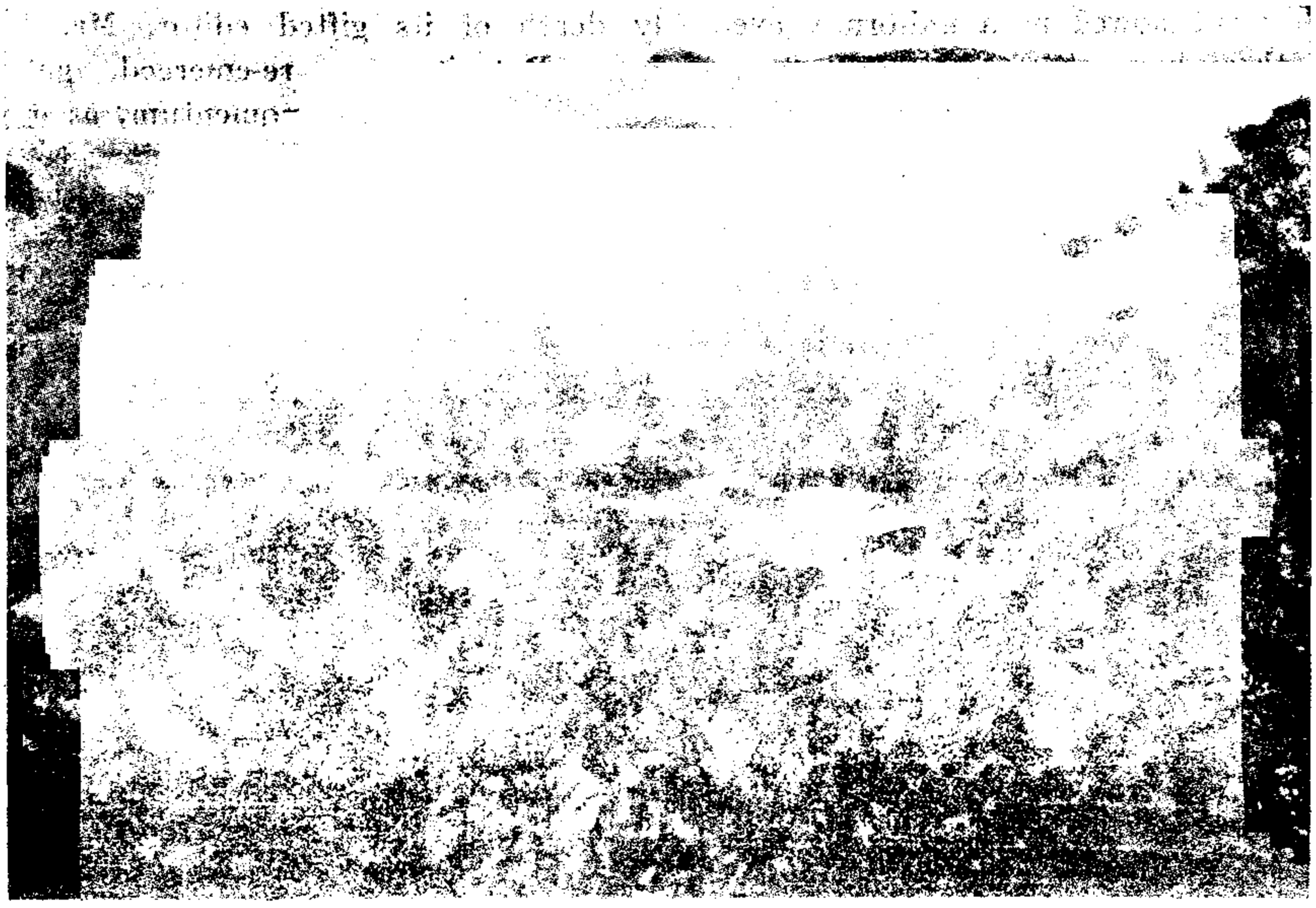
PRABUDDHA BHARATA EDITORIAL OFFICE



MRS. C. E. SEVIER



CAPTAIN J. H. SEVIER



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE MAYAVATI ASHRAMA

existence and the divinity of man, so eloquently preached by Swami Vivekananda. His benediction on the journal is to be seen in his poem 'To the Awakened India' (*Complete Works*, vol. IV, p. 322). The progress it has made in its Himalayan

SNOW-VIEW FROM MAYAVATI

home amply justifies the Swami's high hopes about its mission. The torch of illumination it has borne all these years burns in undimmed lustre and guides countless pilgrims on the path of Truth. *Prabuddha Bharata* has long been considered to be one of the best cultural magazines not only in India but in the outside world as well. Its lofty vision of mankind as one Brotherhood united in bonds of love is a potent force for universal uplift—'the regeneration of man the brute into man the god.' As years roll on, its beneficent influence will be felt more and more throughout the civilized world.

It has had notable contributors, including Swami Vivekananda himself, whose memorable visit to Mayavati in January 1901, was a great impetus to the band of selfless monks who were untiringly nursing the magazine in those early days. Sister Nivedita was a regular contributor, and wrote, besides other valuable articles the Occasional Notes since the premature death of Swami Swarupananda in 1906 till her own untimely death in 1911. One also recalls the name of Frank J. Alexander, a brilliant young American, whose facile pen and remarkable insight into Indian philosophy and culture enriched its pages with fascinating articles, sometimes anonymously or under assumed names such as 'Monk Tej Narayan'. It was he who, during his stay at Mayavati in 1911 and subsequent years, helped in writing *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, published in four volumes by the Advaita Ashrama. The premature passing away in America of this radiant soul, full of love and admiration for India, was a sad loss to India and the world. Another editor who made noteworthy contributions to the magazine was Swami Prajnananda, whose untimely death in 1918 robbed the Organization of a deep thinker, a powerful writer, and an accomplished worker. Among other talented editors whose writings have done much to raise the magazine in the estimation of the cultured public, I can mention the present Head of the Vedanta Societies at San Francisco and Berkeley, in U.S.A. Since his time the journal has appreciably gained in size as well as in quality, and has drawn an increasing number of important contributors both from India and abroad.

Prabuddha Bharata has always taken a keen interest in the humanitarian activities of the Ramakrishna Order. Swami Swarupananda organized the Kishengarh Famine Relief in 1899, and the Dharmsala Earthquake Relief in 1905. He also actively helped the Kankhal Sevashrama in its early days. Reports of different types of permanent and temporary work and appeals for them have

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

always found a place in the magazine. One such appeal in aid of Famine Relief inspired an eminent subscriber, Mr. S. N. Pandit, Bar-at-Law, Rajkot, to take a vow, in 1915, that he would not touch food till he had collected Rs. 10,000 for the work. He succeeded in it, and forthwith sent a cheque for the amount to the Manager, *Prabuddha Bharata*.

Even in 1910, when I went to Mayavati for the first time, I was struck by the extraordinarily simple conditions in which the publication department of the Ashrama was conducted. A double crown hand press was turning out not only *Prabuddha Bharata* but also *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. A new *Brahmacharin* from Southern India was composing the fifth volume of the *Complete Works*, while the magazine had a salaried compositor, who could speak Bengali, and for his urban manners was treated more as an Ashramite than as an outsider. The press also dealt with reprints from both the magazine and the *Complete Works* often in a different format. The printing and book-binding staff were all people from the neighbouring villages. No wonder that the get-up of the publications was not at all up to the mark. The monastic workers were few. In fact, in more than one winter, when there was usually more work, there were only three, who divided among themselves the entire work of the Ashrama.

Mayavati, being situated deep in the Himalayan forests, 37 (then 60) miles from the nearest railway station, is an ideal place for leading a contemplative life. There being only a bridle path, it is not very easily accessible. Being about 6,800 feet above the sea-level, it is delightful in summer, when the plains of Northern India are like a furnace. The spring and autumn are also charming. The monsoon is generally heavy, and the winter is cold. But the luxuriant vegetation and the rush of torrents are a feast to the eye and the ear in the rainy season, and in the winter the exquisite beauty of snow-falls, which turns the whole place into a fairyland, more than compensates any discomforts caused. The most elevating sight, however, is the magnificent snow-range extending for over 200 miles, from Badrinarayan in the west to Panchchuli in the east, with Nanda Devi (25,661 ft.) and Trisul in the middle. Nearly 70 miles off as the crow flies, it is visible on most days of the year, and with its play of colours, particularly at sunrise and sunset, it never fails to inspire and thrill everybody's heart. Its silvery dazzle in moonlight is also enchanting: it at once reminds one of Shiva's form, as set forth in the 'meditation' prescribed for that form of God.

The silence of Mayavati is a thing that needs to be felt to appreciate it. The monastery is the only settlement on the hill, the nearest village being one and a half mile off. Lohaghat, the sub-divisional town, is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles and Champawat, the Tehsil, is $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Mayavati, which is about a thousand feet higher than these. The trade route from Tanakpur (O. & T. Ry.) to Thibet passes through these. Since only ordinary necessaries of life can be had at Lohaghat, many things have to be brought from the plains and stocked for the year. Captain Sevier's idea of having a place free from frequent intrusion from the public has been fully realized at Mayavati. But the disadvantages of carrying on any kind of work, especially publication work, from such a place are obvious. The difficulties have to some extent been obviated by transferring first the book department and then the magazine to Calcutta. The additional expenditure consequent on the maintenance of two establishments has been offset by the fine get-up and larger circulation of the publications, which would have been impossible at Mayavati.

The Mayavati Ashrama has always sought to combine plain living with high thinking. Along with work, there is enough scope in it for study, meditation, and recreation. A good library and a large number of periodicals supply sufficient food for thought. In the early days, there were three buildings of stone with slated roofs, at different levels, within two minutes' walk of each other. The upper-

most one was (and still is) the main Ashrama, where all the monks lived in cubicles on the first floor, which also contained the editor's humble office. A hall on the ground floor, with an open fire-place, fed by logs, served as the sitting and dining room, office, and library. In another hall on the same floor were the printing and bookbinding paraphernalia. A single almirah of medicines etc. in the passage between the two halls was the dispensary, which was run by one of the Swamis. On account of this congestion, a small meditation cabin had been built at a short distance from the main Ashrama, secluded by trees, which was much resorted to by the Swamis in the early days, and latterly on occasions. The other two buildings were the winter and summer residence of Mrs. Sevier, and the guests' quarters.

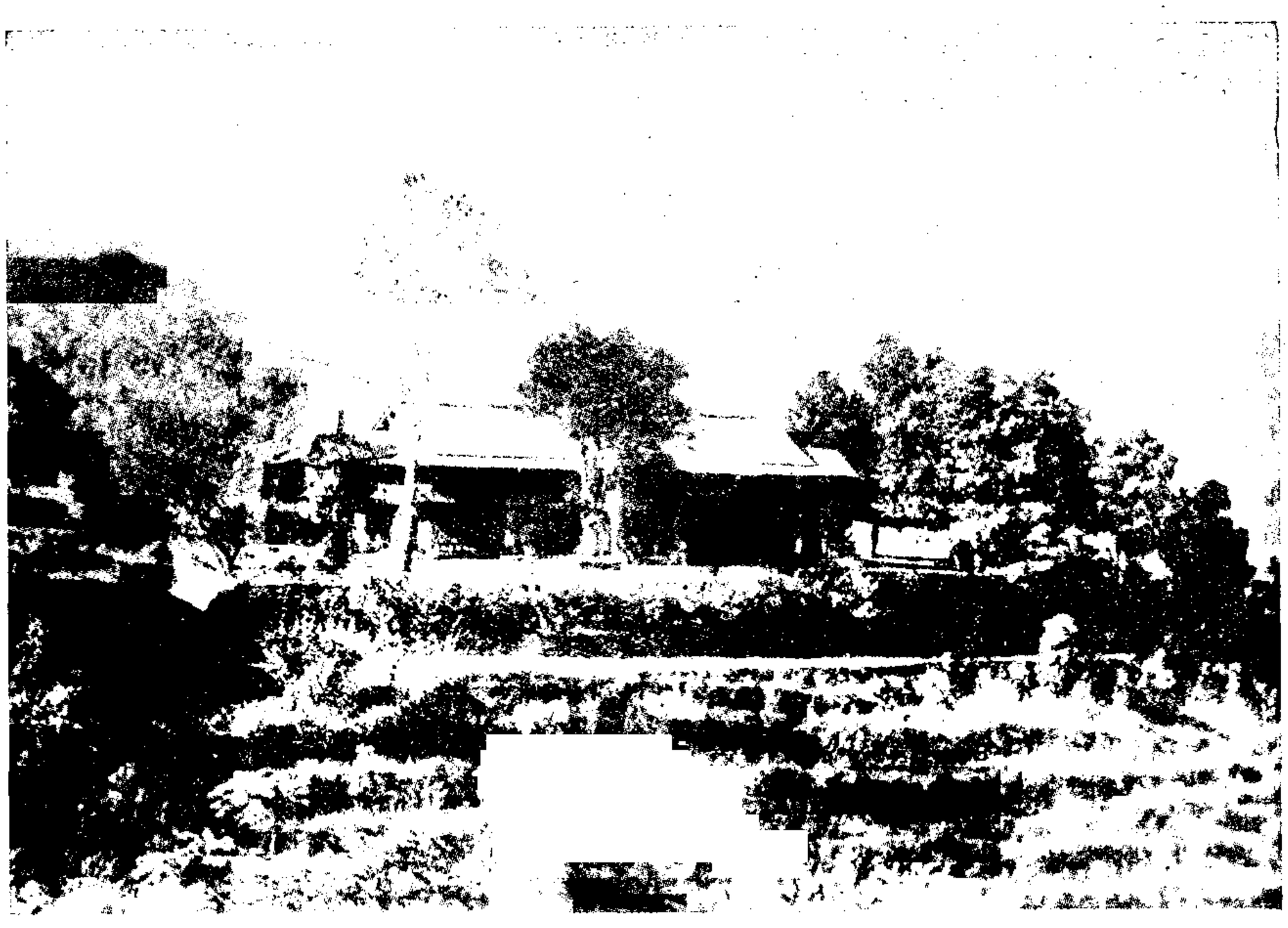
SISTER NIVEDITA

A small building for the dispensary with 6 beds, and a very much larger building for the publication department were constructed in 1914. Since then the editors' quarters have been in this latter building, which also contains the post office, opened in 1919—the telegraph office being at Lohaghat; formerly it was at Almora. Subsequently a fine building has been constructed for the hospital, which, with its much larger number of beds, under the charge of a qualified doctor, is a boon to the sick for many miles around. The Ashrama has some outhouses, a kitchen garden and some flower gardens and orchards. It has a number of cattle, but of poor breed. Up to 1918 it had a horse too. The Ashrama has got extensive lands. At one time it had a small tea plantation.

Captain and Mrs. Sevier, or 'Mother', as she was generally called on account of Swami Vivekananda's so addressing her, came to India along with the Swami in 1897, and after accompanying him to various places, settled at Mayavati in 1899. The Captain was Manager of *Prabuddha Bharata* till his death in 1900. His body was cremated by the monks with Hindu rites on the rivulet that flows below Mayavati. It was to comfort Mrs. Sevier that Swami Vivekananda, accompanied by Swami Shivananda, paid the visit to Mayavati, to which reference has already

been made. Mrs. Sevier was a jewel of a lady, of *advaitic* views, and was truly a mother, full of loving kindness for everybody, so much so that the hill people used to speak of her as an 'angel'. Everyone of the Ashrama inmates had a taste of her motherly love. We used to take the afternoon tea with her by turns, after which she would come up to the Ashrama for a game of croquet. Despite her age, she was of active habits, and helped in the editing of the Ashrama publications, occasionally also contributing articles to the magazine, signed 'C. E. S.', etc. At her invitation Dr. (afterwards Sir) J. C. Bose and Mrs. (now Lady) Bose, whom she addressed as 'Shakuntala', visited Mayavati on several occasions during summer, together with Sister Nivedita and Sister Christine. A solitary path has been named 'Bose's Walk', because he used to walk there, just as the path immediately below the Ashrama has been named 'Monk's Walk' after Swami Vivekananda. When such parties came, badminton was an alternative game. Latterly it and volley ball have replaced croquet. During one of his visits Dr. Bose gave us a talk on his favourite subject, the response of plants to stimuli, demonstrating it, as far as possible in such circumstances, with the mimosa, (*vide Prabuddha Bharata*, August 1911, p. 150). Earlier, Mr. A. M. Bose, the patriot, had also been a guest at Mayavati. After Mrs. Sevier had left for England in 1916, Mr. C. R. Das with family was similarly a guest of the Ashrama.

There were other types of guests also. One of these was a doctor who at one time was the Port Health Officer at Rangoon. He was an amiable person, of a devotional turn of mind, which made him give up his service and live with the monks of the Ramakrishna Order. Latterly, during his state of convalescence from an illness, he would sit in a chair in the upper verandah and make any servant who passed by do some job for him. We used to ridicule him for this weakness. One day, when he was bringing his clothes for the laundryman, from the head of the staircase he saw a servant and asked him to take the clothes down. I happened to be there by



SNOW-FALL AT THE ASHRAMA

accident and remarked, 'Just in time!' The doctor laughed and went towards his room. But he returned in a minute and said to me, 'Swami, which was just in time? My finding the boy, or your being there to see it!'

Mayavati has off and on had a number of distinguished visitors also, including high Government officials. Once two pilgrims, on their way back from Kailas, halted for a day at Mayavati. One of them was a writer and the other an artist of repute. The former regaled the Swamis with tales of his adventures in Thibet. He said that at one place he thrust his stick into a cleft in the ground, and it struck a vein of gold! But his ingenuity in ousting a gang of robbers was more interesting. When faced with them, he said, he took out from his pocket his spectacles case, and holding it erect before them, told them firmly that if they advanced a step further, they would die! At this they got frightened and went away. His companion, however, whispered to the listeners that it was all a yarn—which they already knew.

External worship is banned at Mayavati, only the ceremony connected with taking the monastic vow being permissible. The inmates are at liberty, however, to tell beads in private, and they chant, recite, or sing on holy occasions. On the *Shivaratri* day they fast and keep vigil at night, although the nights are long in winter. The lovely autumnal atmosphere during the *Dussera* festival, with hundreds of pink, yellow, and white cosmos flowers dancing in the breeze, automatically suggests to the mind that the Divine Mother, on Her journey to the plains from Her home at Mt. Kailas, has passed through the Ashrama. Occasional trips to near-by places where there are temples, mostly dedicated to Shiva, are also undertaken. Swami Saradananda who visited Mayavati in 1906, introduced the recitation at meal time of that well-known verse of the Gita (IV.24) in which everything connected with a sacrifice is described as Brahman or God Himself.

Regular scriptural classes are held at Mayavati for the inmates. When I was there, the main class used to be in the afternoon. Sometimes, when a specially qualified monk, like Swami Suddhananda, was present, the class would be very interesting. Often there would be another class at night, in which readings from some devotional book like the *Bhagavata* would take place. Once a weekly session of lectures was organized, in which the Swamis by turns had to speak on some prescribed subject. Although it was started more as a pastime, it developed the power of extempore speaking in the inmates, which some of them afterwards turned to good account. Swami Suddhananda presided over these meetings, and always gave us illuminating presidential addresses.

For a short time we conducted a small school for a number of boys who came from Pithoragarh, a sub-divisional town 30 miles above Mayavati. It arose out of our desire to engage one of the Swamis who wanted to run a school at Lohaghat. Even the most indolent among us took part in teaching the boys. After the school went on for some time, there was a severe snow-fall, and the boys, unable to stand the cold, took French leave, bringing our enthusiastic endeavours to an abrupt stop. But one of the boys has immortalized himself to us by a wonderful discovery of his: On seeing a dismounted form of *Prabuddha Bharata* laid on the ground for washing, he scanned the matter for some minutes with rapt attention and then exclaimed, 'It is all a, b, c, d . . . a, b, c, d!'

The daily menu at Mayavati did not admit of much variation. This deficiency was made up by occasional *bhandaras* or feasts. Before the War, the spending of such a small sum as two rupees extra would provide for a few dainties. Milk and its products being cheap, it was easy to prepare delicious dishes out of them, and some of the monks were expert cooks. In this connection an amusing incident comes to my mind. A Parsi gentleman, living at Mayavati to test his fitness for future monastic life, was entrusted with the task of making an Index to Swami Vivekananda's *Complete Works*. When, in the course of his work, he came to the episode of King Yudhishthira refusing to go to heaven without

the dog which was accompanying him in his last journey, he was so struck with it that he said, 'I shall give two rupees for a *bhandara* in honour of Yudhishthira and his dog.' He was told in fun that if he wanted to include the dog, he must double the amount!

On another occasion, we had as guest a young American writer who came to Mayavati with a view to leading a severely simple life. When, in answer to his query about the charge, he was told that he might pay twelve rupees a month, he exclaimed, 'It is ridiculous!' Dressed in a half-size dhoti, he would sun himself on a bench with a bare body, and outbid us in his eagerness to get as far away from the civilized mode of life as possible. One of his self-imposed restraints was on writing. One day, when he failed to control himself in this, he was penitent and offered two rupees for a *bhandara* as an expiation! Some years later, this gentleman kindly looked me up after a service at San Francisco. Evidently the memories of Mayavati had not been lost upon him.

From the early days the Mayavati Ashrama has devised a very convenient type of dining table, which is a compromise between the oriental and occidental modes of eating. In India one eats from a plate placed directly on the floor. This has a twofold drawback. In the first place, dust is very easily blown into the plate, and secondly, one bas to maintain a stooping posture while eating. At Mayavati, a low rectangular table, about 14 inches in height and covered with oil-cloth, is used, on which the plates are put, and the persons eating also sit on low seats, about 3 inches high. Obviously, this simple arrangement is advantageous from various standpoints. When there are many persons, two such tables are placed end to end.

For the Ashrama servants there used to be two *bhandaras* every year. One of these was on Swami Vivekananda's birthday, which fell in the thick of winter. Since it is the custom among hill people to eat dressed only in a dhoti, half their gusto was gone in fighting the cold, for the feast took place in the evening, and the little piles of live charcoal placed near them did not suffice. The feast was followed by music, in which the sweeper, who had the bearing of a gentleman, was given a leading rôle because of his skill in it, and the cobbler entertained the audience with a bear dance! The 'funny little barber', as Mrs. Sevier used to refer to him, would also follow with his antics.

Mayavati is exposed to depredations from wild animals. In the jungles around there are barking deer and antelopes, leopards, and sometimes tigers as well as bears. The deer, though innocent-looking, do much damage to the crops and vegetables. The antelopes, when they cannot reach the branches of fruit trees, shake them with their bodies, so that fruits drop down. Parrots and hornets also cause havoc to the fruits. Leopards, as also tigers, sometimes attack the Ashrama cows as they graze, and succeed in killing them. Attempts to lure them to the kill did not prove successful. Tigers' growls are heard now and then, and sometimes man-eaters also prowl about. Once a man-eater killed an exceptionally strong man belonging to the next village. He was cutting grass at about sunset in the jungles near the Ashrama, when he was attacked from behind. On information being received that the man had not returned home in the evening, a search party was sent out with lanterns, but no trace could be found in the night. Next morning the party came across the remnants of his body, with the tiger at some distance. Once, in order to frighten the deer, a lantern was placed under an apple tree in the fenced garden. To our surprise, we found in the morning large footprints of a tiger that went round and round the light to satisfy his curiosity. It was an eye-opener to one of our Swamis, who, on the common notion that tigers keep clear of lights, used to wave a lantern as a warning to them, while going to an outhouse near the jungle. Among other nuisances at Mayavati, leeches in the rainy season and fleas almost throughout the year are the worst. Leeches make it an ordeal to take even a short walk. One has to play at carrom with them as they, on hearing footsteps, rush to climb the shoes. Some

loss of blood is the inevitable penalty for carelessness with regard to them. Fleas, too, often baffle all our ingenuity to avoid them. The absence of mosquitoes is a great relief.

Forest fires are also a great menace to the Ashrama. Villagers in the hills, in order to promote the growth of grass for fodder, start fires at the foot of a hill, which spread upwards and destroy innumerable plants. They look like shining garlands at night, but become a positive danger when they come too close to habitations. The Mayavati Ashrama has often had to fight against such fires. One indirect benefit of these, however, is that leeches are practically eliminated for the year.

In an out-of-the-way place like Mayavati, one has to be very alert so as to meet any emergency that may arise. Fortunately we had in our midst a Swami who was equal to any occasion. People who came to Mayavati for medicines or for some other purpose, or who passed through it on their way to Lohaghat or Champawat, would sometimes take some fruits or vegetables from our garden without permission. One day, in the rainy season, the postman from Lohaghat, who used to carry milk for us daily from a roadside village, was on his way back with the empty can, when the above-mentioned Swami, for no known reason whatsoever, had a notion that he might be taking away some egg-plant seedlings. Down he hurried from the Ashrama, overtook the man at some distance beyond the gate, and quite casually asked him to show what was in the can. Sure enough, the seedlings were there ! The man, thoroughly discomfited, was let go with a warning. By the way, it was at his suggestion, prompted by his desire to rid himself of the daily trouble of having to climb a mile of steep ascent each way, that we applied, successfully, for a post office at Mayavati itself.

Mayavati life has its lighter side also. As a diversion, the monks occasionally indulge in practical jokes at somebody's expense. One or two, for instance, were sent out in torrential rain under the plea of an invitation from the sub-divisional officer or some such person. Of course the joke would not be carried too far. One such prank was played on a very clever young monk, who was directed by a faked telegram, purporting to come from the Headquarters, to proceed to Rangoon and take charge of a preaching centre. He soon warmed up to the idea, and got ready by collecting, among other things, a complete set of the back volumes of *Prabuddha Bharata* as a help to his future work. Two American lady devotees were staying at Mayavati at the time, who, being taken into confidence, arranged a farewell feast in his honour. A photograph was taken, and on the appointed day a large party started to see him off, but without his baggage. When a respectable guest, who had been kept in the dark about the affair, pointed out that the baggage was left behind, he had to be silenced. After the party had gone some distance, and the Swami was taking his final leave of them, he was handed a slip containing a couplet of Rabindranath Tagore, in which a grain-stealing bird was told that its day of reckoning was come. At first he thought that this was a joke, and was eager to proceed, since it was getting late. When, however, the painful truth came home to him, he was stupefied !

Another Swami, a guest, who on account of his knowledge of certain Yogic postures and processes considered himself a Yogi, was fooled by a card trick into believing that the performer, the resourceful monk previously mentioned, was an adept in thought-reading So he approached the latter at dead of night and expressed his eagerness to know how it was done. The other, in order to continue the joke, said in all seriousness that before it could be imparted, certain very rigorous conditions must be satisfied ! This damped the ardour of the inquirer.

Another inmate, who had a liking for milk and had at one time run a *Goshala* (cow-stall) at Tanakpur, once gave occasion for mirth. Some members had the idea of inserting his name in the Birthday Honours list. Unfortunately, the only blank space left in those columns of the paper was under the title 'Shams-ul-Ulema', which is reserved for the highest Islamic scholarship. Since there was

no other way, that very space was quickly utilized to imprint the required name. When the paper was opened in the presence of all, congratulations were showered upon the lucky recipient of honour, together with the explanation that it must be due to his services in connection with the *Goshala*. The inappropriateness of the honour was a serious handicap; so he doubted its genuineness. But he was told that he could verify it in another daily on the next day. That day he was kept engaged for a little while, and when, on the mails being brought, he removed the wrapper of the newspaper, he found his name there also. Then his only question was why that particular title should have been given to him. But he did not seem to disbelieve it altogether. Had it been 'Rai Saheb' or some such title, we could have scored a complete success.

Once, on the last day of the year, one of the Swamis rang the dinner bell which hung below the staircase at midnight, took another Swami into his confidence, and quietly slipped into his bed upstairs. Startled by the sound, the other inmates got up one by one, and wondered who could have rung the bell. They began a thorough search of the Ashrama premises. The other two kept on trying to explain it away, and when, at the end of an hour, no trace of any intruder could be found, they solemnly attributed it to the spirit of Captain Sevier, who thus sent his New Year's greetings to the inmates!

Mayavati has its supply of water from a near-by spring. Once, in order to bring the water to the Ashrama itself, two monks enthusiastically set out to dig a channel for it. But it was summer, and they had not calculated the rate of flow. The result was that the dry earth soaked all the water that entered the channel before it covered one-third of the distance. This made the two pioneers cry halt in their lahour of love. Later on, however, arrangements were made to have the water conveyed in a pipe to the Ashrama.

Mention should be made of Mrs. Sevier's Bhutiya dog, Glama. He was not just an ordinary dog, but a highly psychological being. Shortly after my reaching Mayavati, I saw one of the *Brahmacharins* pose to snatch away the dog's food, repeating, as he did so, 'I shall have it!' When I asked him why he was teasing the animal like that, he said that otherwise the dog would not eat, but just hold the bread. I soon saw that it was a fact. There must be a rival claimant to his possession before he would enjoy it himself! On account of age, he was blind of one eye, was subject to fits of asthma, and had a poor memory. Sometimes, while going to Mother's Bungalow with a piece of bread in his mouth, he would bury it in the ground with the intention of eating it afterwards. But he would invariably miss the exact spot, and a pair of watchful crows would help themselves to the food in his stead! He had a tendency to sleep at night in the President's deep chair. So we had to upturn a small chair on it to prevent his doing so. Then one day poor Glama died. Mrs. Sevier was so deeply moved by it that she would not see anybody that day, and she arranged for a decent burial of her faithful dog.

Many of those who were closely connected with the Mayavati Ashrama for a considerable length of time are now occupying important positions in the organization. Chief of them is the present President of the Order. Associated with the Ashrama from its very inception, he was its second President, as also editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, this double function continuing up to the time of his successor, Swami Prajnananda (1918). A good many ex-workers, including Swami Prakashananda, were or are heads of centres in America or of important centres in India; some are holding responsible posts at the Headquarters; while a few more have distinguished themselves in other capacities. Swami Vivekananda's dictum, 'Work is Worship', is spontaneously instilled into one's mind at Mayavati. Its very tradition does this. When one hears that so great a person as Swami Turiyananda, one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, once acted as a fly-boy for the Prabuddha Bharata Press, one cannot help realizing that work is indeed on the same footing as worship or meditation. His example was cheerfully

followed in our time also, one of the brothers sometimes doing even the hard job of the ink-boy. The service which the publications of this Ashrama have rendered to truth-seekers all over the world is inestimable. The sense of peace and joy experienced by a stay at Mayavati is shared by all, inmates and guests alike. Mayavati is a happy link between the East and the West, between the past and the present, between contemplation and action. Those who cannot do without the amenities of modern city life, may find the place too solitary or dull; but those in whom the least hunger for spiritual realization has arisen, and who, rising above the intellectual plane, want to commune with the Spirit immanent in Nature and in their own selves, will hail this Ashrama as a fountain-head of perennial bliss —the precious gift of Swami Vivekananda to care-worn humanity.

NEW FORMS OF IDOLATRY

By Aldous Huxley

Educated persons do not run much risk of succumbing to the more primitive forms of idolatry. They find it fairly easy to resist the temptation to believe that lumps of matter are charged with magical power, or that certain symbols and images are the very forms of spiritual entities and, as such, must be worshipped or propitiated. True, a great deal of fetishistic superstition survives even in these days of universal compulsory education. But though it survives, it is not regarded as respectable; it is not accorded any kind of official recognition or philosophical sanction. Like alcohol and prostitution, the primitive forms of idolatry are tolerated, but not approved. Their place in the accredited hierarchy of spiritual values is extremely low.

Very different is the case with the developed and civilized forms of idolatry. These have achieved, not merely survival, but the highest respectability. The pastors and masters of the contemporary world are never tired of recommending these forms of idolatry. And not content with recommending the higher idolatry, many philosophers and many even of the modern world's religious leaders go out of their way to identify it with true belief and the worship of God.

This is a deplorable state of affairs, but not at all a surprising one. For, while it diminishes the risk of succumbing to primitive idolatry, education (at any rate of the kind now generally current) has a tendency to make the higher idolatry seem more attractive. The higher idolatry may be defined as the belief in, and worship of, human creation as though it were God. On its moral no less than on its intellectual side, current education is strictly humanistic and anti-transcendental. It discourages fetishism and primitive idolatry; but equally it discourages any preoccupation with spiritual Reality. Consequently, it is only to be expected that those who have been most thoroughly subjected to the educational process should be the most ardent exponents of the theory and practice of the higher idolatry. In academic circles, mystics are almost as rare as fetishists; but the enthusiastic devotees of some form of political or social idealism are as common as blackberries. Significantly enough, I have observed, when making use of university libraries, that books on spiritual religion were taken out much less frequently than in public libraries, frequented by persons who had not had the advantages, and the disadvantages, of advanced education.

The many kinds of higher idolatry may be classified under three main headings, technological, political and moral. Technological idolatry is the most ingenuous and primitive of the three; for its devotees, like those of the lower idolatry, believe that their redemption and liberation depend upon material objects, namely machines and gadgets. Technological idolatry is the religion whose doctrines are explicitly or implicitly promulgated in the

advertising pages of newspapers and magazines —the source from which millions of men, women and children in the capitalist countries now derive their philosophy of life. In Soviet Russia, during the years of its industrialization, technological idolatry was promoted almost to the rank of a state religion. More recently, the coming of war has greatly stimulated the cult in all the belligerent countries. Military success depends very largely on machines. Because this is so, machines tend to be credited with the power of bringing success in every sphere of activity, of solving all problems, social and personal as well as military and technical. So whole-hearted is the faith in technological idols that it is very hard to discover, in the popular thought of our time, any trace of the ancient and profoundly realistic doctrine of Hubris and Nemesis. To the Greeks, Hubris meant any kind of over-weening and excess. When men or societies went too far, either in dominating other men and societies, or in exploiting the resources of nature to their own advantage, this overweening exhibition of pride had to be paid for. In a word, Hubris invited Nemesis. The idea is expressed very clearly and beautifully in 'The Persians' of Aeschylus. Xerxes is represented as displaying inordinate Hubris, not only by trying to conquer his neighbours by force of arms, but also by trying to bend nature to his will more than it is right for mortal man to do. For Aeschylus, Xerxes's bridging of the Hellespont is an act as full of Hubris as the invasion of Greece, and no less deserving of punishment at the hand of Nemesis. Today, our simple-hearted technological idolaters seem to imagine that they can have all the advantages of an immensely elaborate industrial civilization without having to pay for them.

Only a little less ingenuous are the political idolaters. For the worship of tangible material objects, these have substituted the worship of social and economic organizations. Impose the right kind of organizations on human beings, and all their problems, from sin and unhappiness to sewage disposal and war, will be automatically solved. Once more we look almost in vain for a trace of that ancient wisdom which finds so memorable an expression in the 'Tao Te Ching'—the wisdom which recognizes (how realistically!) that organizations and laws are likely to do very little good where the organizers and law-makers on the one hand, the organized and law-obeyers on the other, are personally out of touch with Tao, the Way, the ultimate Reality behind phenomena.

It is the great merit of the moral idolaters that they clearly recognize the need of individual reformation as a necessary prerequisite and condition of social reformation. They know that machines and organizations are instruments which may be used well or badly according as the users are personally better or worse. For the technological and political idolaters, the question of personal morality is secondary. In some not too distant future—so runs their creed—machines and organizations will be so perfect that human beings will also be perfact, because it will be impossible for them to be otherwise. Meanwhile, it is not necessary to bother too much about personal morality. All that is required is enough industry, patience and ingenuity to go on producing more and better gadgets, and enough of these same virtues, along with a sufficiency of courage and ruthlessness, to work out suitable social and economic organizations and to impose them, by means of war or revolution, on the rest of the human race —entirely, of course, for the human race's benefit. The moral idolaters know very well that things are not quite so simple as this, and that, among the conditions of social reform, personal reform must take one of the first places. Their mistake is to worship their own ethical ideals instead of worshipping God, to treat the acquisition of virtue as an end in itself and not as a means—the necessary and indispensable condition of the unitive knowledge of God.

'Fanaticism is idolatry.' (I am quoting from a most remarkable letter written by Thomas Arnold in 1836 to his old pupil and biographer-to-be, A. P. Stanley). 'Fanaticism is idolatry; and it has the moral evil of idolatry in it; that is, a fanatic worships

something which is the creation of his own desires, and thus even his self-devotion in support of it is only an apparent self-devotion; for in fact it is making the parts of his nature or his mind, which he least values, offer sacrifice to that which he most values. The moral fault, as it appears to me, is the idolatry—the setting up of some idea which is most kindred to our own minds, and the putting it in the place of Christ, who alone cannot be made an idol and inspire idolatry, because He combines all ideas of perfection, and exhibits them in their just harmony and combination. Now, in my own mind, by its natural tendency—that is, taking my mind at its best—truth and justice would be the idols I should follow; and they would be idols, for they would not supply *all* the food which the mind wants, and whilst worshipping them, reverence and humility and tenderness might very likely be forgotten. But Christ Himself includes at once truth and justice and all these other qualities too .... Narrow-mindedness tends to wickedness, because it does not extend its watchfulness to every part of our moral nature and the neglect fosters the growth of wickedness in the parts so neglected.'

As a piece of psychological analysis this is admirable, so far as it goes. But it does not go quite far enough; for it omits all consideration of what has been called grace. Grace is that which is given when, and to the extent to which, a human being gives up his own self-will and abandons himself, moment by moment, to the will of God. By grace our emptiness is fulfilled, our weakness reinforced, our depravity transformed. There are, of course, pseudo-graces as well as real graces—the accessions of strength, for example, that follow self-devotion to some form of political or moral idolatry. To distinguish between the true grace and the false is often difficult; but as time and circumstances reveal the full extent of their consequences on the personality as a whole, discrimination becomes possible even to observers having no special gifts of insight. Where the grace is genuinely 'supernatural', an amelioration in one aspect of personality is not paid for by atrophy or deterioration in another. Virtue is achieved without having to be paid for by the hardness, fanaticism, uncharitableness and spiritual pride, which are the ordinary consequences of a course of stoical self-improvement by means of personal effort, either unassisted or reinforced by the pseudo-graces which are given when the individual devotes himself to a cause, which is not God, but only a projection of one of his own favourite ideas. The idolatrous worship of ethical values in and for themselves defeats its own object—and defeats it not only because, as Arnold rightly insists, there is a lack of all-round watchfulness, but also and above all because even the highest form of moral idolatry is God-eclipsing, a positive guarantee that the idolater shall fail to achieve unitive knowledge of Reality.

INDIANISM OR THE HINDU IDEAL AND HUMANITY

By Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, M.A. (Calcutta), D.Lit. (London), F.R.A.S.B.

A particular ideal or mentality, if it has any significance for mankind as a whole, cannot be confined to a particular country; nor should it be regarded as the monopoly of a single people. By bringing it before the notice of other peoples and by educating them in the appreciation of it, this ideal or mentality can be made a heritage for the whole of humanity. But so long as this has not happened, there may not be (and should not be) any objection to associating it with the name of the particular people or nation or group among whom it first took shape, and among whom it was generally followed. We feel that certain ways of thinking and certain ideas relating to things of the spirit which

are current among the Hindu people are worthy of acceptance by mankind in general. These ways and ideas, however, have not yet gained a very wide-spread acceptance among mankind as a whole. So that, for the present, we may label these as 'Hindu' ideas and ideals, 'Hindu' attitudes and ways of thinking and acting : we may in one word call them *Hinduism* in English (and other European speech, *Hindouisme*, *Hinduismus*, *Induismo*), and *Hindutwa* in our present-day Indian languages; and the Hindu way of thinking and acting as being specially a product of the Indian soil has also been labelled as *Indianism* in English and other European languages—a term which we can translate into Arabic, for the comprehension of peoples of Islamic faith who find their mental and spiritual pabulum in the language of the Qur'an, as *Tahannud*, i.e. the ways of the people of *Hind* or India.

Let us now see what this *Hinduism*, or *Hindutwa*, this *Indianism* or *Tahannud*, means, or stands for, and to what extent it is something beneficial for and therefore acceptable by humanity.

Many people, among them some great scholars, philosophers, and historians, have tried to define or to fix the meaning of *Hindutwa*, Indianism or Hinduism. Although painfully conscious of my lack of proper study, thinking, and realization in this connexion, I have nevertheless ventured to trespass into this difficult domain—I have made bold to give my opinion on the nature or character of Hinduism. My only justification for this boldness is the profound attraction and affection I feel for the ideals of Hinduism as I have been able to understand them. It appears to me that the character or definition or basis of Hinduism embraces and embodies the following concepts :

(*i*) Behind this physical universe (which we realize through our senses), and immanent in it, there is an Ultimate Reality, an Eternal Verity : this faith or realization is the First Great Concept. The utmost that we can ascribe to this Reality in its own nature—in its absolute state—are that It Exists, It Is Knowledge, and It Is Bliss (in the language of the thinkers of India, *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda* are the only allowable qualifications, so to say, which we can postulate about this Reality-in-Itself). Man can realize or come in living touch with this Reality in this life through Knowledge or Wisdom, or through a Mystic Perception, or through both.

(*ii*) There are suffering and sorrow in the universe, particularly in human existence; and it is the desire of man (and it should also be his duty) to eliminate this suffering and sorrow, to make them lose their poignancy and power. This is the Second Great Concept of Hinduism.

(*iii*) The Universe including Man is linked up with this Ultimate and Eternal Verity; Man is not something detached from the Universe, but is just a part of it—a part of the Universe with which the Ultimate Reality is intimately bound up and in which It is ever manifesting Its activity. 'God in the Universe' is the Third Great Concept of Hinduism.

(*iv*) The final or only aim of Man's life is the realization of this Ultimate Verity, this Eternal Being. The way to attain this aim is manifold—it is not a single and exclusive path, for the Ultimate Reality has an infinite variety of aspects and shows Itself in numberless ways. A special type of realization or perception is not the only way of approach to this Reality, to the exclusion of other types or varieties. This way of thinking has given us the Fourth Great Concept of Hinduism, viz. different religions, or kinds of religious experience, are but different paths leading man ultimately to the same goal : as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, one of the leading exponents of the Hindu ideals in the present day, who bore testimony to it in his life and his teachings, is said to have expressed it in a sentence—'as many views or persuasions or religions, so many ways' (*jato mat, tato path*). Man can attain to life's *summum bonum* of realization by cultivating the highest that he can find in his own environment : and Hinduism refuses to accept this line of thinking—rather it considers to be entirely wrong and inadmissible—that all men must formally

come under the same creed, and must subscribe to a specially fixed or determined notion about the nature and action of the Ultimate Reality if they are to attain to its realization, or to Salvation.

There are a few other matters characterizing Hinduism which we should know about. In all religions there is always a high ideal for a moral life or moral character. In the language of Hinduism, the laws or rules of moral conduct on which the spiritual life must always be based (laws, which, like holding to truth, refraining from taking what belong to others, from injury and from exploitation, and maintaining purity of the mind and body, are not confined to a single clime, age, and person) are called *Nitya Dharmas* (literally, *Dharmas* or Principles which hold us for ever). After these moral laws of universal application come the *Laukika Dharmas*—the local and ephemeral usages, which are secondary rules of life and conduct varying according to land, period of time and people or community.

Apart from this, there are two other points specially to note in connexion with Hinduism. Of these, the first is that Hinduism is what may be described as a *Natural Religion*—a religion or way of thinking and living which has evolved naturally in its special *milieu* of time, space and race. It is not a religion which has emanated from the brain and the heart of a single individual—a prophet, sage or saint, human thought-leader or divine incarnation. It is a religion which has evolved as naturally as life, enriched by the discipline and experience and thought of the great souls among an entire people who sought to regulate its evolution, consciously or unconsciously—but always keeping themselves in the background. Being a natural thing like life itself, it embraces everything.

The second point to note about it is, that it has no conflict with the material sciences. We find a most easy harmony between the common attitude or point of view of Hinduism on the one hand, and all the great discoveries which science has made and is making about this material world by observing and experimenting through the physical senses of man. The Divine *Shakti* or Power, which is a form of the Ultimate Reality, is sporting in the Macrocosm and also in the Microcosm—*khelati ande*, *khelati pinde*. It is found in the rhythm of the Universe with its untold numbers of stars and star worlds; and at the same time it is operating in the material body of man with all the senses and sensibilities which have their seat and origin in the body; and is listening even to 'the tinkling anklet that is on the feet of worms' (as the medieval mystic of India, Kabir, has put it—*kidike paga newara bâjai*). A deep and sympathetic perception of the all-embracing character of this Divine Power has truly made the Hindu mentality be 'in tune with Infinity'—with the Infinity of ever-changing and unending energy and form and matter such as Science has brought within our ken. It will be quite *à propos* to quote at length what one of the master minds of present-day Europe, Romain Rolland, has said (in his Preface to the French translation of Ananda Coomaraswamy's famous book *The Dance of Siva*):

> But amid all the beliefs of Europe, and of Asia, that of the Indian Brahmins seems to be infinitely the most alluring. I do not at all despise the others. The ecstatic intellectualism of the primitive Buddhist, or the radiant serenity of the void inhaled in Lao-Tse, are infinitely dear to me; but I find in them only rare, exceptional moments, only the dizzying peaks of the spiritual life. And the reason why I love the Brahmin more than the other schools of Asiatic thought is because it seems to me to contain them all. Greater than all European philosophies, it is even capable of adjusting itself to the vast hypotheses of modern science. Our Christian religions have tried in vain, when no other choice was open to them, to adapt themselves to the progress of science: but one would think, indeed, that they have difficulty in forgetting that heaven of Hipparchus and Ptolemy which they saw above them in their infancy.
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> But after having allowed myself to be swept away by the powerful rhythm of Brahmin thought, along the curve of life, with its movement of alternating ascent and return, I come back to my own century, and while finding therein the immense projections of a new cosmogony, offspring of the genius of Einstein, or deriving freely from his discoveries, I yet do not feel that I enter a strange land. For, in the journey of the spirit across stellar space, even to the deeps of the planetary void, amid Islands of the cosmos, the nebular spirals, the countless Milky Ways, and through the millions of creations which sweep along down Space-and-Time, that endless, limitless arc, the rays of whose suns, revolving eternally, could light up phantom, insubstantial worlds, I yet can hear

resounding still the cosmic symphony of all these planets which forever succeed each other, are extinguished and once more illumined, with their living souls, their humanities, their gods—according to the law of the eternal To Become, the Brahmin Samsara—I hear Siva dancing, dancing in the heart of the world, in my own heart.

and he continues in the spirit of a true Hindu :

I do not suggest that Europeans should embrace an Asiatic faith I would merely invite them to taste the delight of this rhythmic philosophy, this deep, slow breath of thought. From it they would learn those virtues which above all others the soul of Europe (and of America!) needs today: tranquillity, patience, manly hope, unruffled joy, "like a lamp in a windless place, that does not flicker." (*Bhagavad-Gîtâ*).

The part played by Hindu thought (and by *Hindu* we include Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jaina, which are different facets of the same comprehensive spiritual and intellectual outlook) for the uplift of man throughout the greater part of Asia and part of Eastern Europe in ancient and medieval times is a matter of history, and it is not necessary to go into that in this connexion. The deepest thoughts of Hinduism relate to the hopes and fears and yearnings in the inner life of man : their social value and utility are not direct and outwardly manifest. The Hindu ideal or Hinduism has no disagreement with any of the material sciences, and it has no quarrel with men of other ideals or faiths : and in these two points we have a most precious social or practical value of the Hindu ideal : herein we have a very great and a timely message from Hinduism to humanity at large. The mentality—which we find commonly enough in these three great religions—the Mosaic or Jewish, the Christian, and the Mohammedan religion or Islam—is absent from all natural religions whether of the past or the present, e.g. the ancient Egyptian and Assyrio-Babylonian religions, the ancient Greek religion, the religion of China and of India, and the primitive religions of Africa and America, and Oceania. No one would call that mentality cultured or civilized which asserts that God or the Ultimate Reality has a special partiality for this religion or that, or that God as conceived or realized by a particular faith is the only true God, and the conceptions or realizations of other faiths are false. The Hindu ideal is quite different—it makes the Godhead say (in the *Bhagavad-Gitâ*) : 'I am the same for all beings—there is none who is an object of my hatred, or who is dear to me' (*samô 'ham sarva-bhûtêsu—na mê dvêsyô'sti, na priyah*). We cannot of course say that such an intolerant attitude never manifested itself among the Hindu people ; but the wider Hindu people or society never subscribed to that spirit of uncharitableness, and those who started with these narrow ideas have remained confined to their little sectarian groups. On the other hand, it would be a travesty of truth if we were to say or suggest that the spirit of highest liberalism and sympathetic tolerance and charity were ever absent from Jewish, Christian and Muslim societies. A great many Christian and Muslim saints and sages have testified in their life and their sayings to their faith in God manifesting Himself in a variety of experiences. Christ himself had hinted that when he said—'In my Father's palace there are many mansions'; and Muhammad said in the Qur'an that God if He so liked would have made mankind follow one religion only, but He sent to each nation a prophet. Great thinkers have come out from among the Jews, and the services of Jewish philosophers and men of science for the emancipation of the human mind, particularly in the persent age, are too well known. Moreover, in Islam, its mystic side (known as *Tasawwuf* or Sufi-ism) has attained to a unique and all-embracing liberalization of the spirit in its quest of the Truth, and has come to a sympathetic understanding of all kinds of spiritual endeavour which would surprise and please all. The spiritual realization of the Sufi can walk together hand in hand with the Hindu spirit, and the Hindu with his *Visva-maitrî* or 'Friendship with the Universe' and the Sufi with his *Sulh-i-Kull* or 'Amity with All' can combine in the work of the mental and spiritual uplift of humanity at the present age.

But it must be said that while Hindu perception and tolerance have shown themselves to be spontaneous and natural things,

as the Hindu religion is a natural religion (and not one based exclusively on a scripture and an authority), and have been in a very large measure accepted by the Hindu people, the Sufi mentality and the liberality of the Sufi temperament had to make a place for itself after a protracted struggle with narrowness and intolerance, with a mentality which insisted that Truth belonged to a special coterie only and that those who did not follow Truth as the coterie saw it were enemies of that Truth, they were God's enemies whose destruction was desired by God Himself; and although the Sufi way now occupies a respected place in Islamic Society, the old narrowness and exclusiveness are still very strong, and even now these seek to wage bitter war against the sweet reasonableness and the charity which is preached by *Tasawwuf*. Those who have studied the history and present condition of Sufi-ism) will admit this.

But we shall not put any stress on the conflict, we shall ignore it. Wherever we shall find anything which is in harmony with the ideals or concepts for which Hinduism or Indianism stands, we shall receive it with open arms. Men of all races and all lands are pilgrims for the same shrine, although they may not know it, calling it as they do by different names, imputing to it different languages and conflicting rituals. In this universal pilgrimage, the Hindu mentality with its insistence upon the truth, the inevitability and the value of all kinds of religious experience, will be of very great assistance to all and sundry. A mentality, which, on the contrary, will not understand the variety of such experiences and will seek to deny and to destroy them, will be a positive set-back, and will bring in cleavage and conflict, humiliation and bitterness. As an American thinker has put it :

> The full power of religious tradition and of religious symbols (e.g. the Madonna, the Buddha image, the Chinese-Japanese Goddess of Mercy) can never be felt save by one who has breathed them in with his earliest breath—they speak with the assurance and authority of the Sacred Past, of the great days from which they sprang. This old world of ours will probably have to get on with the stock of religious traditions it already possesses. Those which it loses will be forever irreplaceable. . . . . I feel sure of two things: that much of the spiritual heritage of mankind is at stake; and that those who out of religious zeal in any camp seek to destroy any of the great religions of man are sinning against the Holy Ghost. The world's need to-day is not the destruction of the old faiths and the old symbols, but the deepening of them. And for the answer to this need we turn, not primarily to the priests or to the scholars, but to the men of insight who can teach us to unite the love of Beauty with the love of God. (Professor James Bissett Pratt in the *Golden Book of Tagore*, Calcutta, 1931, p. 202).

The days of imperialism and suppression in politics seem to be coming nearer, and totalitarianism imposed by the various states of the world is already making people restive. Imperialism and totalitarianism in the domain of religion and thought appear to have had their day. Thoughtful men in all lands are seeking to find out ways and means for bringing in a synthesis of civilization through Harmony, eschewing Discord which thrives only in a desire to impose one world of ideas and one set of interests upon another. The Hindu Idea, that the One, Undivided and Unfragmented Eternal Verity is of many forms and of many faces in its manifestation, and is consequently capable of being realized in diverse ways, is exceedingly necessary in the development of a World Culture in which the whole of mankind may participate, each unit bringing its own contribution for the enrichment of the totality. For this, the 'Hindu' ideal and 'Hindu' mentality—in a word, 'Indianism'—has a special value in the service of Man.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SARAH BERNHARDT

By Christopher Isherwood

In Paris, during the late summer of 1900, Swami Vivekananda had a conversation with the most famous woman of the Western world. It was probably, but not certainly, their first meeting. The two-volume *Life of Vivekananda*, by his Eastern and Western disciples, refers somewhat vaguely to an earlier occasion, in the United States, on which Bernhardt 'sought an interview with him' (that hardly sounds like the imperious Sarah, who had made royalty take its hat off in her presence!) 'and expressed her admiration and intense interest in the sublime teaching of the philosophy he so eloquently and truly represented.' The date given for this encounter, 1895, would seem, in any case, to be wrong. Bernhardt was not in the States that year, though she visited them for a six-month tour in 1896. Moreover, Swamiji himself, writing in 1900 about the people he has met in Paris, particularly mentions that he and Madame Calvé, the singer, were previously acquainted, but speaks of Bernhardt as though they had just been introduced.

His correspondent was Swami Trigunatita, back home in India, and the tone of these travel-letters, which were intended for publication, is instructive, gossipy, explosive, facetious, affectionate and prophetic by turns: they are among the most characteristic things Vivekananda ever wrote. 'Madame Bernhardt,' he tells his brother-monk, 'is an aged lady; but when she steps on the stage after dressing, her imitation of the age and sex of the role she plays is perfect! A girl, or a boy,—whatever part you want her to play, she is an exact representation of that. And that wonderful voice! People here say, her voice has the ring of silver strings!'

In a couple of months, the 'aged lady' was going to be fifty-six years old. Even the unkind camera shows us that, 'on the stage after dressing,' she did not look a day over thirty. Her photograph in the role of *L'Aiglon*, the Duke of Reichstadt, which she played for the first time in March of that year, presents an astonishingly slender and erect little personage in a riding-coat and high boots with spurs, neither boy nor girl, woman nor man, sexless, ageless, and altogether impossible by day-light, outside the walls of a theatre. Some later references in another of the letters to the story of Napoleon's tragic son suggest that Vivekananda must almost certainly have seen Sarah in this, her greatest dramatic triumph after *La Dame aux Camélias*.

Bernhardt was then on the final peak of her mountainous career. Her acting was probably better than it had ever been before: better, certainly, than in the nineties, when her hit-or-miss noisiness, ranting and hamming had provoked the brilliant scolding of the young theatre-critic Bernard Shaw, and his unfavourable comparisons between her and the more modern restraint of Eleonora Duse. She had disciplined herself, artistically and emotionally. The crazy days of her publicity—of the balloon-trip, the coffin, and the shooting of the St. Louis Bay bridge—were far behind her. The shameful tragedy of her marriage with Damala had been ended, long ago, by his death from morphine poisoning. Her extravagance was still immense, but so were her earnings. And the accident in Rio de Janeiro which was to result in her gradual crippling was still five years ahead.

Swamiji seems to have been taken round to visit her in her dressing-room at the theatre after a performance. One wonders who introduced them, what word was used to describe the Swami's occupation to the actress, and whether she had already heard of him. 'Madame Bernhardt,' writes Vivekananda, 'has a special regard for India; she tells me again and again that our country is "*très ancien, très civilisé*"—very ancient and very

civilized." There must have been a gleam in Swamiji's eye as he politely received this flattering information.

They talked, as was natural, of the only play Sarah had ever produced with an Indian setting. It was *Izéil*, by Morand and Silvestre, an expensive flop. Bernhardt had always obstinately liked this piece, perhaps because it displayed her undoubted talent for theatrical décor. 'She told me that for about a month she had visited every museum and made herself acquainted with the men and women, and their dress, the streets and bathing ghats and everything relating to India.'

'Madame Bernhardt,' the letter concludes, 'has a very strong desire to visit india. "*C'est mon rêve*—It is the dream of my life," she says. Again, the Prince of Wales has promised to take her over to a tiger and elephant hunting excursion. But then she said, she must spend some two lacs of rupees if she went to India! She is of course in no want of money. "*La divine Sarah*"—the divine Sarah—is her name—how can she want money?—She who never travels but by a special train! That pomp and luxury many a prince of Europe cannot afford to indulge in! One can only secure a seat in her performance by paying double the fees, and that a month in advance! Well, she is not going to suffer want of money! But Sarah Bernhardt is given to spending lavishly. Her travel to India is therefore put off for the present.'

Underneath these few mock-serious, bantering sentences, one senses the warmth of an immediate sympathy and liking. You can picture Swamiji sitting opposite the vivid, Semitic little Frenchwoman, large and jolly, his amused glance taking in the whole luxurious setting, the jewels, the mirrors, the silks, the cosmetics, the marvellous robes. Here, as in all women everywhere, he saluted his own daughter, sister, mother: here, as always, he bowed to the eternal Godhead, beneath yet another of those queer disguises which bewilder our wanderings toward Self-realization. Here, also, he surely recognized, to an unusual degree, the virtue he prized so highly: courage. Courage was, perhaps, the one quality which these fantastically dissimilar personalities had in common: the courage which had supported Vivekananda in the blackest hours of spiritual torment, of his Master's loss, of all the early struggles and trials of the Order, and which had never deserted him in the jungle or the mountains or the drawing-rooms of American millionaires: the courage which had nerved Sarah in her battles to raise her child, in her work during the siege of Paris, in her defence of Dreyfus, in her return to the stage at the age of seventy-two after the amputation of her right leg. Swamiji must have been aware of this, and loved her for it.

And how did Bernhardt think of him? Perhaps, curiously enough, as a kind of colleague. Had not he, also, appeared triumphantly before the public? Many actors and actresses, including Sarah herself as Joan of Arc, have represented saints—at any rate, to the satisfaction of the audience beyond the footlights. Swamiji, on the other hand, with his superb presence and sonorous voice, might well have been mistaken for a great actor.

In a photograph of this period, we see how the eyes of the young *sannyasin*, burning almost intolerably with mingled devotion and doubt, have softened and deepened in the face of the mature man. The big lips and the line spreading from the wide nostrils have a curve of watchful humour, in which there is neither irony, nor bitterness, nor resignation—only a great calm, like the sea, with certainty dawning over it, an absolute, arising sun. 'Are you never serious, Swamiji?' somebody asked him, rather reproachfully, and was answered: 'Oh, yes. When I have the belly-ache.' Even this was an overstatement; for the smiling, joking Vivekananda of 1900 was already a very sick man.

He and Bernhardt never saw each other again. In October, the Swami's party left Paris for Austria, the Balkans and Egypt, whence he sailed to India, arriving home at the Belur monastery early in December. Thus ended his last journey to the West. The

longer journey, also, was nearly over. One day in July 1902, wishing perhaps to spare his friends the agony of a good-bye, he passed, by stealth as it were, into *samadhi*, and did not come back.

Sarah survived him for twenty-one years, survived the first world-war, lived on into the era of Chaplin and Pickford and the Keystone Cops, appeared in two or three movies herself, and died in action, getting ready to rehearse a new play.

In the half dozen Bernhardt biographies I have been able to consult, the name of Vivekananda is not even mentioned. In fact, this brief anecdote of their meeting, with its exchange of conventional small-talk and politeness, would seem to have no point whatsoever. That is just what makes it so fascinating and so significant. When poets or politicians foregather, we expect epigrams and aphorisms; for talk is their medium of expression. But talk is not, primarily, the medium of the man of illumination. His way of approach is more direct, more subtle and more penetrating. He makes contact with you below the threshold of everyday awareness. No matter whether he speaks of the Prince of Wales, or of God, or only smiles and says nothing: your whole life will be, to some degree, changed from that moment on.

That is why—despite the biographers' silence, and the lack of high-class philosophical conversation—one dare not say that Swamiji's visit made no great or lasting impression upon Sarah. The spotlight of history which reveals a tiny area of surface-action so brightly, cannot help us here. The blackness of our spiritual ignorance hides equally the inner life of the great actress and the unknown servant-girl. All we can venture to say is this: 'One day, the two human mysteries known to this world as Bernhardt and Vivekananda met, exchanged certain signals which we do not understand, and parted, we do not know why. All we *do* know is that their meeting, like every other event in this universe, did not take place by accident.'

THE GLORY THAT IS RAMAKRISHNA AND THE GRANDEUR THAT IS VIVEKANANDA

BY PROF. S. K. MAITRA, M.A., PH.D.

On this happy occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the *Prabuddha Bharata* one's thoughts naturally turn to those great souls whose message this magazine has been faithfully interpreting for the last fifty years.

As I said on another occasion, it is only India that can produce a Ramakrishna, just as it is only Europe that can produce a Karl Marx. India has always stood for realization, as Europe has done for dogmas. Our thinkers have always held that the different creeds and sects represent different paths to the same goal, namely God-realization. And perhaps no Hindu saint was more true to this gospel of realization than Sri Ramakrishna. 'It is immaterial', he said, 'whether or not one believes in the incarnation of Radha and Krishna. One may believe (like the Hindu or the Christian) in God's incarnation or one may not. But we all have a yearning for this intensity of love for the Lord. That is the one thing needful. If you must be mad, be not so for the things of the world. But be mad with the love of the Lord.'

REVIVAL OF HINDUISM THROUGH THE RELIGION OF REALIZATION

Ramakrishna revived the religious spirit of his country which had almost been extinguished by contact with Western ideas,

especially by the influence of the thought of Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill, by his gospel of realization. He succeeded wonderfully, because this was exactly what the country needed. An overdose of rationalism could only be cured by a strong injection of the religion of realization. Rammohan Roy's problem was different. What the country suffered from in his days was not excessive rationalism, but rather a complete absence of it, and he therefore revived Hinduism by the method of reason.

There was another reason why Ramakrishna succeeded so well. When religion becomes a matter, not of creed or dogma but of realization, then it removes all barrier that separates man from man and admits all mankind into its fold. For Ramakrishna there was no distinction between man and man; for him there were no barriers of race, caste, creed, or sect. It was this catholicity which appealed most to his English-educated countrymen and was the secret of the influence which he exercised over them. This was what attracted to him even leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, like Keshava Chandra Sen and Pratap Chandra Mazumdar. Educated and cultured Hindus who had come in contact with Western culture, flocked to Ramakrishna when they discovered that here was a man who, without leaving the Hindu fold, had the most liberal ideas in religion—ideas which were even more liberal than those held by any Western thinker. In this way Ramakrishna succeeded in putting a stop to the secessionist movement either towards Christianity or towards Brahmoism which was such a characteristic of the religious life of Bengal in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. And it was in this way that he became the centre of the Hindu revivalist movement of the last century.

Vivekananda did for Ramakrishna's Hindu Revivalist Movement what Ashoka had done for Buddhism

But Ramakrishna's Hindu revivalist movement would not have achieved such tremendous success as it did if he had not had the fortune of having as his successor a man of such tremendous spiritual force as Swami Vivekananda. Indeed, Swami Vivekananda did for this movement exactly what Ashoka had done for Buddhism. He not only succeeded in stopping all secessionist movements in his country, but he let the world understand what Hinduism was and what it stood for. In this way he raised the status of Hinduism in the eyes of the world. This missionary work, in fact, was an innovation of Swamiji's inasmuch as Hindus had not done it for several centuries. And they had suffered very much for neglect of this work for they always had active missionaries of other religions working in their midst, and they had none to defend their religion against them. The cause of their religion had gone by default, and foreigners entertained the queerest notions about it, such as, for example, that it encouraged idol-worship or that it kept its women and lower castes in perpetual slavery. The missionary work, therefore, which Swami Vivekananda undertook for Hinduism was of inestimable value.

What Swamiji taught

(1) *The Divinity of Man*

Valuable as was his missionary work, his essential work was among his own countrymen. Here the first thing which he did was to make them realize the essential divinity of man. The first essential of religion, Swamiji taught, was to realize the true status of man. Unfortunately, his countrymen, due to centuries of political subjection, had lost all confidence in themselves. To them he used to repeat the great truth of the Upanishads —नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः— 'The Self is not to be attained by the weak in spirit'. Pusillanimity and religion can never go together. The great message of our sages is the divinity of man. And Swamiji, as a true descendant of theirs, preached also the same thing. In a magnificent passage in his lecture on 'Reason and Religion' (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 379-81), the Swami said: '...And what is truth? That

I am He. When I say that I am not Thou, it is untrue. When I say I am separate from you it is a lie, a terrible lie. I am one with this universe, born one. It is self-evident to my senses that I am one with the universe. I am one with the air that surrounds me, one with heat, one with light, eternally one with the whole Universal Being, who is called this universe, for it is He and nothing else, the eternal subject in the heart who says, "I am" in every heart, —the deathless one, the sleepless one, ever awake, the immortal, whose glory never dies, whose powers never fail. I am one with That. . . . From the lowest amoeba to the highest angel, He resides in every soul, and eternally declares, "I am He, I am He" When we have understood that voice eternally present there, when we have learnt this lesson, the whole universe will have expressed its secret, Nature will have given up her secret to us. Nothing more remains to be known. Thus we find the truth for which all religions search, that all this knowledge of material sciences is but secondary; that is the only true knowledge which makes us one with this Universal God of the Universe.' The same idea of the essential divinity of man he expresses in his lecture on 'The Real Nature of Man', where he says that in seeking God, man really seeks himself: '...Why does man look for a God? Why does man, in every nation, in every state of society, want a perfect ideal somewhere, either in man, in God, or elsewhere? Because that idea is within you. It was your own heart beating and you did not know, you were mistaking it for something external. It is the God within your own self that is propelling you to seek for Him, to realize Him. After long searches here and there, in temples and in churches, in earth and in heaven, at last you come back, completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and find that He, for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds, is nearest of the near, is your own Self, the reality of your life, body, and soul. That is your own nature.' (*Complete Works*, Vol. II, pp. 81-82).

This fundamental unity of man with God is, according to him, the source of our moral life. Charity, for example, is the most fundamental moral principle. But what is charity but a deduction from the great truth of the unity of man with the whole universe, a consequence which follows from the eternal truth, 'I am the universe, the universe is one'? Here he seems to follow the example of the *Ishopanishad* which deduces the fundamental moral law **तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः** —'Enjoy through sacrifice', from the metaphysical principle of the all-pervasiveness of God—**ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वम्**.

(2) *Practical Vedanta*

Another great truth which Swamiji preached and which was embodied in his life is what he called Practical Vedanta. The principle of it is laid down in the following verses of the *Ishopanishad*:

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥
विद्याञ्चाविद्याञ्च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।
अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते ॥

'Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone.'

'He who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality.' (Sri Aurobindo's translation).

These verses emphasize the simultaneous need of Vidya and Avidya. Without both, salvation is impossible. Now, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, by Avidya here is understood the standpoint of phenomenal plurality, while Vidya stands for the knowledge of God in his oneness. The verses show the importance of both these standpoints. It will not do to realize God in His multiplicity alone, nor will it do to realize Him only in His oneness. The full realiza-

tion of Him is the realization of His oneness in His plurality, and of His plurality in His oneness.

Now the standpoint of Karma is that of phenomenal plurality. The realization of God in His phenomenal plurality is the function of Karma. Therefore, these verses reaffirm in a slightly different language the truth which the first two verses of this Upanishad assert, namely that the knowledge of the all-pervasiveness of God must be combined with action done in a spirit of sacrifice. That these verses have reference to the combination of Karma and Knowledge appears further from the fact that Manu understands them in this sense, as is evident from the fact that he has stated what he has conceived to be the meaning of the second verse in his own way as follows:

तपो विद्या च विप्रस्य निःश्रेयसकरं परम्।
तपसा किल्विषं हन्ति विद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते॥

'Both Tapas (Karma) and Knowledge are means to salvation for the Brâhmana. With Tapas he destroys sin, and with Knowledge he attains salvation.' (*Manu*, xii. 104).

Swami Vivekananda took his stand definitely upon this feature of our Arya Dharma, its insistence upon a combination of Knowledge and Karma. This combination is what he called Practical Vedanta. Practical Vedanta, in his opinion, must replace the purely theoretical Vedanta which recognizes only knowledge and has contempt for action. The true Vedanta, according to him, is practical Vedanta which, far from ignoring Karma, rather looks upon it as an essential condition for the attainment of spiritual life.

The great truths of the Vedanta, such as *sarvam khalvidam brahma*, *ekamevadvitiyam*, *tattvamasi* are not merely theoretical principles, to which we need only give the assent of our reason, but they are intensely practical propositions, to which we must give the assent of our whole being and which we must carry out in our lives. Swami Vivekananda emphasized this point very strongly. In his first lecture on 'Practical Vedanta' (*Complete Works*, Vol. II) he narrated the story (recorded both in the *Brihadâranyaka* and the *Chhândogya Upanishads*) of Shvetaketu's meeting with King Pravahana Jaivali and how Shvetaketu could not answer any of the questions which the latter put to him, such as 'Do you know how beings depart hence at death?', 'Do you know how they return hither?', 'Do you know the way of the fathers and the way of the gods?'. As Shvetaketu failed to answer any of the questions, the King said that he knew nothing. Shvetaketu then returned to his father Uddalaka Aruni, and asked him why he had not instructed him (Shvetaketu) about those questions. Uddalaka replied that it was not that he did not want to teach him those things, but that he did not know them himself. Uddalaka went to the King and asked to be taken as a pupil. On this, the King said, 'It is true that this knowledge of Brahman has so far been confined to the Kshatriyas and the Brâhmanas have not had access to it. But seeing your great earnestness, I cannot refuse to impart it to you.' Swami Vivekananda's comment on this incident is that it clearly shows that 'the Vedanta philosophy is not the outcome of meditation in the forests only, but that the best parts of it were thought out and expressed by brains which were busiest in the everyday affairs of life.'

Swami Vivekananda explained how this was so. People very often asked him, he said, how any action could be done without passion. He admitted that he also at one time used to think that without passion no work was possible. But as he grew older, he found that this was not true. 'The less passion there is, the better we work. The calmer we are, the better for us, and the more the amount of work that we can do. When we let loose our feelings, we waste so much energy, shatter our nerves, disturb our minds, and accomplish very little work.' (*Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 291). This is, in fact, the reason why the Gita declares: *yogah karmasu kaushalam*. It is the man who is devoid of passion, it is the man who has acquired complete mastery over himself, who can do the best work. The Yogin is the most practical man.

(3) *All Work is God's Work*

Another point which Swamiji stressed was that all work was to be looked upon equally as God's work. Every work is God's work and every work is devil's work. Whether it is the one or the other depends entirely upon the performer, upon the spirit in which the work is done. I was amused, therefore, to read recently an article in a magazine, where the writer contended that though in other kinds of work it was not necessary to renounce the householder's life, all that was needed being only to maintain an attitude of complete detachment, yet it was different with what he called God's work, where nothing short of complete renunciation of the householder's life would do. The writer did not show on what ground he made this distinction between God's work and other work. The Gita knows of no such distinction. Even such grim work as war it looks upon as God's work. Nor did Swami Vivekananda. In his lecture on Karma Yoga (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 66-69) he narrated the story (told in *Mahabharata*, Vana Parvan, Chaps. 205-215) of the devoted wife whose only religion was to serve her husband, and of Dharmavyadha whose only worship was faithful and loyal service rendered to his aged father and mother, and the moral which he drew from these stories is as follows: 'When you are doing any work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, as the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being. Thus, in the story, the Vyadha and the woman did their duty with cheerfulness and wholeheartedness; and the result was that they became disillusioned, clearly showing that the right performance of the duties of any station in life, without attachment to results, leads us to the highest realization of the perfection of the soul. It is the worker who is attached to results that grumbles about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot; to the unattached all duties are equally good and form efficient instruments with which selfishness and sensuality may be killed, and the freedom of the soul secured.'

(4) *Idea of Universal Religion*

Swami Vivekananda showed how a Universal Religion could be built with the help of the idea of Yoga. Three-quarters of a century before him Raja Rammohan Roy also made an attempt to found a Universal Religion. The Raja wanted to base it upon the fundamental principles of the religion of the Upanishads, whereas Swamiji's idea was to construct it with the help of the conception of Yoga. Through the idea of Yoga with its fourfold division of Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga he thought it possible to build a universal religion. There are four types of men—active, emotional, mystic and philosophical—and the four types of Yoga enumerated above correspond to these four types of men. A universal religion, in his view, must satisfy all these four types. 'What I want to propagate', he said, ('The Ideal of a Universal Religion', *Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 385) 'is a religion equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action. If professors from colleges come, scientific men and physicists, they will court reason. Let them have it as much as they want. There will be a point beyond which they will think they cannot go, without breaking with reason.... Similarly, if the mystic comes, we must welcome him, be ready to give him the science of mental analysis, and practically demonstrate it before him. And if emotional people come, we must sit, laugh, and weep with them in the name of the Lord; we must "drink the cup of love and become mad". If the energetic worker comes, we must work with him, with all the energy that we have. And this combination will be the ideal of the nearest approach to a universal religion. Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds *all* these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion, and of work were equally present in full! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man.... To become harmoniously balanced in all these

four directions, is *my* ideal of religion. And this religion is attained by what we, in India, call Yoga—union. To the worker, it is union between men and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his lower and Higher Self; to the lover, union between himself and the God of Love; and to the philosopher, it is the union of *all* existence. This is what is meant by Yoga. This is a Sanskrit term, and these four divisions of Yoga have, in Sanskrit, different names. The man who seeks after this kind of union is called a Yogin. The worker is called the Karma Yogin. He who seeks the union through love is called the Bhakti Yogin. He who seeks it through mysticism is called the Raja Yogin. And he who seeks it through philosophy is called the Jnana Yogin. So this word Yogin comprises them all.'

Such, in briefest outline, was his idea of a Universal Religion. There are, no doubt, many difficulties in the way of the realization of this idea. But one thing is clear, namely that it was only through the idea of realization that he thought it possible to lay the foundations of a religion which would unite the whole of mankind. This shows how true he was to his master's central principle, that religion is a matter of realization, and not one that can be approached through creeds or dogmas.

It is not possible to overestimate the debt which the world in general, and India in particular, owes to these two great souls, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda. Their influence, far from diminishing with the lapse of time, is bound to increase as years roll on. The world will soon be faced with the tremendous task of reconstructing human society on a lasting basis of unity, and where can it find inspiration for this work, except in the great dynamic principles revealed by these two sages, such as the religion of realization, the divinity of man, and the dignity of service?

OUR PRESENT-DAY WOMEN

By Dr. (Mrs.) S. Muthulakshmi Reddi

I

It is admitted by historians, both of the East and the West, that the women of epic and pre-epic periods were given an equal place with men in society and they enjoyed equal opportunities and facilities for education, for their marriage and in choosing their walks of life, and their own future. We read today some of the Vedic hymns and commentaries composed by women; the four stages of life, namely *brahmacharya*, *garhasthya*, *sannyasa*, and *vanaprastha* were open to women in the same way as men. That is why the woman ascetic Shulabha discussed in the court of Janaka the high philosophy of life and convinced the wise Janaka that the short cut to realize God and the aim of one's existence on this earth was to renounce.

Again, in a controversy between the Advaitic philosopher Shankaracharya with Mandanamishra, the latter's wife presided and gave judgement in favour of Advaitic philosophy against her own husband. Both she and her husband became disciples of Shankaracharya, who recognizing her learning and wisdom looked on her as Goddess Saraswati herself and established the Sarada Peetham, which is said to be in honour of that great woman.

In South India, there were great poetesses and writers like Avvai. Avvai lived a single life devoted to learning and service, and was respected by the rich and the poor.

Further, in our own times, Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was initiated into Yoga practices by a Brahmin woman, and Sri Ramakrishna used to have a number of women devotees and disciples.

II

Unfortunately, the present generation of women, especially our high school and college

girls, seem to be getting away and out of touch with their own religious history and tradition. The present generation is worse in this respect than the previous generation. The reason for the same is not difficult to find. While having education in schools, we, the older generation, lived with our parents and grand-parents who were well versed in the stories of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the lives of saints like Nayanars and Alwars and whose influence over the young minds was far-reaching. But due to the rapid increase in the city population and the growth of hostels and colleges for imparting higher education to boys and girls, the latter have been led away from their homes and immediate relations; and they spend their young and impressionable years, cut off from all old moorings and other beneficial influences of religious practices.

Some of us remember, while studying and appearing for our Matriculation and Intermediate examinations, how we used to share with our kith and kin—who, by the way, did not know English—religious life and religious practices (which may seem superstitious to modern educated youths). Hence, by the actions of our mothers, practising charity, giving alms to the beggars, though indiscriminately, and offering cocoanuts, flowers, and fruits to images, and spending hours in telling beads, some of us were unconsciously influenced, and thus the spirit of love and service for our neighbours and an attitude of devotion to God were instilled into our minds. So much so that we developed the spirit of charity and service even from our childhood, and after we had become graduates of the university, we started and organized institutions with the help of the religious training we had received from our elders.

Also, we, who are strangers to hostel life, had heard from our parents and sung with them the names of Seeta, Savitri, Damayanti, and other great women of the past, who to us form the highest ideals of life. Unfortunately, to the present generation of girls and young women, these names are unknown. Therefore, it is no wonder that modern education in our schools and colleges has become fruitless and has utterly failed to give our girls the character, the courage, the purity, and the spirit of service that actuated the best Indian womanhood of the past.

III

We, now, recognize that the prohibition of widow re-marriage and the practice of Sati and even child marriage were protective measures to save our women and girls from dangers to their honour and to their morality from the hands of barbaric invaders. During the present war of civilized nations, we read with great horror and shock, how innocent women and children are mishandled and how indiscriminate bombing destroys whole cities and countless lives. Can we, now, say that the treatment to women during the war by the conquerors is preferable to the action of the women, putting an end to their own lives to escape the danger to their honour from vicious tyrannical invaders? Therefore, we should think over all these facts and then pass judgement whether the Indian men and women practised religion or irreligion, even in the far off period.

Of course, we, at one time condemned the practice of widowhood, Sati and also child marriage. But, now though we consider that virgin widows should be allowed to marry if they wished to, we see that re-marriage of widows has produced another monstrous evil: not only elderly widows re-marry but also widows with a number of children do so and thus overcrowd their families. India is already suffering from over-population, and birth control is taking the place of self-control which is a natural and better method. The physical enjoyment seems to be the only aim of one's existence, and all our education, intelligence, and energy are used for the same. Again, modern educated women do not hesitate to marry a husband who has already a wife living with a number of children. This is another evil, which is gradually creeping into our society and having a demoralizing effect.

IV

Though university education has fairly advanced amongst women, and though there

are many unemployed graduates and high-school girls, yet many of the women's institutions—orphanages and hostels for women—suffer for want of proper women workers and matrons. Education in our villages and high schools trains them only for making an income and also for securing a good husband. But it has failed miserably to spread culture and to inculcate a spirit of service. Therefore, we have necessarily to revise the present system of education and rebuild it on a religious basis.

The world war with its attendant evils has taught us that most men are no better than animals with all animal instincts. As such, they do not hesitate to harm and endanger their neighbour's life and property. At this moment, Indian philosophy as taught by our ancestors on the banks of sacred rivers and on the tops of mountains should be revived and India's message of renunciation, love and peace among men and women, the greatness of the spirit over the body, and the truth that God is real and that everything else is unreal, should be broadcast throughout the world.

SAINTS OF DELHI AND THEIR SHRINES

By the Hon'ble Mr. Justice N. G. A. Edgley

The holy men of Islam exercised a great influence in matters both religious and worldly during the reigns of the early Sultâns of Delhi. While the cities where these teachers flourished have often been devastated to such an extent that only a few scattered ruins of them remain, the shrines of the Muslim saints still exist after hundreds of years as centres of religious devotion and places of popular pilgrimage. Successive generations of devotees have added their quota to the buildings which surround these shrines, and emperors and men of humble degree have desired that some spot near the tomb of their favourite saint might be their last resting place. There is a strange atmosphere of medieval survival about these shrines, which modern accretions in the shape of unattractive tombs of nobles and men of learning of the last two centuries and the officiousness of the *khâdims* are unable to dissipate.

Famous Chishti Saints

The most important shrines are those of the Delhi representatives of the famous succession of Chishtí saints. Two of the well-known saints of this line were Mu'in-ud-Dín Chishtí of Ajmir and Shaikh Salím Chishtí of Fatahpur Sikrí. It was thought that the prayers of the former delivered Prithvi Raja's kingdom into the hands of the early Muslim conquerors. Of the latter it is recorded that his somewhat precocious infant son (six months old) requested the saint's permission to die in order that an heir might be born to the Emperor Akbar. Salím granted this strange request and, in due course, Jahângír was born. Whatever may be the basis of this story it was probably owing to his regard for Salím that Akbar transferred his capital for a time from Agra to Fatahpur Sikrí.

Qutb-ud-Din Kaki

Qutb-ud-Din Kâkí was the second saint of the Chishtí line of which Mu'in-ud-Dín of Ajmir was the founder. So holy was he that it is said that his sustenance was provided by small cakes (*Kâkis*) that fell from heaven. His interesting shrine is situated in the village of Mahrauli, a little to the south of the Qutb Mínâr. The saint came to India with the early conquerors. He lived near the site of the Jamâlí Masjid and died in 1235 during

the reign of Altamash who held him in great esteem.

ROYAL GRAVES AT MAHRAULI

The last Moghul Emperors had a country house near Qutb-ud-Dín's shrine, the gateway to which is to the right of the entrance, and three of them are actually buried here, namely Shâh'Âlam Bahâdur Shâh (1707-12), Shâh'Âlam II (1759-1806), and Akbar Shâh II (1806-37). In the royal burial enclosure a space had been reserved for the grave of Bahâdur Shâh, the last Emperor, who was exiled after the Mutiny and died at Rangoon where he was buried.

SHAH'ALAM AND GHULAM QADIR

A tragic event in the life of Shâh'Âlam is recalled by two graves in another enclosure, namely those of the Rohilla Chiefs, Zabita Khân and his son, Ghulâm Qâdir. It was the latter who seized the royal palace in 1788, and treated the Emperor and the members of his family with the greatest brutality. Finally he had Shâh'Âlam brought into the Díwân-i-Khâs, and blinded him with his own hands. Shortly afterwards Ghulâm Qâdir fell into the hands of the Mahrattas. The following account of his end is given in Hearn's *Seven Cities of Delhi*:—'In the morning he was taken prisoner and eventually despatched to Scindia's camp at Muttra. There he was mounted on a donkey, with his face to the tail, and sent round the bazar; when he abused his guards, his tongue was torn out. Then he was blinded, his nose, ears, hands, and feet were cut off, and in this miserable condition he was sent to Shâh 'Âlam. Some say that he was exhibited in a cage at Delhi, others that his guards grew tired of carrying him along and hanged him downwards on a tree; thus he died.'

The Rohillas seem to have been a desperate crowd of ruffians and Ghulâm Qâdir merely reaped the harvest of the hatred which had been sown by the cruelty of himself and his followers. If Ghulâm Qâdir was typical of his clan one can only admire the foresight which prompted Warren Hastings to agree with Shuja'-ud-Daula in 1773 that Rohilkund should be annexed to Oudh.

SHAH'ALAM AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

As regards Shâh'Âlam it will be remembered that it was this Emperor who, by the Treaty of Buxar in 1765, granted to the East India Company the *díwâní* of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, and thus laid the foundation of British rule in India. He lived from 1765 until 1771 at Allahabad as a pensioner of the East India Company. He then returned to Delhi but was virtually a prisoner of the Mahrattas until Lord Lake entered Delhi in 1803, from which time until his death he again received a pension from the British authorities.

THE SHRINE OF THE SAINT

The Mutí Masjid at Qutb-ud-Dín's shrine, was built by Shâh'Âlam Bahâdur Shâh in 1707 in the style of the Mutí Masjid in the Fort, and there is another mosque in the inner enclosure in which the saint is said to have prayed.

The grave of the saint is seen through a handsome pierced marble screen which was erected by the Emperor Farrukhsiyar (1713-19). It is surrounded by a low marble railing.

In the compound is a tank similar to the *bâolí* at Nizâm-ud-Dín's shrine. Near this tank is an enclosure in which the Nawabs of Lohâru are buried, the last of whom was executed on account of his complicity in the Mutiny and is buried elsewhere.

NIZAM-UD-DIN AULIYA

The most famous of the Muslim shrines in Delhi is that of Khwâja Nizâm-ud-Dín Auliyâ. It is situated in a village named after the saint, which has grown up round his grave and which contains some monuments of great historical interest.

Nízâm-ud-Dín's grandfather came to India from Bukhâra with the early Muslim invaders. He settled at Badâ'un where he obtained the appointment of Qâdí. The saint was born at Badâ'un in 1238. He was carefully educated according to the standards of the time. At the age of 16 he went to Delhi where he continued his studies under Shams-

ud-Dín, a distinguished scholar who subsequently became Balban's Wazír. Thereafter Nízâm-ud-Dín became the disciple of Farídud-Dín Shakar Ganj of Pâk Patan, the Chishtí saint upon whom the mantle of Qutb-ud-Dín Bakhtiyâr Kâkí had fallen on the latter's death in 1235. In due course, Farídud-Dín sent his disciple back to Delhi as a religious teacher and, on his deathbed in 1265, he appointed Nizâm-ud-Dín to be his successor and bestowed on him the symbols of his saintly office, which he himself had received from his preceptor Qutb-ud-Dín.

Thereafter, Nizâm-ud-Dín established his headquarters at a small village near the spot where Humâyun's tomb now stands, where his reputation for learning and sanctity soon began to attract the noble residents of Kilokri to his retreat to such an extent that his devotions were often disturbed.

The Sultâns Jalâl-ud-Dín and Alâ'-ud-Dín treated Nizâm-ud-Dín with great respect, and in their warlike enterprises they relied almost as much upon the efficacy of his prayers as upon the valour of their armies. Two of the royal princes, Khidr Khân and Shâh Khân, actually became his disciples and it was probably the former of these princes who built the central portion of the Jamâ'at Khâna mosque with the intention that it should be a fitting tomb for the saint.

Nízâm-ud-Dín seems to have fallen into disfavour during the reign of Sultân Qutb-ud-Dín Mubârak (1316-20) and that of Ghiyâth-ud-Dín Tughlaq (1320-25). When the latter was on the throne the saint incurred the Sultân's displeasure by employing in the excavation of his *bâolí*, workmen whom Ghiyâth-ud-Dín had engaged to build his fortress at Tughlaqâbâd. The dispute ripened into a quarrel in which the saint laid a curse upon the new city and declared that it should lie desolate or become the habitation of Gujars. At the same time the Sultân foretold that the water of the *bâolí* would become noisome. Both prophecies have been fulfilled. Later the Sultân sought to punish the saint on the ground that he was addicted to an unorthodox fondness for music, but he cleared himself of the charge of heresy. Hostility between saint and monarch continued and became so acute that Nizâm-ud-Dín was suspected of conspiring with Muhammad Ibn Tughlaq to stage the incident which brought about Ghiyâth-ud-Dín's death. Whatever ground there may have been for this suspicion it did not detract from Nizâm-ud-Dín's saintly reputation. He died in April 1325, at the age of 85, since when pilgrimages are made to his tomb from all over India.

The Baoli

There is something gloomy and sinister about the saint's *bâolí* which is the first thing that the visitor sees on entering the precincts of the shrine. It is said that to bathe in its green slimy water provides an infallible cure for all skin diseases in this world and a certain admittance to paradise in the next. Small boys are anxious for a small consideration to dive into the tank from the top of the buildings sixty feet above the water. We had no desire to witness this interesting but insanitary diversion, so we passed along an ancient arcaded passage to the inner enclosure which contains the shrine. On the side of the tank opposite to this passage is a curious double-storied building known as the Chíní-kâ-Burj. Further to the south is the tomb of a lady named Bâ'í Kokaldí who died in 1670. The grave is in a small but well proportioned marble pavilion.

The space within the inner quadrangle is somewhat limited but the combined effect of the red sandstone of the great mosque, the lavish decoration of the shrine and the white marble screens of the surrounding tombs is undoubtedly pleasing.

Jama'at Khana's Mosque

The finest building here is the Jamâ'at Khâna mosque. It is built in the earliest Pathân style of architecture, and appears to have been constructed about the same time as the 'Alâ'i Darwâza, with which it has many features in common. Fíruz Shâh (1351-88) claims to have built this mosque, but the style of its architecture is entirely different from that of the later Tughlaq

period. He may have repaired it but the authorities who attribute its construction to Khidr Khân, the son of Sultân 'Alâ'-ud-Dín are more likely to be correct. When the project of utilizing the central chamber as a tomb for the saint was disapproved the two side wings may have been added subsequently but care was taken not to mar the effect by adopting a different general design. The building is surmounted by well proportioned domes and the arches are decorated with Qurânic inscriptions and geometric designs. The surface interior decoration of the central chamber, the attractive *mihrâbs* and the beautiful pendentives, combine to produce an impression of strength and dignity. This is certainly one of the finest of the Delhi mosques.

NIZAM-UD-DIN'S SHRINE

The tomb of the saint, in spite of its somewhat tawdry decoration, is rather a pleasing monument, but it has been repeatedly rebuilt and redecorated by various emperors and other admirers of the saint. The columns of the verandah and the numerous dwarf domes of the parapet display a tendency towards excess of decoration. The shrine is more a token of the zeal of the Faithful than of the skill of the architect.

TOMBS OF JAHANARA AND MUHAMMAD SHAH

There are two tombs in this enclosure which are of great interest on account of their historical associations, namely those of Jahânârâ Begum and Muhammad Shâh.

Jahânârâ was the daughter of the Emperor Shâh Jahân and Mumtâz Mahal—the lady of the Tâj. The Jâmi'Masjid at Agra was founded by Shâh Jahân in her name, and she built the Begumsarâ'i at Delhi. She wrote a biography of the famous Chishtí saint of Ajmir, Mu'ín-ud-Dín, and it was through successful medical treatment administered to her that Gabriel Boughton, an English surgeon of Surat, obtained the grant from the Emperor of valuable trading privileges for the East India Company. She supported the cause of her unfortunate brother, Dârâ Shikuh, who was put to death by Aurangzíb and she shared her father's captivity until his death, after Shâh Jahân had been imprisoned in the Agra Fort by his treacherous son. She must have been an interesting and attractive person. The headstone to her grave bears the well-known inscription: 'Let naught cover my grave save green grass, for grass will suffice as a covering for the grave of the lowly.'

It is a pity that the custodians of the tomb do not pay more careful attention to the royal lady's request for, at the time of our visit, the grass was dead and brown.

Muhammad Shâh (1719-48) was the unfortunate emperor during whose reign Nâdir Shâh invaded India, captured Delhi, massacred its inhabitants and returned to Persia with the famous Peacock Throne and other plunder, the total value of which has been estimated at about £80,000,000.

TOMB OF PRINCE JAHANGIR

In a marble enclosure to the east of Muhammad Shâh's tomb is buried Prince Jahângír, the son of the Emperor Akbar II. He was a troublesome young man who died at Allahabad in 1821 whither he had been banished for firing a pistol at Mr. Seton, the British Resident at Delhi.

TOMB OF AMIR KHUSRAU

The courtyard to the south which is entered through an arched doorway contains the grave of Amír Khusrau. The tomb has been rebuilt several times. The present structure of white marble surrounded by latticed screens was built about 1606 during the reign of the Emperor Jahângír. It is a pleasing and dignified tomb.

Khusrau was one of the best known of the Muslim poets of India. He was held in great esteem by Prince Muhammad, the son of Balban, and was captured by the Mongols in the battle in which that prince was killed. Fortunately he obtained his freedom, and subsequently became a prominent figure at the court of Sultân Jalâl-ud-Dín Khiljí and Ghiyâth-ud-Dín Tughlaq. He was a disciple and friend of Nizâm-ud-Dín and died at the age of 72 on the 27th September 1325.

Khan Dauran Khan's Mosque

A little beyond the west wall of Khusrau's enclosure is a small red sandstone mosque founded by Khân Daurân Khân, a noble of the eighteenth century who died of wounds received in battle at the time of Nâdir Shâh's invasion in 1739.

Beyond the eastern wall of the enclosure which contains the saint's shrine are many graves of members of the royal family and of prominent courtiers. The most important of these are the tomb of Atgah Khân, and the Chausath Khamba. Near-by are the tomb of Khân-Jahân and a mosque built by him.

Roshan Chiragh of Delhi

Before he died Nizâm-ud-Dín passed on the sacred relics to his disciple Nasír-ud-Dín, better known as Roshan Chirâgh of Delhi, who thus became the next in the succession of the Chishtí saints. He lived until 1366, and his shrine was built by Firuz Shâh in 1374. The shrine is surrounded by an imposing circuit of walls erected by the Emperor Muhammad Shâh, in 1729, within which a village has grown up. The shrine is an unpretentious structure in an enclosure rather overcrowded with graves of the saint's disciples.

Bahlul Lodi's Tomb

Just inside the enclosure is the tomb of Sultân Bahlul Lodí (1450-88), the founder of the Lodí dynasty. It is a small square building with five domes, which may have been the summer house of a garden which this Sultân had made here.

Shah 'Alam's Dargah

Another saint who lived in the time of Firuz Shâh was Shâh'Âlam whose picturesque Dargâh and mosque are on the other side of Delhi near the northern end of the Ridge. Very little seems to be known about this saint. The buildings with which his name is associated are simple and dignified specimens of the Middle Pathân style of architecture and their setting is particularly attractive on account of their proximity to a beautiful bridge of the same period.

Shrine at 'Aliganj

We also found another shrine among some ruins in the village of 'Alíganj, near Safdar Jang's tomb. It appeared to be of great antiquity and the villagers seemed to regard the saint who is buried there with considerable veneration. But we were unable to obtain any information either with regard to the identity of the saint or the nature of his claims to sanctity.

A man must only build a house for 'God and guests,' to build for himself would be selfish; therefore he erects temples as dwelling places for God.

—Swami Vivekananda

TO THE AWAKENED INDIA[1]

By Swami Vivekananda

Once more awake!
For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!
No death for thee!

Resume thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever
Forward! Speak thy stirring words.

Thy home is gone,
Where loving hearts had brought thee up, and
Watched with joy thy growth. But Fate is strong—
This is the law—all things come back to the source
They sprung, their strength to renew.

Then start afresh
From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
For working wonders new. The heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song;
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

And all above,
Himala's daughter Umâ, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, who works all works, and
Makes of One the world, whose mercy
Opes the gate to Truth, and shows
The One in All, give thee untiring
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,
The seers great, whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
Well. Their servant, thou hast got
The secret—'tis but One.

[1] Written to *Prabuddha Bharata* or *Awakened India*, in Aug., 1898, when the journal was transferred from Madras to Almora, Himalayas, into the hands of the Brotherhood founded by Swami Vivekananda.

Then speak, O Love!—
Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,
In all its glory shines.—

And tell the world—
Awake, arise, and dream no more!
This is the land of dreams, where Karma
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
The softest breath of Truth drives back to
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON INDIA AND HER MISSION

By Swami Nirvedananda

India is an unhappy country. Circumstances appear to have conspired to keep her down. Political servitude, economic depression, communal dissensions, social iniquities, and cultural anarchy have made her people miserable. The depth of their misery and humiliation is appalling. In this setting, even the good things they have inherited from the past get easily misinterpreted and undervalued. Their social customs are branded as downright barbarism, and their religious beliefs as rank superstition. Even their complexion appears to be a serious drawback. As a matter of fact they have to live almost like pariahs ('untouchables') in the society of the dominant peoples of the world.

Yet, nearly fifty years back, Swami Vivekananda came forward to inspire his countrymen with hope, faith, and courage by making them conscious of their potential strength and glory. He asked them not to look at themselves through borrowed spectacles and pointed out the errors of judgement made by many foreigners regarding the real worth of their culture. He stood almost like a living challenge from Mother India and presented the other side of the shield, showing unmistakably that India had an eminence of her own and a unique mission to fulfil for the progress of mankind.

The Swami took his reading from an entirely different stand. He did not, like others, measure India's strength in terms of material well-being. He looked deep beneath the surface of things. To him India was not a mere geographical nor a political entity. He discovered that she was and would continue to be the spiritual nursery of the world. Underneath the tormented life of political slavery and material wants, of cultural chaos and ideological confusion he detected a steady undercurrent of spirituality that might again develop into a tidal wave and sweep over the world as it had done in the wake of Buddha's life.

This was why he exhorted his countrymen to be proud of their cultural heritage and to stand by it instead of feeling small for their material backwardness. To foreigners he presented the following facts. India is not inhabited by savages who have to be reclaimed in the light of any imported civilization. Rather, it is a fact that India has a history and a culture almost unparalleled in the world. Her history is to be reviewed not by decades or centuries, but by millenniums. Even Buddha, who was only a 'rebel child' of the ancient Vedic Faith, was six centuries ahead of Christ. Indeed, Indian culture has been traced to an age when the ancestors of the modern nations had hardly emerged as civilized men.

Even in such a hoary past, the Swami pointed out, India had her Vedas holding out some of the loftiest and subtlest metaphysical truths, such as 'One alone exists, sages call It by various names'[1], 'All this (universe) was pure Existence at the beginning'[2], 'The self is none other than the Absolute'.[3] Such a penetrating vision of the fundamental unity of the universe, which science and philosophy have not yet been able to grasp and towards which these may be said to be surely and steadily converging, is the very hallmark of the Vedic literature that had its origin some thousands of years before the birth of the modern nations. Such a hoary history, such a glorious record of cultural achievement, India has to her credit.

The Swami went further to explain that Indian culture was not only the oldest on earth but also the most precious asset of mankind. Even when his own countrymen, lured by alien ideas and ideals, started condemning everything Indian as something uncouth, and rushed to change their skin by adopting exotic manners, customs, tastes, and fancies,—even at this hour of complete blackout of the cultural self-consciousness of the so-called educated Indians,—Swami Vivekananda had the boldness to hold up Indian culture as a priceless heritage of which India might very well be proud. India may be materially poor, but she is spiritually rich. Her worth is to be assessed not by the standards of material wealth and brute power but by those of spiritual eminence. Thus tested, her position is unassailable.

As a matter of fact all through the ages, particularly during the different epochs of her spiritual resurgence, lofty ideas and ideals, together with her precious contributions to fine arts and positive sciences,[4] spread far and wide beyond her borders and gave a cultural lift to the peoples of various lands. India may very well be said to have been the mother of civilization in the East ; and the growth of civilization in the West as well owes much to her contributions through Palestine, Greece, Egypt, and Arabia. Even now she has something substantial to offer towards the progress of human civilization, and this in spite of her abject material condition.

Being convinced of this, the Swami cried halt to his countrymen in their cultural march towards the West. He warned them, moreover, of the disastrous consequence of cultural alienation. He drew their pointed attention to the fact that their very life-centre lay in their age-old unique culture characterized by a thoroughly spiritual outlook. Spirituality was precisely their forte. It had been the channel through which their national energy had been flowing for scores of centuries. If they now wanted to change the course of their cultural life, the result would be the total extinction of their race. And if they followed it, they would become revitalized and nothing would be able to resist their progress in any direction.

The *upanishadic* sages mentioned two distinct cultural ideals, namely, the 'eternally good' (*shreyas*) and the 'temporarily pleasing' (*preyas*). The first ideal, namely, *shreyas*, inspires man to curb his ego, restrain his

[1] cf. *Rigveda*, I. 164. 46.
[2] cf. *Chhand. Up.*, VI. 2. 1.
[3] cf. *Brih. Up.*, II, 5. 19

[4] *Vide* Dr. P. C. Ray's *Hindu Chemistry*, vol. I—Introduction, & Dr. R. C. Mazumdar's *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*.

brute impulses, and manifest the divinity within him. It prescribes the gradual transformation of the brute-in-man into God-in-man. The second ideal, *preyas*, on the other hand, is ego-centric ; it prods man to remain a brute, with all its greed, lust, and ferocity, whose only business is to cater for selfish ends, to propitiate the lower self.

Man has two 'self's, as it were. Of these, one is real, and the other apparent. The real self of man is none other than the philosopher's Absolute. It is God Impersonal. He who realizes this self finds himself in all beings and every being in himself.[5] He loves all beings as his very self. He cannot hate or hurt any one. Eternal peace dwells in his heart. His thoughts and feelings are broad as the sky, deep as the ocean, and pure as the crystal. Far beyond the reach of envy or pride, doubt, misery, or fear, he lives like a pole-star for guiding humanity towards peace and blessedness. Love and compassion remain to be the only motive force of all his acts. The prophets, seers, and saints of the world are luminous instances of men having a clear vision of their real self. The paths pointed out by them are intrinsically the same, namely, the path of eternal good or blessedness (*shreyas*).

Man, however, is so constituted that ordinarily he is not aware of his essential divinity. He does not know that he exists eternally as pure spirit, as God Impersonal. He mistakes the body, the mind, and the senses as parts of his being. So, instead of feeling his essential unity with everything, he stands out as a separate entity and finds himself at war with the rest of the universe that appears to crush him out of existence. His illusory ego wants to dominate the world, ransack and grab it for its sensual enjoyment. He runs after the *preyas* ideal. But so long as he, in his ignorance, pursues this ideal, he does not find happiness, and brings untold miseries to others.

Now, emphasis on these two distinct ideals, 'eternally good' and 'temporarily pleasing', has given rise to two different types of civilization, which may be characterized as divine *(daiva)* and monstrous *(asuric)* respectively. In Hindu mythology one finds stories of clashes between the upholders of the two distinct ideals. The followers of the monstrous type of civilization were variously called *asura*, *daitya*, *danava*, or *rakshasa*. They developed mighty power but directed it towards exploitation, self-aggrandizement, and sensual enjoyment. They cared only for their own immediate material well-being and not a whit for their spiritual progress. Casting all ethical principles of self-restraint to the wind, they would scare the followers of the *shreyas* ideal by their heartless tyranny and terrific orgies. But soon a great leader of the divine group, like Rama or Krishna, would come forward to smash the gigantic power of the monstrous group and restore the peace and spiritual well-being of the people.

This is the lesson of Hindu mythology, and it points unmistakably to the fact that, in the days of yore, India went in for the *shreyas* ideal and built the entire structure of her civilization on this ideal. Even as far back as the Vedic age, India discovered that the *shreyas* ideal alone could bring peace unto mankind, and stressed the need of faith, purity, selflessness, love, charity, and unity for rearing up a healthy and progressive society. The idea behind the social structure laid by them was to help each individual to advance spiritually from where he stood. To the builders of this society, the sages, human life meant a march towards perfection, towards the complete manifestation of the divinity within. Their idea of a healthy society was an organization that would help each individual according to its capacity in its spiritual march. The ideas and ideals of the Indian civilization are still there. They are eternal. Beneath the crudities that crept into the Indian society during periods of spiritual decadence, Swami Vivekananda discerned lofty spiritual ideas and ideals as the very basis of its structure. The Indians have to bring them out on the surface as well, when all that is crude, heartless, and weakening

[5] cf. Gita, VI, 29.

will disappear and they will become as healthy, virile, and vigorous as in the heyday of India's glory.

The modern dominant nations, on the other hand, appear to be pursuing the *preyas* ideal. Their outlook is materialistic, though most of them may sometimes swear by religion. In the course of the last three centuries in the materially advanced countries, religion has been relegated to the background, and there it remains not as a living force for moulding spiritual lives, but rather as an effete institution of crude dogmas and rituals that have very little appeal to the modern mind, and this again is used more or less like a 'Sunday cloak'. Among many the mention of God or of anything supermundane appears to have become almost a taboo, except, of course, by way of swearing. The immediate material well-being of their nationals is their sole concern and for this they are out for grabbing more wealth and more power. The politicians at the helm of the states seem to be loyal more to Machiavelli than to any code of ethical or spiritual laws. Their end is to safeguard and expand the material interest of their nations and any means, however low, that may serve this purpose is welcome. All sorts of dirty jobs become sanctified in the name of national interest. Spirituality is bartered openly for a mess of pottage. Men sink to the brute level and start revelling in fratricide and vandalism. The earth groans in agony.

The choice of the *preyas* ideal is at the root of this evil. The pursuit of material prosperity at the cost of spiritual well-being can lead the human race only to its extinction. The craze for the moment all over the world is to race recklessly through this suicidal course. 'Survival of the fittest' is their slogan. But this is a law of the jungle. Only brutes evolve according to this law. On the human plane it may produce at best gigantic brute-men, monstrous supermen who cannot but jeopardize the peace and security of mankind. The modern dominant nations are on the wrong track. They have raised, no doubt, splendid structures, but alas ! all on the loose sand of the *preyas* ideal. Swami Vivekananda felt that the entire civilization of the West at the moment was on the top of a volcano which might burst any moment and reduce to ashes the fruits of their age-old labour. He warned them that if their civilization were not thoroughly overhauled and placed securely on spiritual ideas and ideals, the entire structure would come down with a crash like a tower on sand. One devastating world war coming at the heels of another is, perhaps, a pointer to the stern truth of the Swami's reading. Who knows ?

Indeed the *preyas* ideal can give rise only to the *asuric* (monstrous) type of civilization. Its upholders are dominated by the greed and ferocity of brutes, only magnified, organized, maybe a bit refined on the exterior, and even sanctified by a diabolical twist. So long as this ideal is not replaced by the *shreyas* one, there cannot be any peace, individual, national, or international, and the votaries of the *asuric* type of civilization, if not edified in time, run the risk of disappearing altogether like the ancient Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Assyrians.

This is the calamity towards which the modern dominant nations are forging ahead, dragging the entire world with them. This has to be averted. Humanity has to be rescued from the fatal grip of materialism.

Herein lies precisely the mission of India. She has to hold aloft her banner of the *shreyas* ideal instead of yielding to the world-wide craze for gaining material ends at the cost of spiritual well-being. She has to preach both by precept and example how the pursuit of this ideal can give birth to a superior type of civilization. She has to demonstrate the benign glory that comes in its wake.

Men cannot become good by Acts of Parliament, nor by force of any kind. And till men become good, at least the leading ones, there cannot be peace on earth. Only if they are helped to grow spiritually towards perfection,

peace on earth may be secured. For the very existence of mankind, therefore, the spiritual well-being of the people should become the foremost concern of every nation. The law of the 'survival of the fittest' has to be replaced on the human plane by that of self-sacrifice and service. It was to this that the great spiritual personages of the world pointed by their hallowed lives and teachings. Buddha offered his head for saving the life of a goat. Christ on the cross prayed for the pardon of his ignorant assassins. It is by such complete effacement of the lower self that man can become divine. The path of self-sacrifice and service leads to this goal. This undoubtedly is the correct path of human progress. The spiritual teachers of the world, all prophets, seers, and saints, are the infallible guides on this road.

Religion consists in following the footprints of the great spiritual Masters and not merely in subscribing to a set of dogmas. Rama and Krishna, Buddha and Christ, Lao Tzu and Shankara, Mohammed and Chaitanya, Nanak and Ramanuja, and such others are the luminous models after which men have to fashion their lives; and all organizations, political, economic, or social, must aim at giving maximum scope to individuals for doing this. Every other interest of human life has to be subordinated to the supreme demand for spiritual progress. The great religions of the world have to be reinstalled in their glory. Purged of crudities imported by spiritually blind priests and preachers, they must again play the role of mighty purifiers of the human race.

India has her Vedanta that contains the rationale of all religions. The fundamental spiritual ideas and ideals held out by the Vedanta can breathe fresh life into all religions. The watchwords of the Vedanta, namely, the essential divinity of man and oneness of the universe in spirit are the secure planks on which all religions may take their stand and shake hands with one another, banishing for ever all narrow and fanatic, sectarian and communal ideas that have been darkening the pages of human history through the ages. These Vedantic truths explain how the selfsame God is pointed at by all the religions of the world. The same Universal Spirit, the philosopher's Ultimate Reality, is presented in different garbs by different religions. And He is within man as the essence of his being, as his higher self. Man has to bring out his essential divinity and become perfect in all his bearings. This is the goal towards which, consciously or unconsciously, he is moving. Nothing less than that will ever be able to give him that peace and happiness for which he has been breathlessly yearning and struggling all through his life. This is the blessed goal towards which the human race has to bend its steps.

Science and rational philosophy are all right so far as they go. But they cannot take us to the deeper and central truths. They leave us almost at the outskirts of the universe, within the bounds of the intellect, within the domain of time, space, and causation. Absolute Reality lies beyond all these, and It can be realized as one's very soul and as the soul of the universe. It is through the intuition of a pure heart that such realization can be achieved. This intuition is just another faculty of man, which, developed by necessary training, can lead him, step by step, towards the realization of the great transcendent truths. The training consists in the purification of the heart by gradual self-effacement. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,' said Christ. And this is no diplomat's hoax, it is the utterance of a simple truth by a seer. It is the statement of a spiritual law. A pure heart develops intuition and through that one realizes God, the Ultimate Reality, and attains thereby eternal peace and blessedness. Besides the Hindus, the followers of Buddha and Lao Tzu as well as the Sufi saints and the Christian mystics believed in this. This faith has to be revived and humanity has to be led on to rely more on pure intuition than on mere intellect for its further evolution on correct lines.

All the religions on earth teach us in detail how we may purify our hearts and approach divinity. If there is anything in them that does not help us cleanse our hearts, broaden our outlook, make us humble and selfless, and instil universal love in us that has nothing to do with religion, and that may very well be abjured without any loss to anybody. Thus purged of non-essential crudities, the religions have to stand on the fundamental spiritual truths and exert their benign influence all over the world for lifting up mankind from the brute plane.

India has to lead the way. Even her masses have an unshakable faith in things spiritual. She has not yet been led astray from the ancient track by the siren calls of materialism. She has the potency of extricating the soul-stirring spiritual ideas and ideals from the mass of crudities that has accumulated round her religions through centuries of spiritual inanition and of dynamizing with them her entire national life. When this is done India will stand rejuvenated and her unique civilization, illumined by the *shreyas* ideal, will serve over again as a beacon-light showing the correct path of human progress.

Indians have to do something more than what was possible in their past. On the secure basis of spirituality they have to erect an entirely new structure suited to the requirements of the modern age. They have to utilize every bit of material knowledge that modern science has discovered, they have to utilize the power of organization and resourcefulness of the West, and on the solid rock of spiritual ideas and ideals they have to build a magnificent civilization, evolving new economics, new sociology, and new politics. Into the *shreyas* ideal of the East the really good and useful elements of Western civilization have to be fitted as far as that is possible. This will go, as Swami Vivekananda predicted, to stir up a mighty spiritual renaissance all over the earth, rescuing humanity from the spells of the *preyas* ideal that would otherwise inevitably lead to its extinction. It is to fulfil such a great mission that India has been living through millenniums.

This is how Swami Vivekananda has made his countrymen conscious of the epoch-making achievements of their past, the potential strength of their present and the glorious mission of their future. In fact he laid a grave responsibility on the shoulders of every blessed child of this land. They have to fall in line and march under the glorious banner of the *shreyas* ideal. This will bring everything in its train, even material prosperity so far as it may be had without depriving and injuring others. And this will go a long way towards ushering in an era of peace and concord, harmony and co-operation all over the earth.

The wise, having realized Brahman in all beings, attains immortality.

—Upanishad

A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

A SEMI CENTURY'S STRIVING IN THE FIELDS OF BHARAT'S CULTURE

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

By St. NIHAL SINGH

1. THE GALVANIZER

'WATCH, my boy, watch,' said Mother. She took a pair of scissors, the edges ground very sharp. She turned up the circular wick in the tall kerosene-oil lamp then (late-eighteen-eighties) in use in the Punjab. This she trimmed with precision. 'See! See!' she exclaimed, in her masterful yet musical voice, 'how even—how perfectly even—it is all round.'

The wick lit, she deftly fitted the tall, slender, tubular chimney over the round flame. Gently lifting the shade from the table, she adjusted it with care that even I, wee child that I was, could see it was extraordinarily great. 'These things are too precious,' she remarked, 'and the servants are too careless to be trusted with such expensive lamps. Your father obtained this from far-away Madras. It cost a hundred rupees. He values it very highly. We must take good care of it.'

A moment or two later she went to another part of the house. Because of her talk, the flame fascinated me. Suddenly an overwhelming desire surged within my heart. What if I were to turn the wick higher—ever so little higher. Would the light become brighter?

I turned up the wick—ever so little. The light became brighter. There could be no doubt of it.

Having, in my own estimation, done better than Mother, I proceeded with the experiment. She was still somewhere indoors. No one was near, no one to say Don't.

The wick went up—and up. I had not been at that, to me a new game, for two or three moments, at least so it seemed to be, when there was a sudden crash. Chimney and shade lay in a score of splinters. A piece had flown against my cheek—had actually singed it. I began to cry.

'Playing with fire,' commented Mother, more sad than wroth. She had instantly taken in the situation upon hurrying into the room, attracted by the noise, or was it my cries?

So had I, her junior by nearly twenty years. A law of Nature had leapt into my understanding. It had lodged there. From thence forward I was to know that heat accompanies light—that that heat has power—that that power is often explosive in character.

* * *

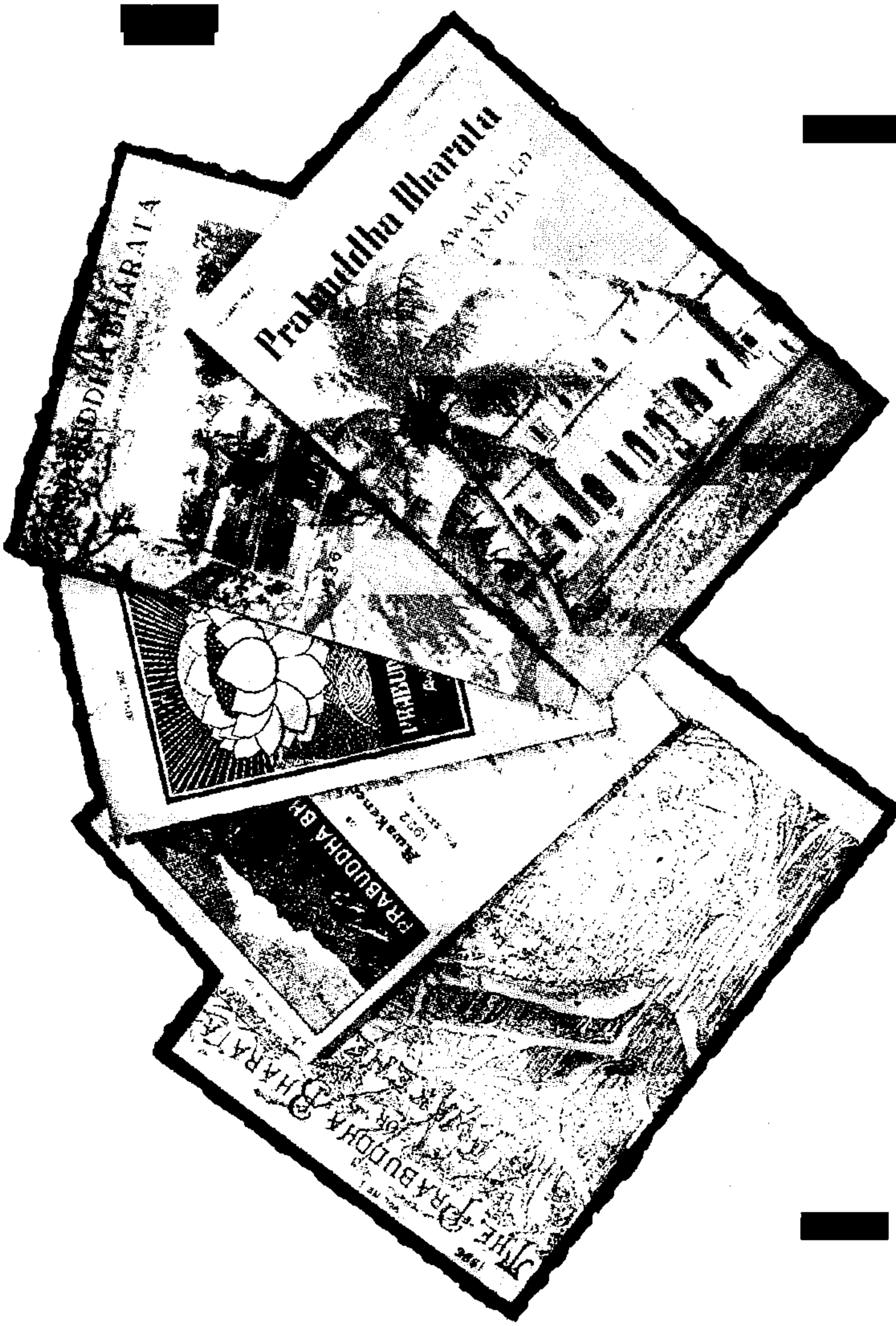
Had the Swami Vivekananda's personality lacked power while his eye was lit with knowledge of all the universes (I use the word in the plural to make it the vehicle of our conceptions), this magazine might not have existed today nor would I write about its life and work for the Special Number that is being issued to mark its semi-centennial anniversary. Illumination, by itself, would not have sufficed for his mission upon earth in the circumstances in which the Motherland was placed at the moment of his advent.

India then was in *samadhi* (a trance) superinduced by a magic wand of alien manufacture waved by materialism masquerading as science. The glazed eyes were, for the nonce, incapable of perceiving any ray, however brilliant. A peal of thunder was needed if there was to be an awakening. Need there was also for the flame of power that consumed dross. Dross had gathered within the breast of the Motherland as she lay prone in the trance of 'inferiority complex.' Slave psychology made us oblivious of our ancient culture. Some of us even derived joy in deriding our ancestors' achievements.

If the Master had the dazzling brilliance of Indra's sky pyrotechnics, he also had the peal of thunder and the crash and consuming heat of the rain-god's bolt.

This I realized, even as a schoolboy. He visited the Punjab less than a decade from the day when I had experimented with light and found that it is accompanied by heat—heat that may be explosive in character.

Only persons alive to this twofold quality of that great being can interpret his life and living word with any degree of fidelity and force. This little dynamo that he had charged and named the *Prabuddha Bharata* —Awakened India—in 1896, some six years prior to closing his mortal eyes on America's Independence Day (July 4th), must inevitably partake of that twofold quality. Its record must be judged by this exacting standard.



Prabuddha Bharata AT DIFFERENT STAGES

Has it shed illumination from the flare of culture—our culture—any culture?

Has it generated power to liberate the mind and to set free the soul for purposes of the highest individual endeavour—endeavour directed not merely towards personal profit, be that profit no other than *moksha* (salvation), but also towards social good?

2. THE FIRST IMPULSE

I have lying upon the desk at which I am writing a volume. It measures $10\frac{3}{4}$ by $8\frac{1}{6}$ inches. It still bears upon its face marks of having been carefully tooled by skilful hands. Its owner, it is quite evident, set great store by the 24 issues of the magazine he thus sought to preserve from the ravages of time. That they have lasted 50 years since the first of them was shot out of the inky bed of the press, most probably worked by hand, is doubtless due to his forethought and the loving care given by persons into whose safe custody he committed it prior to journeying to the bourne beyond mortal ken.

B. R. RAJAM AIYAR

Our climate, with its drought alternating with wet weather, either usually extreme, is cruelly hard upon the works of writers and printers. It serves as a most efficient instrument for the Lord Siva whose function it is to dissolve all that has been compounded of matter, so that his brother-deities—Brahma and Vishnu—who fashion and foster new forms—may have ample material to work with.

A few of the pages within the volume are split longitudinally, in two. The substance of some of the others has perished in places, particularly at the outer edges and the corners.

Yet just the sight of these moth-eaten, tattered pages whirls me back a half-century. The snow strewn by Father Time lies heavily upon the thatch, still noticeably thick, over my head: but, in fancy, I am again a schoolboy. His knowledge of the rulers' tongue, thanks to the pains taken by his sire, is precociously large. He nevertheless must have recourse to the lexicon every minute or two and then understand only a little of the *Prabudha Bharata* (as the magazine is called), of which that sire, religious-minded for his early manhood, is a devoted reader. In point of fact I occupy a chair in the verandah fronting the eternal Himalya; but, in imagination, I am none-the-less seated in a small town in the Punjab lying a few miles to the north-west of the place where the Satluj quits its hard, rocky, Himalyan bed for the soft, pliant mud that its waters are to fructify.

The best remembered page is the title. Sometimes it was white, often faint green in the issue as it was received, month by month, from Madras. It bore upon its face a scene that etched itself upon my memory. I do not need to look at it in the volume lying alongside me, in order to describe it.

A *bor* (Punjabi for banyan) tree sprawled across the page. Its trunk was large and vital looking. Living ropes were twisted round it. Brown garlands were they—garlands that had become embedded in the bark. Others hung from powerful boughs. They reminded me of tassels depending from the bridegroom's turban as he rode, in joyous procession, towards the blossom-bedecked, leafy bower where he was to be united in holy wedlock to his bride.

Near the foot of the trunk sat a sage. His hair, long as Nature meant it to be, was coiled upon the top of his head in a knot that we Sikhs call *joora*. I can even now hear

Father calling my attention to that fact.

The beard fell over the *rishi's* breast, bare, as indeed was his whole body down to the waist. From the tight *kach* (the Sikh word for knickers) protruded his legs. Only up to the knee were they visible, however. The fore-leg and feet were hidden by the haunches as they reposed upon the *mrig-asana* (deer skin) upon which he was sitting.

A tiny stand that folded up, (of a kind even now in use) touched an edge of this skin. Upon it reposed a book, wrapped in cloth—a clear indication that it contained food for the soul, it was sacred. A half inch or so away was the water-vessel—the *Karumandala*—that holy men carry, originally made from a calabash (double-gourd).

The sage's left hand rested in his lap. The other was held up as if he was emphasizing some point or points.

Two boys sat in front of the *rishi*. Their bodies were bare save for the *dhoti*, its folds elaborately indicated. They were apparently all eyes.

In the 'middle distance' two deer stood, both majestically antlered, one at a little distance from the other. 'They, too, are listening to the *rishi*,' my father's comment, echoes in my ears. I also recall that I said that they must have been pets—they were, at least, utterly unafraid.

Under the tassels hanging from the foremost bough stood a couple. They puzzled my boy mind. The man was wearing a hat that, in terms of information later acquired, was of straw plaited into crown and brim. Alongside him was a *mem* (corruption, no doubt, of madam—ma'am, in the patois of the London house servants, as I was to discover in time). Dressed as every British woman theretofore seen by me, she held an umbrella (the term parasol had not yet entered my sadly limited vocabulary) with the ferrule firmly resting against the earth.

Right behind them were trees similar in species to those from which I had often plucked dates—soft, black, juicy, syrup. In among the palms were thatched huts. One of them looked like a miniature *dak* (travellers') bungalow. (Many of these and even the large houses in which the *sahibs* then dwelt, with their *mems* and children, were roofed with straw).

Even with my mind only half-formed, I realized that this couple did not fit into the scene in front of me. I felt that these two somehow did not 'belong' there. Why were they gaping at the sage and his students, as to me they seemed to be doing?

An idea that I regarded as brilliant entered my head. They were, perhaps, putting up at the *Dak Bungalow*. Out for a stroll, they had come upon the *rishi* and were trying to listen to what he was teaching his pupils.

My father, who may have read the explanation offered in one of the early issues of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, explained the riddle in language that even my boy mind could comprehend. What the *rishi* was teaching, I was told, was good for everybody in the world—not only for Indians. The *sahib* and his *mem*, were listening to it as those Madrasis were, because of this. These two foreigners would profit from it as would Indians—Indians from north and from south, from east and from west.

Father told me of the sage who, at that very moment—some time in 1896-7, most likely that very winter—was expounding Indian thought somewhere in *Wilayat* (a term comprehending Europe and America). He was a great Teacher. The language he used was simple. Yet it was both vivid and vital. It was as attractive as was his personality.

This magazine had been started by one of the sage's devotees. His name was B. R. Rajam Aiyar. He was a Madrasi.

* * *

The magazine spread his Swami's (Master's)—Vivekananda's—message to humanity. In terms of money it was as cheap as it was valuable in content. It cost only Rs. 1-8-0 a year. An issue worked out at two annas including the postage.

A few months after I had become conscious of the magazine (October, 1897) the great Swami himself came to the Punjab. His personality and phraseology lifted us—

adolescents and adults alike—off our feet. Of that upliftment I sought to give a picture in my *India's Awakener*: *The Master and the Magazine*.[1]

His coming to us vivified my interest in this monthly visitor to our home. A few years later I was living in Sarnath with the Anagarika[2] Dharmapala (afterwards the Bikku—[3] Devamitta), who had been with the Swami at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September, 1893, and loved and honoured the great Indian. In a letter addressed, in the summer of 1896 from (I believe) London, to the Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, he welcomed the birth of the magazine with the warmth that was characteristic of him—by far the most inspiring personality born in modern times in Sri Lanka (as I am glad her sons and daughters wish her to be known henceforth):

'All hail to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. I send herewith one pound sterling in the name of the Maha Bodhi Society for the *Prabuddha Bharata*. May the mellifluous fragrance purify the materialistic atmosphere of fallen India! Your efforts will be crowned with success and *Prabuddha Bharata* will surely awaken the lethargic sons of *Bharat Varsha*.'[4]

In the Bikku's library I found in 1903 or 1904, the back numbers of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. I read and re-read them. Much of that which to me had been obscure during my early teens in the Punjab was easily comprehended in my early manhood in Sarnath.

I am one of that band, now I fear very small, who has known this magazine through its entire life. This, I suppose, is the reason for the kindly, capable head of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati—the Swami Pavitrananda—prevailing upon me to prepare this account for the semi-centennial memorial number.

[1] The *Prabuddha Bharata* for December, 1944, pp. 430-435.

[2] The homeless one.

[3] After his people's (Sinhalese) fashion, Dharmapala used to leave out the aspirates. So did the Tathagatha, he would say. The Buddha gave his message to the masses, not to the select few. He used, therefore, the prakrit (vernacular) of the lowly, not the Samskrit (refined language) of the cultured.

[4] *Prabuddha Bharata* for July, 1896—inside of back cover, printed in red.

(This article will be reproduced in the ordinary issue of the Prabuddha Bharata, *and the rest of the story will be continued in succeeding months.*—Ed. P. B.)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND MODERN SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

BY SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA

There blossomed in lonely and lovely splendour in the garden of Dakshineswar in the middle of the last century, a flower of divine and heavenly fragrance whose radiance is not yet fully diffused in human society. Like a city set on a hill Sri Ramakrishna draws the gaze of the world which keeps wondering at the significance of his life and message for modern times. He seems like a comet which has 'swum to our ken' out of the vast infinite and passed out into the unseen as quickly as it came, speaking a voice which we half understand and half fail to grasp.

It is difficult and almost impossible to understand and appreciate him and his message in the setting of modern thought with its emphasis on material power and splendour. Can the concentrated spirituality which this God-man's life represents ever be made to minister to our material ideas of sense comforts? The answer is a decided 'no'. He never made an attempt to fit his life to modern society. Moved by an infinite compassion, like a father for his erring children he

pressed the whole world to his bosom and kept it warm. With his wonderful catholicity of spirit, he did not leave out any votary of religion, and found a place for all, and called all to him not in patronizing kindness but in the ecstatic madness of love for his beloved ones.

He made no attempt to compromise his teaching and life to the follies and foibles of modern mankind. He was not at all a product of his surroundings, but was born with the strength and clarity of vision which comes to those who live in hourly and daily communion with God. He was plunged into divine ecstasy times without number during a day. He threw the charm of his personality and the healing balm of his message on society. He tried to lift human society to the heights on which he lived, but never lowered his message to mundane levels. That was the peculiarity which differentiates him from all modern teachers. While all other teachers tried to fit their message to life, to apply it to life so that life might be enriched, aggrandized, and its full fruits drawn out, he did the opposite. He wanted to raise the human life forcibly to his spiritual heights, leaving the human values to follow as best as they could, if necessary to disappear in the process. In his vision and life there is a great deal of realization which cannot be brought down to sense demonstration. But humanity has to ascend to empyrean heights, sacrificing a good deal of human values which it now hugs to itself. To bathe in the light of the spirit, to bask in the sunshine of divine grace means 'Earth's light must grow dim, its joys vanish'.

Who will understand this necessary precondition to human progress and advancement? We cannot hug both the earth and the heaven in the same embrace. The former must be relentlessly sacrificed for the latter. This is what differentiates in one stroke his life or message from all others. We may make hundreds of attempts to make spirituality and material life run in parallel lines. But these must fail. Gradually the senses creep in and spirituality becomes a vanishing quantity. Ultimately we have to sacrifice all for His sake. The Western world tries to harmonize material prosperity with spirituality, but has it succeeded? The result has been tragic; spirituality has been dragged into the mire, made to minister and give support to all racial, national passions, prejudices, and desires to enjoy and rule. All this material prosperity which the West has gathered to itself at the sacrifice of all else—is it a manifestation of spiritual power and grace? A Christ, or a Buddha, or a Ramakrishna would have denied such heresies. The West is now learning to its cost. The lesson is being driven home with guns, ammunition, and bayonets that that way lies ruination and tragedy of the human soul which is slaughtered before the twin gods of lust and mammon.

Sir John Woodroffe, the great English orientalist, steeped in Eastern lore, and in Western science and philosophy, wrote to the present writer when he was Editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata* thus: 'Indian civilization will come to its own when ours will have run its course—and that very soon.' His words are prophetic. Another great orientalist, Dr. Horace Hayman Wilson, wrote to a great Indian in 1834:

> Eating, ostentation, and politics are the sum total of our existence. I have a very meagre opinion of my countrymen. You are much happier and much more soberly and rationally occupied than the good people of London though they think they are the wisest and best in the world. I prefer by far the good sense of my friends in the East, particularly my native friends. There is great talent here, no doubt, but less concentration. . . .

Those of us who have lived in the West and seen things with spiritual eyes have not yet all been impressed by the manifestation of luxury, power, and enjoyment. On the other hand, they have found, as Sir John Woodroffe has said, that 'Western life is riven through and through with economic and political jealousies'. Swami Vivekananda also said, 'Aye, they (the West) hide rancour, hatred, jealousy, and competition behind their material prosperity'.

Spirituality cannot be harmonized with excessive material prosperity. This is a

hard lesson to grasp, yet the tragedy of events will one day surely drive it home to us. In Western teaching spirituality has all been tainted with other earthwise trends; 'this objectivity', this attempt to bring down heaven to earth, Kant's 'ding an sich', Hegel's absolute,—these have all this objective taint, whereas all our philosophers have all along said that the Infinite cannot be brought down to earth, cannot be manifested through the finite, and we must begin a return march (*nivritti*). It does not thereby suffer any diminution of its worth and value, which remain in absolute and undiminished splendour in its unmanifested nature. Christianity is essentially an Eastern teaching nourished by the hard racial material of Teuton and Roman natures. And it has thereby suffered in this process. It has become objective, gross, and crude. When one reads of Christians, with the Cross in front, running in battle to conquer heathens and to get the inheritance of the heathens—one finds an instance of this coarsening process. The Spanish conquests in Mexico is an example of Christ's teaching made to minister to our earthly power and sovereignty over our fellow-men. Christ would have denied such heresies. Christ's teaching has this heavenly subjectivity, interpreting spirit in the realm of the spirit, worshipping God in spirit and truth. Hence the note of renunciation that breathes through it, the aroma of divine fragrance, promise of a heavenly land beyond the vale, free from the prison and bondage and limitation of the sense life as we know it on earth. It is like a breath of heaven to earth-scorched souls. Take note of the heavenly words:

> Take no thought of the morrow, what ye shall drink, for the nations of the earth seek after them. But seek ye rather the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and everything else shall be added unto you.

Here the material conditions of life are remorselessly put down at the feet of the spiritual. A supreme carelessness, nonchalance, and defiance of eating, drinking and sense power, how they have been turned topsyturvy in the modern Western world! Things which should, according to the heavenly words of Christ, come free as gifts of nature and God to man, the wherewithal to feed ourselves and clothe ourselves and to which we should not give more than a passing thought—have been made the be-all and end-all of existence. It has been dignified and elevated to the highest *purushârtha*. 'Money-getting has entered into the bone and marrow of our existence' (William James). The whole struggle is for that; whoever succeeds in this unholy game becomes the great one of society. It is man's greed and lust of possessions that has made all this difference. Otherwise with simplification of life which the great ones of the earth have preached, nature provides bountifully for all.

The spiritual struggle, then, is to establish the old spiritual adjustment. Shake down the material ideas from their seat of plenitude and power, and prevent man from being a money-getting machine by his growing dependence on matter. This is essentially a spiritual process. The adjustment of the outward mechanism of society, its economic structure, its political framework have very little to do with it. They will follow as obedient servants when the spiritual balance is set right. It is tragic to think what disproportionate efforts are made to adjust the outside mechanism of society leaving man's unregenerate nature untackled. This is the villain of the peace, and has brought about want where there is plenty, struggle where there is love. Who stops to think of it?

Look at this star of the first magnitude which has risen in the spiritual horizon of modern times. See how his benign influence sheds upon us a heavenly peace and clarity of vision! Here is a life which is full of the concentrated essence of spirit, not a touch of matter. What a wonderful life, what a colourful life, full of lively human interest and vividness of detail! He is the true benefactor of humanity who will give it his spiritual inheritance, now dispossessed of it by the usurper, the demon of lust and gold. His life is a drama of wonderful interest; he

was essentially a divine dramatist (as Sir F. Younghusband has remarked); he is an object-lesson to humanity on love, charity, and sweet-souled tolerance of all faiths and their followers. Who has heard of such intensity of love with which he loved his fellow-men? How men should live and move in this life and love each other, and how they should find employment for their energies in the acquirement of spiritual vision and divine revelation, and the blessedness of the peace that passeth all understanding; how they should look on the world around and learn to find this divine love reflected in the human face, so that lover and loved become fused into one mass of transcendental love; that is the essential significance of his life. Material conditions of life are at his feet. Yet he renounces them all. The love of gold and lust is completely absent in him, and in their place reigns the love of God and His devotees. What a blessed transfiguration of life! Material life is transcended, dwarfed purposely, lowered in order to set free the spirit on its divine flight. This is the essential message of the great ones of the earth. We in the East have deliberately built society upon that, upon possession of the least, upon peace and renunciation of pugnacious aggression. We have suffered in the historical pageant, we have been conquered and tyrannized over, but we must pay the price of the spiritual outlook on life at all costs and in all weathers. One must be sacrificed, if need be, for the sake of the other. We mean to hold on to the soul, to peacefulness, to purposeful limitation of material life to the end of our days. We shall have spiritual strength and peace and joy; the pain and pleasure of the body are inevitable to human life; we defy them.

In the case of other great ones the record of their life is meagre in details, much is omitted; so the divine figures that we read about in the pages of the Bible and the *Tripitaka* are not full of vivid and life-like interest like that of Sri Ramakrishna. He has lived near to our times, his life has been noted and delineated with a wealth of details by his faithful and devoted evangelist Sri M. that leaves nothing to be desired. The intimate touches of his life, how he lived and moved and loved, and lost himself in the ecstasy of divine love of God and man, are heavenly tales told in a heavenly way by Sri M. It fans the smouldering embers of spirituality into a roaring flame.

Indeed this new depiction of the life of Sri Ramakrishna makes the lives of Christ, Buddha, and Chaitanya ten times more intelligible, lovable, and fit for communion. They are all held in a golden thread of harmony and unity, and Jerusalem and Brindavan and Dakshineswar meet in a holy confluence of pilgrimages where bathe the votaries of all religions. Such a high destiny has been opened to mankind by Sri Ramakrishna. We can meet in all temples, churches and mosques, and embrace all and meet in love. Infinite spiritual vistas have been opened to us. It is enough spiritual pabulum to humanity to the end of the ages. What more do we want? What greater outlet to human energies, what greater ways leading humanity to glory and peace need we seek?

DRYNESS IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

By Gerald Heard

Once anyone realizes that real growth of the spirit can be made he becomes interested in method. He sees that not only no longer need he leave his life to accident, he need no longer drift and look to amusement to give living whatever meaning it may have: he sees that he must set about intentional living, he must undertake training, he must co-ordinate all his activities and his whole way of life along the path which has appeared and

toward the goal at which that path aims. This insight, or foresight, raises a number of questions. How is he to set about his new task? How much of his past life, which was based upon deliberate distraction and amusement, can remain? When anyone changes over from a way of living in which it was taken for granted that however you lived, the fundamental fact was that Life meant nothing and went nowhere, to a way of living in which the meaning of Life is apprehended and the place of the individual in that scheme has been discovered, then there must be very considerable modification of the things that are done as well as of the thoughts that are thought. Right Livelihood, the fifth step in the Eightfold Path to Liberation and Enlightenment, is something more than abstention from certain debarred occupations and professions such as armament manufacturing or white slave trafficking. It is even something more than abstaining from gambling in Stocks and Bonds or from being absorbed in the advertising business. It is getting rid of everything which may distract one's attention from the one end and purpose of living. Many things which are obviously of no particular harm to any one else have to be put out of the way not because they are harmful in themselves but because they take up too much time and attention when all the time one has and all the attention which one can command are required for the one main purpose which now makes meaning of every moment. Most people think that as long as what they do harms no one else and is not unhealthy for them there is no reason why they should not enjoy themselves in that way. This familiar standard of morality cannot, however, satisfy those who have found the meaning of their life. For them every moment is precious and every ounce of attention is husbanded to bring them as soon as may be to their goal.

But once that is clear to them, and once they have resolved that so alone they can live, they have to ask, How best may I get to my End? Most of us find that the discovery that life has a meaning, a meaning as urgent as it is vast, breaks on us with a shock of surprise and also delight. 'So after all that we see about us, the pointless lives of most individuals, the blind clash of classes, the hideous anarchy of the nations, Life has a meaning, it goes somewhere, we can go with it.' That is the huge wave of relief. The accepted nightmare which drives men to addictions, to possessiveness, to pride and violence and despair, is false. Then comes also the wave of counter-concern. If that is true, then there is not a moment to be wasted. Already one has wasted so much. 'Work while ye have the light; the night cometh when no man may work.' It is urgent not to waste a moment more of the all too few hours of daylight. So there is a double pressure urging us to use every second. There is the attraction of the goal and there is the rapidly passing opportunity of working on the means to the goal. This sense of stress and attraction undoubtedly sometimes makes beginners suffer from anxiety and a kind of febrile haste. This may be one of the causes of disappointment and that giving out of interest which is generally called 'dryness.' There is much need here, it is obvious, for good teaching and wise guiding. Even if we start young, which is uncommon in the West, we are by nature an impatient lot and all human beings, whether of the East or the West seem to have this other factor in common that their lives are run on what we may call an 'alternating' rather than on a 'continuous' current. With the best will in the world and with the wisest training it does not seem possible for them to avoid a certain, and perhaps a necessary fluctuation. Now this it is which it is so difficult for the ardent and anxious beginner to endure and it is here therefore that it is very interesting to try and compare the findings both of the masters of the West and also of the East as to how far this ebb and flow is necessary and how far the fluctuations—like those of unemployment—may be 'flattened out' as the economists say, so as to save the booms and slumps. The obvious question here is whether the slumps—as in employment—might not be saved, by 'back-pedelling' when the booms are on. Psychologists have taught for a long

while those of their patients who have a tendency to too big a fluctuation, and so are honoured with the fine frenzied title of Manic-Depressive Types, to check the moment of elation and so save themselves from the moment of depression. But, beyond this very natural and practical advice, may we not learn more? Quite obviously there are a number of rules for the spiritual life which apply to all of us whether we are stolid or excitable. There is a lower limit of observance and practice below which if we go we shall be simply slothful and not making any real effect on the will and the character. After all, we are like people in a ship which has a leak and which is making for the shore. We must work at a certain pace at the pumps or the water will gain on us, rising in the hold and we shall founder before we can be safely beached. But there is also a higher limit, a limit above which strain comes on. To use the same simile again: there comes a time when the crew may wear itself out in pumping and so have to abandon their labour before the shore is reached. The leak cannot be wholly stopped, what we have to do (at least we beginners) is to keep the water level down, to keep on pumping out more or at least as much as is coming in. Now our question is where do those limits lie? To take another simile, this time from Alpine Climbing. The young when they go out with an experienced guide are always surprised at the slow and almost loitering pace at which he starts. They cannot endure this dilatoriness. They swing off ahead but when the sun is up and the higher slopes are reached, he passes them, for they have to sit down exhausted in order to get back their strength. His set pace is a thought out balance between fatigue and the distance to be covered and the time for covering that distance. It is significant that all Alpine distances are given not in kilometres but in hours and minutes—it is a well thought out race, however slow it looks, a race between the time before the sun will set and the energy at the climber's disposal. Some violent fluctuations would therefore seem to be due to lack of foresight on our part. After all, risks are nearly always taken and accidents nearly always happen because we will not look ahead, suddenly see an oncoming difficulty and try to get out of it without sufficient time in which to make the necessary change.

But there are deeper rules of fluctuation and of ebb and flow which do not seem due to our present mistakes and carelessness or under our present control. In learning a language, a golf-swing, the piano, in every skill where knowledge has to combine with knack and blend into skill, there seems a wave-motion, an ebb and flow. There is a period of rapid surface-mind learning and then a disappointing ebb when even that which was thought to have been mastered disappears. It seems possible that during this disappointing time some deeper process is going on, what may perhaps be called a period of storage and profound modification and, again it may be, no new knowledge or knack could safely be taken in unless first of all the first load had been safely stowed and room and relation found for it in the ways and means, the methods and functions of the body-mind. We are probably far more full up than we know and a new knowledge and power must always mean a modification of old ones. But still again beyond this recognition of gaps, and waits and periods when we seem to 'lose way' as sailors say and 'hang fire,' there are deeper dips. What of those states which the Western saints and contemplatives call, The Dark Nights of the Soul? Here a number of difficulties confront the researcher. First there is the difficulty of the words themselves. Do all the writers mean the same thing when they use this same title? It seems difficult to think that they do. For example a textual authority on Western Mysticism such as Dr. W. R. Inge gives in his collection of Excerpts from various spiritual authorities (*Freedom, Love and Truth*, pp. 160-161) as examples of the Dark Night passages from Ruysbroek and the Theologia Germanica—two sources near one another in date and place. But the Ruysbroek passage where he talks of an Autumn of maturing fruits after the lush springing of summer seems to refer to Dryness and a

fruitful dryness at that, a rich reflection after a high experience, and not to the deep despairs and utter emptying of 'Naughting.' Ruysbroek mentions physical losses and hardships as being part of his 'Autumn.' The desolation of the Night seems in other cases so profound that they would be quite unaware if they were given all the health in the world or lost their closest relations. The Theologia Germanica says the Soul is sent to Hell and medievalists did not use that term lightly. The loss of the Presence that alone counts and to regain That is the one hope. In these latter cases, then, there does not seem a storage, an autumn harvesting going on. Rather, it would seem we might say, the very barn itself is being harvested, cut down and taken to pieces. Here we seem past the acquiring of virtues and the abandonment of vices and specific weaknesses. It is the very Self itself which is being challenged and attacked. Eckhart, who does not seem to say much about the Dark Night as a specific term—perhaps because he welcomed it—yet teaches a path which certainly with most good people would lead to acute distress. He says that there are three things which keep us from God and, it would seem, three stages whereby we may and do return to Him. The first is by losing ourselves from our specific sins, the second is by loosening ourselves from all sense of self and the third by loosening ourselves from Time. Many a Westerner when he reads even those introductory lines of Emerson's

> The High Gods pine for My Abode
> And pine for me the Sacred Seven;
> But thou, meek lover of the Good,
> Find Me, and turn thy back on Heaven.

feel a certain chill. And certainly Christianity has never been comfortable with what its teachers called Oriental Nihilism, though, it is all the more important to note, that all the master saints of Christendom as they climb beyond a certain height seem to view the same prospect which so daunts those on the lower levels.

Perhaps such high matters should not concern beginners. Perhaps all we on our level have to fear is quite common laziness, the wish for comfort and excitement, the impatience with the slow assimilation, the lack of advance because we will not let fall much that makes, by its weight and back pull, our advance necessarily slower than it need be, would we abandon more. Still the problem remains as one of interest to all students of humanity. How much of our difficulties, even the difficulties of the advanced, is due to ignorance, which greater knowledge could remove, and how much is due to the necessities of the case? An entomologist was particularly anxious to hatch out successfully a valuable moth which had been found in its cocoon stage. The moment came when it began to emerge. It was watched with delighted care. But just when the dangerous emergency seemed safely over, one of the beautiful wings, which made so largely the value of the specimen, remained caught in the husk of the cocoon. In vain the animal seemed to struggle to get free and at last it semed quite clear to the anxious watcher that the insect's strength was failing and that it must die in the vain struggle. As it lay helpless and exhausted on its side, trapped and inert, the watcher snipped with sterilized scissors the stiffened edge of the cocoon. The wing was released. The insect crawled out free. But it could not fly; the specimen was ruined. The wing remained curled and shrivelled. That final struggle to the limits of life and strength seems to have been necessary. The circulation was not driven into the delicate veins of the wing and so it could not expand. The agonizing effort was not merely to get free but to grow whole, not merely to get out into the new world of winged flight but to have, full of power and energy, the fully unfolded wings, without which the new and larger life was vain and a mockery. So it may be with our struggles. We may be made, not merely to win the larger life, but, through the agony of effort, to attain the powers and capacities and the quality of consciousness to function fully and rightly in that life.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MAN AFTER DEATH

By Swami Vividishananda

I

As the life after death takes us to a realm which is as yet beyond the range of scientifically verifiable observation and experiment, we can either indulge in speculation or deduce conclusions from evidence furnished by our scriptures. In the Upanishads, the Gita, the Puranas, and other authoritative books there are passages which throw a flood of light on the subject. Such scriptural evidence as does not contradict reason, being based upon supersensuous experiences of illumined seers and sages, is the only evidence which can help us here.

In the journey of the soul, the dying moment, the time of its exit from this world, has always been considered a crucial or decisive moment, because the thought that is uppermost at this time colours and shapes the future of the soul. Says Krishna in the Gita: 'Remembering whatever object, at the end, he leaves the body, that alone is reached by him, O Son of Kunti, because of the constant thought of that object' (VIII. 6). The thought that a person holds at the moment of his death epitomizes the thought of his entire life. So, during that crucial moment, before he breathes his last, he re-enacts on a small scale the drama that he has played throughout his life. The highlights of his joys and sorrows, his achievements and disappointments, his passions and prejudices, his virtues and vices come back to him, and he re-lives, as it were, his entire life during that twilight hour. One who has been spiritually inclined, making the realization of God the ideal of his life, will perhaps snatch this moment for thinking about God and looking forward to greater gains in devotion, selflessness, purity, and enlightenment. A worldly person who has cared more for the pleasures of the senses, being extremely attached to his body and possessions, will perhaps be most worldly at that moment and be reluctant to go. The scriptures enjoin, therefore, spiritual pre-occupations at the moment of death.

The state which follows death has been described as the borderland leading to planes of consciousness, higher or lower. Earth-bound souls and those who meet violent death or rashly commit suicide, stay longer in this borderland, living a morbid life of despair, pain, and suspense, neither belonging to this earth nor being able to pass on to other planes, veritable clouds hanging in mid air. They can be released from this condition by surviving relatives and friends through specific prayers and acts of charity. In our country we have the custom, immediately after the death of a person, and later on periodically, of performing a ritual called the Shrâddha ceremony, which has a similar end in view. It is supposed to help the departed person by releasing him from an earth-bound condition and also by promoting his onward march toward the goal of life.

This earth which has been called in Sanskrit Bhuh Loka is synonymous with the human plane. Although it has many limitations, governed as it is by the dual forces of good and evil, the human plane is in one sense the most covetable, for it is here, in this Karma Bhumi or field of action, that the embodied soul works anew, living a chequered life of pleasure and pain, and finally wins its freedom from the law of Karma and rebirth. As contrasted with this earth, the planes belonging to the other world are called Bhoga Bhumis, the planes of enjoyment, because there the soul does not undertake anything new, but simply enjoys the fruits of what has already been done on the human plane. Just as the human plane requires of an embodied soul a gross vehicle called the gross body, without which it cannot function, so must the planes of the other world have cor-

responding vehicles, and these vehicles are formed out of fine particles of matter called Bhutasukshma, after the dissolution of the gross body. Like the human plane, the planes of the other world represent orders of consciousness and existence ruled by laws peculiar to themselves, and should not be identified with the planets and stars.

These planes range in order of fineness and ascendency as Bhuvah, Swah, Mahah, Jana, Tapah, and Satya. Sometimes some of them have been designated by other names. The Lokas Bhuvah and Swah are the worlds inhabited respectively by the Pitris and Devas, and these Lokas correspond to the heavens of the Christians and Mohammedans. They are in a way finer counterparts of the human plane, being free from some of the evils attendant on men, such as sickness, old age, shortness of life, poverty, disappointment and so on. The embodied soul that engages in charitable acts selfishly or specifically desires and works for the pleasures of these two planes generally goes there, and by such acts such a soul simply forges fresh chains for itself. It lives its life of relative immortality and uninterrupted pleasure which comes to it because of its desires and deeds. The Loka called Mahah is a higher plane, reserved for those who engage in unselfish works without having any spiritual understanding; it is something like a corridor leading to the still higher and spiritual worlds meant for highly developed souls. We can imagine that souls who have struggled hard and made great strides in spirituality journey to the Lokas called Jana, Tapah and Satya, and live a supremely exalted life of contemplation and meditation, enjoying genuine peace and bliss.

In the Upanishads and other books we read of specific paths which the souls follow and of guides who help them forward in their journey. For instance, Pitri Yana is the path which is comparatively dark and hard and leads souls to the Lokas Bhuvah, Swah, Mahah; Deva Yana is the path of light, which leads souls to the Lokas Jana, Tapah and Satya. One has to return to the human plane after exhausting one's good Karma in any of the five planes other than the Satya Loka. The Satya Loka represents the highest order of spiritual existence and consciousness, affording one the highest spiritual felicity and final emancipation from all bondages at the time of the dissolution of that plane at the end of a cycle.

Corresponding to the so-called heavens like Bhuvah and Swah, there are lower orders of existence and consciousness whither the embodied souls repair to work out an exceptionally vicious Karma by extreme suffering. One may call them hells if one so chooses; but they are as temporary as the Lokas Bhuvah, Swah and others.

II

The story of the soul's return journey to this earth and its reincarnation is very interesting, although scriptural passages which deal with it are shrouded in obscurity. Guided instinctively by its Karma, desires and tendencies, the embodied soul gravitates toward the family and environment where it can best express itself, even as water seeks its own level. The parents of whom it is reborn, furnish it simply with the suitable channel that it needs. Herein lies the difference between the scientific approach with its answer to the problem of life and the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation.

The last point for discussion in this article is as follows: What are the stages of the growth of the soul (Jiva)? Has it arrived at the human stage by following a process of slow and gradual evolution, as taught by Darwin and scientists of his school? Thousands of years before Darwin and his school dreamt of the theories of evolution and the origin of species, the Hindu seers came to the conclusion that human birth is the fruit of experiences extending over countless years, and the soul has had to go through all the various stages of life, namely, fish, reptile, bird, and mammal. In the Vishnu Purana there is a passage which graphically describes this gradual evolutionary process with many interesting details. The soul, whether it has the tenement of a moss, a microbe, a bird, a

monkey, or a man, is in essence the same. It is the Atman or Spirit—Absolute Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss, even if it happens to become embodied when its consciousness is clouded.

This question leads us to the further question as to whether souls are evolving uniformly without having to go back to lower stages. We have reasons to believe that souls progress uniformly until they reach the human stage which represents, as a species, the topmost rung of the ladder of evolution. Even human beings ordinarily are not likely to go back to the lower stages of plant and animal life, but under exceptional circumstances there may be what may appear as retrogression. As distinguished from plants and animals that live instinctive lives, human beings reason and have the freedom of will and choice. Just as they have the prerogative of being moral and spiritual and attaining perfection, they can also stoop very low because of the freedom of will and choice. It is a matter of common experience that there are men who, although having human forms, behave in certain respects worse than brutes, displaying extreme attachment and ignorance. Such men will perhaps work out their Karma (it must be very bad Karma) quicker if they are reborn as birds or beasts. 'As one thinks and acts, so does one become'—it is a law of psychology, the truth of which cannot be doubted. If a man thinks and acts like an animal it would not be unnatural if he is reborn with the body of an animal. In the Srimad Bhagavatam is narrated the story of Jada Bharata, an illumined sage, who never opened his lips to speak lest he be caught in the snare of Maya. People took advantage of his goodness and treated him unkindly, but he was ever patient and forgiving. Once he broke his silence and startled a king and his party that had hired him by giving a profound discourse on the Soul or Atman. In a previous incarnation he had been a recluse, struggling sincerely for illumination. Later in life, so the story goes, he became so inordinately attached to a pet deer he had saved from a watery grave that he lost all interest in his devotions and meditations, spending all his time in fondling and caring for the deer. In his dying moment, instead of thinking about God, he became completely engrossed with worries as to what would happen to his pet after his death. As a result, he was born as a deer in his next incarnation, but he had the memory of his previous life and folly. Setbacks like this are only temporary and not permanent, and they prepare the way for greater progress and development.

The root cause of all evil is ignorance; it is ignorance that is responsible for our embodiment and repeated incarnations as well as retrogressions. With the dawning of knowledge there is an end of all trouble. Buddha has rightly said :

Many a House of life
Hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught ;
Sore was my ceaseless strife!

But now,
Thou Builder of this Tabernacle—Thou!
I know Thee! Never shalt Thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay ;
Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!
Delusion fashioned it!
Safe pass I thence—deliverance to obtain.

(*The Light of Asia*—Edwin Arnold)

ECONOMIC INDIA TOMORROW

By Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar

Spiritual Remaking

It is a new world in which we are living today in the perspective of developments during the last fifty years. The half century or so since Vivekananda's lecture at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago (1893), and the establishment by him of *Prabuddha Bharata* (1896) has been an epoch of profound spiritual remakings. The creative urges of man as an individual and in interhuman relations have been manifesting themselves in novel forms. The re-creation of spirituality is a *fait accompli* in the most diverse phases of life in East and West. A tremendous intellectual and moral rebirth of mankind is on among the masses and the classes.

The transformation of the human spirit is prominent in the fields of belles-lettres and artistic creativities no less than in those of philosophical speculation. Religion has been becoming less and less formal or theocratic and more and more humane or spiritual. In private and public morality 'social work' has been superseding the charity and philanthropy of the religionistic ideologies.

The expansion of Asian freedom is a conspicuous fact of the international transformation of our own times. The growth of nationalism in subject peoples, on the one hand, as also the emergence of neo-democracy and neo-despotocracy and of neo-socialism and neo-capitalism in the two hemispheres, on the other, are no less characteristic features of new spirituality in the political domain. It is, moreover, the age of Lenin, the exponent of the totalitarian abolition of private capital and private profit, and the champion of the absolution of colonies, dependencies and foreign rule.

In the relations hetween East and West the chauvinism and ethnocentrism of the alleged superior races have been definitely checked and are being slowly replaced by the facts and ideals of racial equality and abolition of albinocracy. Eur-America has learnt to set limits to its megalomania vis-à-vis Asia. We encounter here a world-wide spiritual revolution of the first magnitude. Noteworthy in this connection are the contributions of the 'Ramakrishna Empire',—the Greater India of the twentieth century,—to the evolution of the new order in interhuman relations.[1]

No less conspicuous as embodiments of mankind's spiritual progress in recent years are the discoveries of exact science and the inventions of technocracy. But no spiritual transformations of the past half century can be described as more monumental and epoch-making than the revolutions in the socio-economic plane. These last revolutions are indeed organically linked up with the techno-scientific transformations.

The Problem before Backward Economies

The analysis of the international statistics of *arthik unnati* (economic progress) as well as of the equations of world-economy enables us to visualize comparative technocracy and industrialism in a thoroughly realistic manner. The economic indices can leave no doubt as to the higher and lower potentials or achievements of different regions or peoples. In such a study the amount of progress achieved cannot remain an uncertain quantity. The equation A (1940)=X A (1905) conveys the most palpable and simple reality. The grades of industrial revolution establish themselves automatically. The differentia between Industrial Revolution II and Industrial Revolution I become matters of first postulate.

In the paper on 'Trusts and Rationaliza-

[1] B. K. Sarkar: *India's Epochs in World Culture* (*Prabuddha Bharata*, July, August, September, 1941).

tion : Aspects of the New Industrial Revolution' published in the *Journal of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce* for September 1927 the present author dwelt at length on these grades of transformation or degrees of revolution. For the purposes of applied economics and economic planning no study is more fruitful and suggestive. If it is true that a second revolution has broken in upon a previous revolution the problem before backward economies becomes perfectly clear. First, they have to assess the amount of their backwardness. Secondly, they have to devise ways and means for catching up. Economic planning is for them but a programme of catching up with the nearest go-ahead and dealing with the 'lags' one by one, in a pragmatic and realistic manner.

Post-war India

A plan for Economic Revolution in Post-war India has been issued by some industrialists of Bombay (January 1944). It is always useful to discuss the far-off divine events. But as in every other country, belligerent or neutral, in India also post-war reconstruction will have to attend to the problems of famine, epidemics, business failures, and unemployment. The immediate economic requirements of India tomorrow will have to be met, no matter what be the ultimate goal. Post-war economy is essentially the economy of demobilization. The fundamental problem is to decide as to how much of the war-time state controls in industry, trade, currency and agriculture, as well as employment, prices and wages ought to be maintained in order that demobilization may be prevented from producing its worst effects. Reconstruction problems before India are bound to be in the main of the same order as those before other countries.

In the present conditions of under-development the temptation to indulge in comprehensive schemes and fundamental principles of planned industrialization is bound to be great. For the time being, let us combat that temptation in a deliberate manner. Since 1907 the present author has been issuing schemes, plans or creeds for theorists and public workers. Some of the most pressing needs of India in the immediate future which have been discussed in one or other of those creeds are being enumerated below. The object is to suggest a few channels along which the demobilized resources in finance and personnel may be utilized.

The plan, designed as it is for all the provinces of India, comprises the following items :

A. Techno-industrial

1. Electrification of every municipal area, in order that, among other things, cheap power may be conveniently rendered available to small and medium industries. (The municipalities in India are approximately 1,000 in number).

2. Construction of roads, inter-district and intra-district, with a view, among other things, to facilitating the marketing of agricultural goods. The poverty of Bengal, especially of East Bengal and Assam, in roads, is notorious. Motor roads between Dhubri and Chandpur on the one hand and Sadiya and Chittagong on the other have long been overdue. Perhaps some of them are already under construction as military necessities.

3. Erection of ship-yards and equipment of harbours at diverse maritime centres and river-mouths. Narayanganj (Dacca) and Chandpur (Comilla), for instance, may be singled out as first-class sites for seaports in East Bengal no less worthwhile than Calcutta.

B. The Standard of Living of Peasants, Workmen and Clerks

1. Allocation of special funds (of large size) such as may be rendered available to individual cultivators through co-operative societies at convenient rates of interest.

2. Introduction of compulsory social insurance among working-men and other employees with adequate state grants. (A Bill is in preparation).

The standard of living and efficiency of the masses in villages and towns is likely to be raised in a special manner by the above two measures.

C. Socio-economic

1. Training and employment of women in health and other social services at the rate of one for each union board. (The number of union boards is about 5,000 in Bengal).

2. Intensified campaign (large-scale pumping, land reclamation, training of rivers, irrigation, etc.) for the eradication of malaria, district by district.

3. Enactment of consolidated Public Health Act. (A Public Health Act has already been passed in Madras in 1938).

It may be regarded as the irreducible minimum of techno-industrial and socio-economic planning during the period of 'reconstruction' in the narrow sense, say, five years from the end of the war. A large part of the personnel technocratically educated and disciplined during World War II is likely to be absorbed through road-making, electrification, port construction, river-engineering and allied industrial projects. An avenue may then be found for taking charge of large numbers that are bound to be thrown on the unemployed list as soon as demobilization commences.

For an outsider who is not in the know as to the exact kind of industries that the war-economy has brought into life or expansion it is not possible to say how many of them ought to be maintained and under what patterns. The re-distribution of workingmen and clerks also among new workshops and business concerns can likewise be suggested only by persons acquainted with the activities of the war supply and other offices.

IDEALISM OF THE BOMBAY PLAN

Of course, this prescription, modest as it is, cannot be expected to bring the Indian infant mortality down to the Anglo-American level or raise the expectation of life up to the German level in seven or ten years, as reconstruction-planners would wish. Nor can the national income *per capita* be possibly augmented hundred per cent within a quinquennium or so as a result of the carrying out of the simple scheme of the eight items formulated here. It would be but crying for the moon if on the strength of these recommendations India were to emulate within a decade or so the figures exhibited in *Japanese Trade and Industry* by the Mitsubishi Economic Research Bureau (London, 1936) or *National Income in Japan* (Japanese Economic Federation, Tokyo, 1939). No economic millennium is in contemplation. And as for the federated world-state of human brotherhood and inter-racial amity, this humble plan is the furthest removed from that consummation.

It is superfluous to observe that the plan put forward in this modest fashion would appear too elementary and primitive by the side of the programme suggested in *The Condition of Britain* (London, 1937) by G. D. H. and M. I. Cole. That work, of course, deals with pre-war conditions and formulates fundamental policies. Nor is it possible to encounter here the planifications attempted in Turkey under Kemal Ataturk since 1923 and especially since 1933, the year of her first five-year plan. It is from a hated condition of *semicolonie* prevailing during the previous half-century that Turkey has been emancipated by comprehensive state intervention in the domain of agriculture as well as by state aids to industry, as one understands from Conker and Witmeur's *Redressement économique et Industrialisation de la nouvelle Turquie* (Paris, 1937, pp. 41-54, 123-153, 174-239).

The 10,000-crore-finance envisaged by the Bombay Plan is certainly very heartening. But the Plan is vitiated by fallacies of which the plan-makers are not unconscious. First, it assumes the emergence of a 'National Government.' Secondly, it assumes the emancipation of India's economic policy—'full freedom in economic matters'—from the British Empire-economy. No plan could be more superbly idealistic and wide of the mark in regard to the realities.

THE MAD WORLD WE LIVE IN

By Swami Pavitrananda

My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.
—William Cowper

I

The world seems to be in a melting pot. All the furies of hell have, as it were, been let loose on earth. The devil-dance of destruction is going on all around. Passions of nations as well as of individuals have run so high that they are not conscious of what they have been doing. Persons who in private life could not stand the sight of the slightest suffering of a single individual very readily become the instrument of slaughtering human beings on an incredibly large scale. Rather they take pride in that and become elated at the success of their actions. It is said that a boy who was taken to see a military display cried out in excitement, 'Were these soldiers once men?' Yes, persons who are perfectly human in private or domestic life commit such acts of savagery when called to the army that one is apt to exclaim in great surprise and agony, 'Were these people once men?' A crime cannot be exonerated simply because it is done on a huge scale. The value of truth does not diminish if, say, all the people of the world unhesitatingly take to falsehood. By an Act of Parliament falsehood cannot be given the dignity and status of truth. In the same way, because it suits political purpose or satisfies the ambition, whim, or caprice of a dictator we cannot shut our eyes to the inhuman cruelty that is done in waging a war.

It seems man is vying with savage beings or wild creatures as to who can excel whom in acts of brutality. Even wild animals do not find so much joy in destroying lives as do men in times of war. Animals kill their prey forced by the dire necessity of hunger, but men cause the slaughter of human lives moved by passion, greed, or avarice, though they are endowed with intelligence and powers of discrimination and judgement. Wild animals' power of committing mischief is limited, but man's power of committing havoc is immense and it is increasing with the passage of time and the discoveries of modern science.

Formerly only the combatants would suffer death or physical injury in times of war. But nowadays it is a totalitarian war—the lives of the civil population also are constantly in danger. Innocent men and women, helpless babies and children, the disabled and the diseased—none are safe. Rather the civil population suffers more than the military. For it is difficult, if not impossible, to give sufficient protection to the vast population of a country. It is a war of nerves. Sometimes a great havoc is deliberately done to the civil propulation, so that the morale of a country or a nation may be broken.

One of the most important problems of the world is war. For there is nothing so destructive as war—specially in these days of scientific development. Flood and famine, epidemics or cataclysm of nature cannot compare with the world-wide havoc that is being done by the present war. It seems that the clock of civilization has been turned back and some nemesis has willed that the fruit of human labour for thousands of years must be destroyed. Some say that the after-effects of the present war will be no less disastrous than what is being witnessed at present. Many problems will arise after the war which will be difficult to tackle, specially as the resources left behind will necessarily be very small. Besides, different nations of the world—as almost all of them are engaged in fighting—will feel too much exhausted to face new facts and fresh situations. So the future is gloomy as much as the present is disheartening.

II

Some philosophers and thinkers now and

then raise the question, whether war could be avoided; if it could not be avoided whether there could be any better and more humane substitute for the present form of war. After each war this problem comes to the forefront, is discussed and debated by political leaders and thinkers who then talk in terms of the highest idealism, but the general feeling is that war will recur periodically after every quarter of a century. The vanquished, and humiliated nations will take that period to recoup their strength and the fight will again ensue. Unless the fundamental cause of war is seen and recognized and radically cured, there will always remain the chance that there will be volcanic eruptions of military savagery. Political leaders, when they talk of war aims or of the plans of reconstruction after the war, clothe their thoughts in words which outwardly seem highly commendable. But do these utterances always come from their heart? Are they sincere and earnest in what they say or do they themselves really believe in what they declare? One great curse of the modern civilization is the painful disparity between thoughts and words. One thinks vilely, but talks politely. Language has nowadays become the art not of expressing but of hiding one's thoughts. This is very often seen in the so-called refined and civilized society, but nowhere is it so keenly experienced as in the field of politics.

With reference to the disarmament proposal made by the Russian Government in the Hague Conference, Tolstoy wrote in 1900:

> But strange, unexpected, and indecent as such proposal was—especially at the very time when orders were being given to increase its army—the words publicly in the hearing of the people were such that for the sake of appearances the Governments of the other Powers could not decline the comical and evidently insincere consultation; and also the delegates met—knowing in advance that nothing would come of it—and for several weeks (during which they drew good salaries) though they were laughing in their sleeves, they all conscientiously pretended to be much occupied in arranging peace among the nations.

Has the world become wiser or people more sincere since then? Mon. Romain Rolland said in the year 1931:

> Our civilization in its dire peril has vainly invoked the spell of great words: Right, Liberty, Co-operation, the Peace of Geneva or Washington —but such words are void or filled with poisonous gas. Nobody believes in them.

Some time after the last Great War, the famous British Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, who piloted the nation in war times said in regret,

> After each and all of the solemn pacts signed by the civilized nations of the world, outlawing war as a means of settling disputes, armaments have increased in virtually every country that signed the pacts.

And the result is the present world conflagration.

The suspicion that the peace that will come after the present World War will be at best of a very temporary nature, has already been exercising the minds of many. So we find Madame Chiang Kai-shek broadcasting from Chungking:

> The peace which we want must not be a *negative peace*; it must not be a passive but an active peace; it must not be a transient but an abiding peace, and finally it must be a genuine and not a fraudulent peace.

III

Various factors have been suggested as being the causes of war. Some of them are: (1) Economic exploitation, (2) Political rivalry, (3) Greed for colonial expansion or unwillingness to part with what a nation has already seized, (4) If there is war it serves the vested interests of some capitalists, specially of those who manufacture war goods, (5) The excitement of war is a relief to those wealthy persons who find their life full of boredom and monotony, (6) The personal ambition of some dictator to leave a name behind, and so on.

It is true that the general masses do not want war. They are unwillingly dragged to it. It is said that Mr. Chamberlain, after the Munich Pact, received thousands and thousands of congratulatory letters from English men and women for averting a great catastrophe. Then the question is, Why is it that the masses become unwilling victims of or a party to war? Why cannot they resist it? These are days of democracy; one of the aims of the Allies taking part in the present war is declared as making the world safe for democracy. But in the democracy as

it is, people's voice really does not count much. Votes are manœuvred, popular opinion is marshalled, mass feeling is aroused by interested parties, and the average men are blindly led to do what they have to repent at leisure. The masses cannot simply resist the effect of excitement and passion, or have not the eyes to see or the power to judge what is what. And it is the masses who are the backbone of a nation, it is they who really constitute power and strength. It is a great pity that it is they who suffer most in times of war: they sacrifice their lives for a pittance, they suffer untold misery in the front and at home, they sell their conscience, deaden their feelings and stifle their reasoning faculty to worship the god of war. But for what end? What do they gain even if the war is won?

A German soldier, taking part in the Prussian War, wrote,

> My deepest conviction is that war is only trade on a large scale—the ambitious and powerful trade with the happiness of the peoples.
>
> And what horrors do we not suffer from it! Never shall I forget the pitiful groans that pierced one to the marrow!
>
> People who never did each other any harm begin to slaughter one another like wild animals, and petty, slavish souls implicate the good God, making Him their confederate in such deeds.

Ultimately it comes to this: The masses do not want war. Unwillingly and helplessly are they drawn to it. They are led like drum-driven cattle to where they do not know till there is no opportunity to turn back. In war times when passions run high or excitement is at white heat, it is hard to believe this—it might even be out of tune to utter this—but when the time and opportunity come for calm thinking after the war, everybody feels the truth of this. That has been the experience of every war.

IV

If we want a better world to live in, if we want to stop this process of periodical destruction by war, what is required is to evolve a better type of people who will think in terms of a high ideal and will be strong enough to follow their ideas into practice. The most unfortunate thing in the present-day world is that we are giving less and less importance to moral and spiritual values. People might talk high philosophy in academic circles, even political leaders might attune their speeches to a high pitch of idealism, but in actual practice they throw all their theories to scrap-heap. They say that in the day-to-day living high philosophy cannot have any place unless one deliberately wants to make oneself a fool. That is what they call practicality. Truth is truth for all time. There cannot be one truth on Sundays, and another truth on week-days. If truth has got any value it must cover our whole life, it must regulate every bit of our activities. The fact that the majority is too weak to follow that, does not mean that truth has got no value, that it should be discarded. In the political field the majority is supposed to be controlling the minority, but in the moral and spiritual world it is the minority who regulates the life of the majority. That is the normal rule. One Buddha or a Christ influences the conduct and activities of millions and millions of people for centuries and centuries. The voice of the majority is not always the voice of truth. Simply because the majority of people in the world pays no heed to moral and spiritual values, one cannot say they have no place in man's life. It is just the other way. Because the majority are too weak to follow any ideal, they speak in terms of their weakness. So beware of them. The great Chinese philosopher Lao-tze said, 'Those who know me are but few, and on that account my honour is the greater.'

But truth will not cease to have its way, simply because man does not show allegiance to it. If man shows no respect for truth, he will do that to his own cost. And the present world is paying that cost. The simple words of Buddha 'conquer hatred by love,' contain much greater wisdom than all that are being said by the so-called leaders of the world through platform, press, and radio. It is strange that the prophets belonging to different times and lands say exactly the same thing. Lao-tze said: 'To the good I would be good: to the not-good I would also be

good, in order to make them good.' Christ said: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.' These are the most practical philosophy of life. Whoever has made even an attempt to follow that in practice knows the value of these precepts. It is true that many will find it hard to believe them, and more will find it very difficult to practise them, but those who will have the courage and determination to follow the ideal will soon cease to have any enemy. Prophets all over the world have undeniably proved that in their own lives, and many persons, belonging to a higher strata of humanity, have more or less come to the same result. Formal, credal, and organized religions are covered so much with weeds and overgrowth that people are scared away at their very mention. People have their grievances against religions and they deserve sympathy. But the truths discovered by prophets are quite different from the shapes their teachings have taken in the hands of their followers in degraded days. Truths will live for eternity, attenuated truths will have but a short existence. It is but meet that we should stand by truths that have stood the test of time.

V

It is through the educated people that ideas filter down to the masses. It is the educated people who are mostly responsible for breaking all canons of moral behaviour. It is they who commit the greatest amount of harm to civilization. Through education they acquire power and intelligence, which more often than not are directed to doing mischief. Moreover, the education that is now imparted has not as its aim making men better types of humanity but making them good citizens. And what does good citizenship mean? It is that one should completely identify oneself with the wish and desire of the State however objectionable they may be. Sometimes education is definitely aimed at making young men war-minded and grow with feelings of hatred against other races, nations, or countries; as such they become potentially explosive substances.

Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*:

> There were a great number of weak points in German education before the War. It was fashioned on an one-sided system with a view to mere knowledge and very little with a view to practical ability. Still less score was set on formation of character, very little on encouraging the joy of responsibility, and none at all on cultivation of will-power and decision. The result of this was not the strong man, but rather the pliable possessor of much knowledge.
>
> The more intellectual our statesmen, for instance, were, the weaker most of them were in real accomplishment.

So according to him education should be directed towards increasing the will-power of the boys—making them strong in body, vigorous in mind, capable of quick decisions and confident actions. These things sound very good. But what is the deeper aim of this education? The great Feuhrer said:

> Their whole education and training must be directed towards giving them a conviction that they are superior to others. Through bodily strength and skill the youth must recover the faith in the unconquerableness of his nation. For what once led the German hosts to victory was the sum of the confidence which each individual felt in himself, and all felt in their leaders.....But that conviction can only be the final product of a sentiment shared by millions of individuals.

Indeed this is regular military training introduced into educational institutions.

Similar is the idea, more or less, behind the training of young men in many other countries, if not in all of them.

Now, if through regular drilling the will-power of the boys can be developed and directed to military aims, why not try the same experiment to moral and spiritual purposes? It is too true that educated people very often lack will-power and the courage to act. They theoretically discuss many ideas, dissect and analyse many subtle problems of philosophy and religion, but have not the power and perseverance to put a single idea into practice. Real education is not the stuffing of human brains with undigested ideas and information but making men morally and spiritually better. One single idea put into practice is better than the reading of thousands of books if that leaves no influence on one's character.

Some will argue that a nation becomes too weak for the struggle for existence if too much emphasis is given on the cultivation of moral virtues. 'Look at the militaristic nations,' they will say, 'how powerful they have grown. Look at Germany, look also at the Eastern country Japan, and look at the condition of India and China.' No doubt those nations which concentrate their attention on military power achieve dazzling results; but that success is only temporary —it does not last long. A nation which is not based on any idealism higher than aggression, conquest, trade, and commerce cannot last long. The present condition of India and China is no doubt deplorable. But India and China have outlived many civilizations which have been wiped off from the face of the earth. And India and China are nations which have not crossed their borders for material conquest, have never coveted the wealth of their neighbours. If Indians have gone outside, they have always gone with a message of peace and goodwill. The influence of India on the outside world had always a civilizing effect. Even in her present degraded condition India evaluates life in terms of high idealism ; she has been producing thinkers, saints and prophets who represent the highest level of humanity. The nations who swear by military strength and suffer from spiritual bankruptcy are destined to perish. That is the verdict of history. But the lessons of history have got very little influence on the nations which are intoxicated with powers or have sold their souls to market-places. It has been very pertinently said that we learn only from history that mankind learns nothing from history.

VI

In the course of the last two or three hundred years the thought process of the world has taken a definite turn. With the birth of modern science and greater and greater discoveries of the secrets of nature, people have been putting less and less importance on inner life and stressing more and more only outward activities. The secrets of external nature excite our greater interest than do the laws of inner world, because the former yield more tangible and immediate results. Science has placed immense power in the hands of man. But power can be directed to baser ends as much as to nobler aims. To the ethically deteriorating nations and men science has become an instrument of evil as is sadly witnessed all around.

Science has given us speed and easy means of communication, it has given us comfort and convenience, but has it increased the happiness of mankind? People can fly through the air, race through the sea, but how to live on the earth they do not know. Under the stress of the modern civilization they are living a hectic life, they are always busy, excited, and in a high-strung condition of mind. Those who lack occupation or work do not know what to do with their time; their leisure is much more killing than any hard work. So they go in for cheap sensations; failing any, they create them. They go on world tours, undertake mountain expeditions, indulge in the intoxication of adventures and enterprises, finding joy in risking lives. It is said of a madman that having nothing else to do he began to run and run till he fell down exhausted and died. That is exactly the condition of the modern man. He lacks poise, he has not the equilibrium of mind. Some devil, as it were, chases him, and he runs and runs till he falls down dead.

One forgets that the peace and happiness which one seeks in life cannot be had in the outside world, but they come only from the controlling of the internal nature. One may rule the waves, one may annihilate distance, one may have powers over external nature, but unless and until one masters the secrets of inner life, one is far, far from having any glimpse of real peace. Nemesis, as it were, has made man's senses out-going, only he who can turn them inward can taste peace and happiness. With all his pomp and wealth, pride and self-conceit, man is not a master of himself, he is a slave, an abject and miserable slave—slave to his passions, greed, avarice, and thousand and one

vagaries of mind. Control them, and you are free, you are happy. But how many can do that? How many even feel the necessity of that? The crux of all human problems is not political liberty, economic freedom, abolition of capitalism, the pulling down of aristocracy, but the control over the inner self. Man commits wrong in private life, in the domestic world, in national and international spheres, because he has no control over himself. Before he is conscious of what he has been doing, he has done the most diabolical action. Saint Paul said, 'What I want to do I cannot do, and I do what I do not want to do.' Yes, that is the greatest tragedy in man's life in this world.

Now, what is the remedy? Man has lived but a few thousands of years on this earth. That period is but nothing in comparison with the age of the planet we inhabit. Man has been learning and has much to learn. Nations are having experiences; who knows they will grow wiser by these lessons? In life, they say, from enjoyment springs the real germ of renunciation. The man who has tasted life to the brim thinks of the existence beyond or behind life. Torn with conflict, lacerated by struggles, disgusted with the results of uncontrolled actions and the effect of unbridled thoughts, weary and jaded, the world is bound to turn inward and seek the deeper secrets of life in order to get peace. In the meantime those who think and feel, and are anxious and worried about the present situation of the world may try to emphasize the message of those who have known and mastered the secrets of inner life —the god-men on earth.

INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

BY PROF. D. S. SARMA, M.A.

It is interesting to observe that many of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa were at first members of the Brahmo Samaj. Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Swami Saradananda, and Swami Ramakrishnananda who were the great pillars of the Ramakrishna movement, had been first attracted to the Brahmo Samaj and been among its most ardent members. And what is more, Sri Ramakrishna is reported to have exerted very great influence on the minds of some of the prominent leaders themselves of the Brahmo Samaj—Keshub Chunder Sen, Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar and Pandit Sivanatha Sastri. It is worth while inquiring into the causes of these happenings, because most of our modern educated men, especially the products of our universities, are more or less in the position of those young men of Calcutta who first sought shelter in the Brahmo Samaj and who afterwards became the monks of the Ramakrishna Order.

To put the matter briefly, what Sri Ramakrishna did was to lift these young men who came to him from a merely intellectual plane to a spiritual plane. What is the difference between these two planes? How does intellectual knowledge differ from spiritual experience? Intellectual knowledge shows us only the variety in the world. It assures us that time and space are ultimate realities. It infers that the individual is ever an isolated unit. Thus it gives us what our scriptures call *avidya*, which means not so much ignorance as imperfect knowledge. On the other hand, spiritual experience reveals to us the unity behind all this variety and makes us see that the world is not really what it seems. It makes us realize that the world is only everlasting *Now* appearing as succession in time, and everlasting *Here* appearing as extension in space. The world is not unreal, but it is reality in disguise. As the *Isha Upanishad* says, the face of Truth is ever hidden behind a golden disc. The white light of eternity comes to us through the prism of time, space, and number and is

spread out into a spectrum of seven colours. The spectrum is not unreal, it is only the white light in disguise, as it were. So it is in a spectral world that we live. When we recognize only the variety in the world and lose sight of the unity in it, we may be said to be moving in a world of shadows, a truly spectral world. Intellectual knowledge gives us only this kind of world, whereas spiritual experience takes us to the other side of the prism, where the white light of unity is not broken up into fragments of colours and where we experience Reality as it is.

The *Bhagavad Gita* lays stress on this distinction between the One and the many and says that all creatures, as creatures, are subject to a common delusion which prevents them from seeing the One beyond. It does not speak, of course, of the prism made up of time, space, and number, as we have done. The prism it speaks of is made up of the three gunas—*tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*. Employing the scientific concepts of its time, the great scripture speaks of the threefold dispositions of Nature and of the cosmic delusion caused by them in the minds of all creatures. It says :

> There is no creature here on earth, nor again among the gods in heaven, which is free from the three dispositions of Nature, (XVIII, 49).

And the *Avatara* of the *Gita* observes :

> Deluded by these threefold dispositions of Nature, this world does not know me, who am above them and eternal.

Sometimes the *Gita* also speaks of the delusion caused by the pairs of opposites—pleasure and pain, heat and cold, love and hatred. It implies that our creatureliness lies in being affected by these pairs, and that our divinity consists in recognizing their polarity and raising ourselves above the realm of relativity. For the Bhagavan says :

> Deluded are all beings born, O Arjuna, bewitched by the pairs that spring from love and hatred.
> But righteous men in whom sin has come to an end—they are free from the delusion of the pairs and worship me, steadfast in their vows. (VII, 27, 28).

Thus the spiritual plane is beyond the pairs of opposites. It is also beyond the threefold dispositions of Nature. Our delusion is both individual and cosmic. The dispositions of Nature give us our threefold being—physical, mental, and moral. The spiritual plane is entirely different from the psychic plane, whether the latter is considered in its intellectual or emotional or even moral aspect. As Browning says in his *Abt Vogler*, out of three sounds we frame 'not a fourth sound, but a star.'

On the spiritual plane, God is not a mere logical concept or a mere poetical concept. He is not a logical concept for explaining the fact of creation, nor a poetical concept serving as a centre for our feelings of love and worshipful admiration. On the spiritual plane, He is a real Presence, the only Reality that there is. On the intellectual plane, we take a self-centred view of all things, on the spiritual plane we take a God-centred view. The difference between the two is similar to that between the Ptolemaic astronomy and the Copernican astronomy. In the former the earth is the centre of the universe and the sun goes round it, in the latter the sun is the centre and the earth goes round it along with the other planets. Similarly, in mere intellectual knowledge the self is the centre of all things, the old Adam is secure in his seat; whereas in spiritual experience God is the centre and the self fades away. In spiritual realization God is no longer a mere ideal, but a fact. He is no longer an object, but the eternal subject. We no longer aspire, but experience. We no longer chase what ought to be, but reach what is. We pass from the realm of the Law of Karma to the realm of the Law of Prema. We move away from the Law of retributive Justice to the Law of self-forgetting Love.

Therefore, on the spiritual plane, our religion does not consist of any articles of creed or dogmas or doctrines. These belong to the realm of the intellect. They are intellectual formulae. They are not pure gold, but current coin in which gold is mixed with baser metals so as to form a durable alloy. On the spiritual plane, our religion consists of experiences and realizations. Creeds can be taught by means of books, lectures and sermons. But experiences can be evoked only by the con-

tact of a living teacher who dwells in the spirit. In the former there is much cry and little wool, in the latter there is little or no cry but abundant wool of the finest quality. In religion, more than in anything else, is the adage true that says, 'Speech is silvern, but silence is golden.'

On the spiritual level, again, all the various religions of the world are instinctively seen as representing the various grades of experience of the religious soul. So also the various sects in a religion. And so also the various kinds of *sadhanas*, from the worship of images to the contemplation of *Nirguna Brahman*. No arguments are needed here for toleration. No condescension is required to sympathize with idol-worship. For all ways of approach are instinctively seen and felt to be His ways, as all names and forms are seen and felt to be His names and forms. On the intellectual level we have a high-brow, respectable religion. On the spiritual level we have a religion of loving accommodation and true brotherhood. The former is paper flower, the latter is a living flower on a living tree.

So in the lives of Swami Vivekananda and the other Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order, who came with modern education and saw the land of their hearts' desire in the courtyard of the temple at Dakshineshwar, we have a deathless lesson given to those of us who give lectures on religion or listen to them and who write books on religion or read them. The lesson is that true religion is to be sought not on the intellectual plane but on the spiritual plane—not in creeds and formulas but in experience and realization.

Again, the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is that, when he attained to the spiritual level through his *sadhanas*, he was not content to remain there always. A true saint and mystic never does. It is a false charge that is brought against Eastern mystics that they lose themselves on the heights of contemplation, that they do not bring any glad tidings to the suffering humanity below. This may be true of the lesser mystics and Yogis, but not of the great mystics of India. It is not true, for instance, of Buddha or of Shankara. It is likewise not true of Sri Ramakrishna. For, after his illumination, he taught day and night and gave illumination to a number of disciples who afterwards spread themselves and illumined others who had never seen the Master. If he was unlike the Brahmo Samaj leaders in many respects, he was also unlike the monks of the type of Totapuri, his own teacher. He felt he had a mission in life and he fulfilled it. Employing a figure used by Sri Ramakrishna himself, we may say that he was not always on the terrace of realization, he often came down the staircase of *sadhana* and helped people to ascend the various steps of it. That is why the movement associated with his name is a genuine incarnation of Hinduism. It is as if one of the Upanishadic seers came back into the world to guide the footsteps of modern India in the realm of spirit. The Ramakrishna movement is not only a genuine but also a full incarnation of Hinduism, for it discards no part of the Hindu religious tradition, it draws no line at the Vedas or the Puranas. It excludes no forms of divinity and no modes of worship. Also, it is a truly dynamic incarnation, as it seeks to solve vexed social problems like those of the caste system and untouchability, not by reform propaganda but by evoking the divine love in the hearts of men. There is no doubt, therefore, that so long as the Ramakrishna movement is faithful to the Master's principle that true religion dwells not on intellectual heights but in spiritual depths, that it consists not in subtle arguments but in rich experiences, it will continue to be a mighty power for good in the country.

THE PROBLEM OF MECHANIZATION AND THE ART OF LIFE

By Swami Maithilyananda

I

A modern man is terribly faced with the problem of mechanization. The present-day civilization has walled him within the artificial confines of a machine-dominated life and has fostered in him a strange sense of illusory security and self-sufficiency. It has tended to shut man off from living contact with the world of nature—its beauties and benefactions. Men of deeper understanding are alive to the fact and declare that it is crushing the very soul out of humanity. It seems that the modern world is in the grip of those forces that make for universal ruin and the brutalization of human nature.

Glancing over the history of mankind we find that the problem of mechanization arose on the day when man employed a spade instead of his hands to dig the ground. As far back as 1835, after the great individualistic reaction of the French Revolution, the problem of mechanization was given a very fair measure of consideration by all classes of people on the ground that machinery would play a very great part in society and would promote the real well-being of mankind. It was then simply the problem of the development of tools placed at the disposal of man. The Industrial Revolution transferred labour from man to mechanical appliances driven by power-generating machines. The machines were, as a rule, too large and complicated to be used and controlled by the individual worker. The consequence was that the individual worker lost zeal and initiative, and he followed the mechanistic discipline of mass production. 'The machine knows', writes a thinker, 'neither excellence nor beauty. Both its method and its standard of work are dictated by inert materials and inorganic forces. Man must adapt himself to these in order to earn and live. The organic adaptation must be as close to mechanical standardization as possible, for the machine standardizes everything —tools and materials, process and product.' The daily routine of the individual worker became fixed and he viewed the world as something mechanistic. To all intents and purposes, it determined his attitude to his fellow beings and nature round about him.

II

The real problem is to determine whether machinery has led to the degradation of human personality by sacrificing individual liberty. Men are subordinated at every turn to the requirements of mass production, which crush out human personality. Every man is in danger of being broken down as part of machinery. There is no possibility for the expansion of human personality under present conditions which dominate the civilized world. The dignity of the human personality has always been respected by right-thinking people and the moral law has been recognized as the foundation of society. The reassertion of the moral law would be impossible until people overcome the hypnotic spell which machinery has exercised over their minds that come into constant contact with it. There is no single practical issue facing the world today that does not immediately involve an indispensable return to the moral. It is doubtful whether the existence of that law is even recognized today.

Secondly, machinery has restricted the possibility of artistic production. It has deprived the work of art of part of its human and spiritual value by wasting the artistic personality by merging it in uniformity. It has simply transmitted, in more or less perfect fashion, the art created by man. The cinema, wireless, television are not creative machines, but only means of transmitting and standardizing works of art. The

machine has never created either literature or the drama which is claimed as a new art form, new from the standpoint of technique and transmission.

Thirdly, it is to be seen whether the drawbacks attaching to the mechanization of man are due to the machine itself or whether they are not rather the outcome of man's attitude towards it. So long as man had an upward tendency towards the Invisible, it was within his power to dominate the visible. His material tool was weak in those days, but modern civilization has entirely altered the terms of the problem. By widely extending the horizontal scope of man's vision, it is weakening the vertical tendency of the spirit. Under the influence of materialistic considerations, man regards himself as a machine and bows beneath the yoke of his slavery. In fact, the development of machinery demands an entirely different attitude and calls for the reassertion of the human soul and spiritual values in the face of the machine.

Fourthly, the effects of technique have rendered the problem of mechanization all the more complicated. The domination of technique is a fatal bar to the progress of man's cultural life. Prof. Nicholas Berdyaev, in an illuminating article published in the *Hibbert Journal*, October 1934, observed : 'By nature the machine is anti-humanitarian, a technical conception of science is in direct opposition to the humanitarian conception and is in conflict with its idea of man. It seems surprising at first to be told that technique is not so dangerous to the spirit, yet we may in truth say that ours is the age of technique and of the spirit, not an age of the heart. The religious meaning of contemporary technique consists precisely in the fact that it views everything from the angle of a spiritual problem and may lead to the spiritualization of life, for it demands an intensification of spirituality.

'Technique has long ceased to be neutral, to be indifferent to the spirit and its problems, and after all can anything really be neutral? Things may have appeared so at a casual glance only, for whilst technique is fatal for the heart, it promotes a powerful reaction of the spirit. If the heart left to itself proves weak and helpless before the growing power of the machine, the spirit may show itself strong. Through technique man becomes a cosmiurge for, in comparison with the weapons it places in his hands now, man's former arms seem like childish toys. This is especially apparent in the field of military technique, the destructive power of weapons of former days was very limited, everything was localized; with the old cannon, muskets, and sabres neither great human masses nor large towns could be destroyed, nor could the very existence of civilization be threatened. Now all this is feasible and man wields a fearsome power which may easily become deadly. Peaceful scientists will be able to promote cataclysms not only on a historical but on a cosmic scale; a small group of men possessing the secrets of technical inventions will be able to tyrannize over the whole of mankind; this is quite plausible and was foreseen by Renan. When man is given power whereby he may rule the world and also wipe out a considerable part of humanity with its culture, then everything depends upon man's spiritual and moral standards, upon the question: In whose name will he use this power—of what spirit is he?'

Thus it is obvious that the problem of mechanization becomes a spiritual question, and as such, a proper conception of the meaning of man's life, its struggle, and goal should be made clear before the world can safeguard man from enslavement and destruction through the machine and technique.

III

The scientific age has no better solved the problem of human existence and co-existence than previous ages, but has fared worse. Because science neither co-ordinates nor harmonizes, neither transfigures nor spiritualizes. All the direct objectives of science are of an analytical, and not synthetic order. Whereas, art alone can co-ordinate and harmonize what is originally neither co-ordinated nor in harmony, and art alone can

refer to the spirit, man's vital nature. So, it is only in the service of art that science can produce a lasting good.

Art is the utterance of life and the whole realm of human life belongs to the plane of art. Living is an art inasmuch as man cannot manifest his liberty on the plane of life itself save by taking into account the laws characteristic of each and every layer and part of life. Man is free only in the sense in which the artist is free, in reckoning with the laws of matter which is being shaped by him, whether it be a question of musical rhythm or the spectrum of colours. It is by comforting himself as an artist that man can transform the raw material of experience into a harmonious expression of the spirit which he feels he represents in his innermost depths. On this condition alone can man be said to be free, and the secret of true art lies in representing the spirit. In this sense, life should be treated as a supreme art and since the goal of true art lies in manifesting the beautiful, the art of life must tend towards the unfoldment of the ideal. Life as an art has its culmination in the equation of the Hindus according to which truth, goodness, and beauty are one and blended in a harmony of the very highest order.

The ever-increasing mechanization of life and its professional expressions make it difficult for an average man to manifest the whole of his being originally and integrally. The art of life consists in the conquest of mechanization by the spirit alone and it demands the full expression of a man's personality. The expression of the spirit and not mechanization constitutes the true plane of human life. He who gives himself with bared breast to the whole of his being has the greatest chance of growing inwardly and inward growth is the growth of the innermost being in man. He who gives himself completely to the spiritual principle can make everything dear to him, because every movement is governed by a spiritual principle which penetrates all. Hence, the art of yielding oneself unreservedly is more important for the vast majority of human beings than the art of dominating life. The art of unreserved surrender always presupposes great courage and its practice is impossible without the cultivation of a genuine search after the spirit which can only grow under the sign of sincere aspiration. The solution of the problem of mechanization is, in fact, impossible on any other plane than that of the art of life.

The attitude of an artist is creative. The data of life are as raw materials to every individual as marble is to the sculptor. This creative attitude is fundamental in every man and he has to be intensely conscious of the fact that he can shape his destiny in the midst of tension and conflict. It is a common fallacy to lay the blame on the circumstances presented by nature. It is impossible for any man to attain victory of the spirit by abandoning himself to the natural momentum of life or to a natural evolution towards the better. It is only the man-artist who can attain victory by surmounting the obstacles by living completely on the basis of the spirit which is the vital centre of man. As every art must be in touch with nature and yet rise above it, so the art of life has to grow in the world of facts but must rise far above it. The ideal has to be brought down to our everyday life through the practical, and every man has to raise himself to the higher plane to enjoy the fulfilment of the ideal. Every detail of life must be arranged in unison with the ideal kept in view.

IV

The task of an artist is to give form to what is amorphous and to give a pattern to matter and thus infuse it with life with the different impressions aroused by the creations of philosophy. Philosophy is strictly personal as there can be no impersonal conception of the art of life. The philosopher no more photographs truth than the painter photographs nature. 'Whoever wishes', observes Count Hermann Keyserling, 'to practise philosophy with erudition as his sole resource would be like an artist, devoid of real talent, pretending to produce artistic

work on the sole basis of the experience that he might have gained at an art school. He who, gifted with but an infinitesimal degree of creative power, yet works hard, has a wide experience and enough judgement to distinguish surely between what is bad and what is good, can not only evaluate the work of others with tolerable accuracy; he will himself come in due course—if he devotes the necessary time to it, and diligently treasures up every happy idea that occurs to him, ruthlessly rejecting the worthless ones—to produce work that is not had.' The vision of a philosopher must, therefore, have its background in his own art of life, as philosophy as an art demands the expression of the philosopher's personality.

Spiritual experience is neither a science nor a philosophy. It is innate in man and it grows in him accordingly as the spirit in him manifests itself. It is an art inasmuch as it is the attempt to realize the spirit in the soul and in nature. It differs from the intellectual and emotional life and is the unfoldment of the very essence of man. Plato recognized it as that consciousness which could comprehend the real world of ideas. Plotinus called it another intellect which is different from what reasons and is denominated rational. It does not follow any strict code of dogmas, rituals, and doctrines. Nor does it rest with any particular theology or any particular hero having founded any creed.

V

In the rush and clamour of the modern life, people do not have an adequate consciousness of what the spirit in man can do and how it can refashion this machine-dominated life and society. To earn that consciousness we need discover how the machine can be used to restore to the individual that spiritual value, hitherto the privilege of a select few. The use of the machine has to be confined to such ends and kept within such limits as may not take away the independence of mankind as a whole. The main objective of all right-thinking people should be to stop the bad effects of mechanization that stand in the way of the resuscitation of the soul of man. This emphasis which is valuable in all ages seems to be invaluable now in the face of the stern facts of the world today.

THE HINDU CONCEPTION OF SELF

By Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D., P.R.S.

By the Hindu conception of self is meant the idea of the individual self as accepted in Hinduism or Hindu religion. Hinduism as a religion is neither a system of abstract ideas without any connection with practical life nor a set of practical rules which one is to follow blindly in one's life without any understanding of their basic principles. Rather, it is that way of life in which one has an enlightened understanding of the highest principles, and a determined will to follow them according to one's station in life. It is this kind of religion (*dharma*) that supports the world of living beings and holds them in a harmonious order.[1] Hence although Hinduism may be properly taken to mean Hindu religious customs and practices, or the Hindu ways of life, yet it more properly means both Hindu religious ideas and ways of life.[2] Among the Hindu religious ideas, the idea of the self occupies a very important place. Here we propose to analyse and explain this important idea of the Hindu faith.

In Hinduism the individual self is called *jivatma* as distinguished from God who is called *paramatma* or the Supreme Self. Although the one is regarded as a manifestation of the other, yet the distinction between

[1] Dhâranâd dharmamityâhur dharmo dhârayate prajâh.—*Mahâbhârata*, 69, 58.

[2] For a fuller account see the writer's article on 'A Definition of Hinduism,' in *Prabuddha Bharata*, June, 1943.

the two is that while the first has a body and is subject to certain limitations, the second is free from all limitations. The individual self generally means the embodied self or the soul in its bodily setting. But the embodied condition of the soul is neither its original nor its final condition. The individual self is usually related to a body no doubt, but it is quite distinct from the body, the senses, and mind. Even when associated with the body, it can realize its utter distinction from the latter and abide in its pure essence as the self-conscious spirit which is above anything that is material. The distinction between the soul and the body or the mind is fundamental to Hindu religion. Hence with regard to the self we have to make a distinction between its embodied and its essential characters. The one set may be called its empirical and the other its real or noumenal characters. But it is the same self that has these two kinds of characters. The self in its empirical character does not become a different self like the one which is called the empirical self by some philosophers or philosophical systems. It is not the case that there are two selves in a man, one empirical and the other noumenal. Rather, it is the same self that has different characters, of which some are due to its embodied condition and may therefore be called empirical, and some are intrinsic or natural to it and may thus be called real or noumenal. We shall explain these characters separately.

The empirical characters of the self may be considered under three chief heads, namely, the bodily or physical, the mental or psychical, and the moral or ethical. The individual self born in this world has a threefold body which is usually spoken of as three different bodies, namely, the gross or *sthula*, subtle or *sukshma*, and the causal or *kârana*. The gross body of the self is born of parents and is composed of the five physical elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. It is nourished by food and is accordingly described as the self's *annamaya-kosha* or food-sheath. It serves as the medium of the self's experience and enjoyment of the gross physical objects of the world (*bhogayatana*). It is the basis of what is known as the waking consciousness (*jagrat*). At death the individual self leaves this gross body behind it and finds its abode in a new body as the organ of its activities. The second body of the soul is called *sukshma-sharira* because it is constituted by elements finer than those of the gross body and cannot, like the latter, be perceived by the external senses. It is also called *linga-sharira* because it serves as a sign (*linga*) from which we may know, i.e. infer the existence of the soul. It is the combination of seventeen elements, namely, mind, intellect, the ten sense-motor organs, and the five vital breaths. So it is said to be constituted by the *pranamaya* or vital, the *manomaya* or mental, and the *vijnanamaya* or intellectual sheaths. It serves as the basis of our dream-consciousness and as the medium of transmigration of the soul from one body to another. At death the individual soul leaves the gross body to be reduced to ashes, but carries the subtle one with it and takes its abode in a new body which is suited to its past character as preserved in the subtle body. What kind of body the departed soul would have in the next life is determined by the effects of its past desires, thoughts, and deeds as these are preserved in the subtle body. The third body of the individual self is called *kârana-sharira* or the causal body in so far as it is the original ground out of which the gross and the subtle bodies arise. It is the substratum of the blissful experience of sound sleep when the individual soul is not disturbed by thoughts or moved by desires for the objects of the world. So it is called the *ananda-maya-kosha* or blissful sheath of the individual. It is also the ground into which the individual's gross and subtle bodies are absorbed during deep sleep (*layasthana*). The individual self casts off all these bodies when it realizes its true nature and is thereby liberated.[3]

The psychical characters of the self are of three kinds, namely, the cognitive, the

[3] *Vide Devi-bhagavata*, VII, 32.; 30f.; *Vedanta-sara*, 17, 29, 35, 45.

affective, and the conative. Sometimes the self is said to have in it three qualities, namely, desire or will, wisdom or knowledge, and activity. But the more widely accepted view is that the self is an immaterial substance to which all cognitions, feelings, and conations belong as its attributes. Desire, aversion, and volition, pleasure and pain and cognition or knowledge are all qualities of the soul. These cannot belong to anything physical or material, for they are not, like physical qualities, perceived by the external senses. Hence they must belong to some immaterial substance called the soul. But it should be remembered here that all these psychical characters belong to the soul in its embodied condition. They fall off and disappear when the self attains liberation through a right knowledge of its real nature. The soul in its real nature is unchanging, conscious spirit. But during its life on earth, it has such functions as cognition, desire, and will, and is regarded as an agent who strives and acts, enjoys and suffers. There are four states of consciousness of the self. As related to some kind of gross body, it passes through the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep. The self in its waking consciousness (*jagrat*) is called *vishva* or the seer of the spatio-temporal world. In the state of dream (*svapna*) it is known as *taijasa* or the shining light of the subtle body of sub-conscious desires and impressions. In the state of deep dreamless sleep (*sushupti*) it is designated as *prajna* or the wise one who frees himself from the embarrassing conditions of ordinary life and reverts to his pristine state of bliss, although that be for a short period of time. The fourth state of pure consciousness called *turiya* is not an empirical, but a transcendental state of the self, and so it will be explained afterwards in its proper place.[4]

The moral attributes of the self are more important and fundamental than its bodily and psychical qualities. In fact, its bodily, psychical, and other conditions are grounded on its moral characters. The body that an individual has, the family or society in which he is born, the mind or intellect with which he is endowed are all conditioned and determined by his past moral character. We get just that kind of body, mind, and intellect for which we have fitted ourselves by our previous moral deserts. The moral qualities of the individual self are the effects of its own *karma* or acts. There are three different types of activities which are natural to the individual, namely, the bodily, the mental, and the vocal. These activities produce certain moral effects in the life of the self over and above their physical effects. Good acts produce merit (*punya*), while evil actions produce demerit (*papa*) in the individual. Virtue and vice as moral qualities respectively arise out of the good and bad deeds, thoughts, and words of the individual. All actions, however, have their root in the nature (*prakriti*) of the individual soul as constituted by the three *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. While the soul in its real nature is above the *gunas*, it is apt to confuse itself with them in the embodied condition and own them as a part of its nature. The *gunas* are the primal elements which combine in different proportions to constitute all objects of the world. An individual in whom *sattva* or the element of manifestation predominates is called *sattvika* and is characterized by such attributes as virtue (*dharma*), knowledge (*jnana*), dispassion (*vairagya*) and excellence (*aishvarya*). An individual in whom *rajas* or the element of mobility is dominant is called *rajasika*. He is swayed by the passions and impulses of our natural life and is engaged in all sorts of activity. The individual who is dominated by *tamas* or the element of passivity is called *tamasika* and has such bad qualities as vice, ignorance, infatuation, greed, apathy, laziness, etc. In respect of their moral status individual souls are divided into three classes, namely, the *nitya*, the *mukta*, and the *baddha*. The first group includes souls which have never been in bondage and are thus eternally free, e.g. Narada, Prahlada, etc. The second class consists of individuals who were once in bondage but are now free and liberated, e.g

[4] *Ibid.*, cf. also *Mandukya Upanishad.*

Janaka, Vasishtha. To the third class belong ordinary individuals who are in bondage to the world and are swayed by passions, desires, and lust for things of sense. The individuals of this class are bound to the wheel of birth and death and wander from life to life till they are liberated through perfection of their moral character and realization of their true nature.

Now we proceed to consider the real or noumenal character of the self. As we have already said, the distinction between the self on the one hand, and the body and the senses, the mind, intellect, and ego on the other, is fundamental to Hindu religion. A man's self is different from his body and the senses. We use such expressions as '*my* body', '*my* senses'. This shows that the body and the senses are certain objects which belong to me but are not identical with myself. Further, while the body and the senses undergo change and mutilation, a man remains the same self throughout. For the same reasons, a man's self must be distinguished from his mind, intellect, and the ego. All these are objects for the self and, therefore, not identical with it. The mind, intellect, and ego of a man cease to function in the states of deep sleep, swoon, and ecstasy, but even then his self abides as a conscious reality. Nor can the self be regarded as an aggregate of conscious states or a stream of consciousness. But for the reality of a permanent self, we cannot speak of an aggregate of many things or of a stream of the same stuff. Nor again can we explain the indubitable experience of our personal identity. A flowing stream is not conscious of itself as one and the same. It is the same or appears to be the same only for the same observer of its flow from beginning to end. All such considerations lead the Hindu thinkers to the view that the real self of an individual is a permanent self-conscious being or an unchanging, immutable spirit. The real self of man is revealed in the *turiya* state of consciousness to which we have just referred before. It is a state of deep concentration (*samadhi*) which is attainable through *yoga*. In this state the body and the senses, the mind and the intellect cease to function. So there is here no consciousness of any objects, including internal mental states. Still it is not a state of unconsciousness, for that would make it indistinguishable from death. One who attains the state of *turiya* or *samadhi* does not die, and come back to life after some time. Rather, in this state one continues to exist and to be conscious, although one does not exist as a particular individual and is not conscious of any particular object. As free from the conflicts of the ordinary objects and interests of life, it is also a state of permanent peace or bliss. It is a state in which the self abides in its own essence as pure consciousness, enjoying the still vision of pure self-shining existence.[5] Thus pure existence, consciousness, and bliss are what remain of man when he gets rid of his separable adjuncts and outer coverings. These then are the inalienable and essential characters of man's real self. As compared with these, all the physical, psychical, and even moral characters which we have explained before are external and accidental to the self. They form no part of the essential nature of the self, but are certain accretions that clothe the self in its worldly life. It is sheer ignorance to think that the self is the body or the senses, the mind, the intellect, or even the ego. But when through such ignorance the self confuses itself with these things, it *seems* to have their attributes and considers itself to be *somebody* having a certain name, belonging to a certain caste, and being subject to birth and death, pleasure and pain. It is the inordinate desire for enjoyment of the pleasures of sense that darkens and envelopes man's discriminative insight and misleads him to identify his self with the body, the mind, etc.[6] In truth, however, the selves that abide in the bodies of living beings are neither born nor do they die. They are eternal, indestructible, and unchangeable. With regard to them it cannot properly be said that they were non-existent in the past or that they would cease

[5] Cf. *Yoga-sutra*, I, 3.
[6] Cf. *Bhagavad Gita*, III, 40.

to be in future. They exist eternally, and are not born and destroyed with the birth and death of their body. Birth and death are only transitions of the self from one body to another like its transition through the states of childhood, youth, and old age in the same body. It is the body that is subject to disintegration and destruction, but not the self. 'Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, nor can water wet and air wither it. It cannot be cut, burned, moistened, or dried up. It is eternal, ubiquitous, immovable, immobile, and uncaused. It is beyond the reach of the senses and the mind, and it is above all changes.'[7]

It would appear from what we have said before that the individual self in its real nature is a conscious and eternal reality which does not really possess any physical or mental quality. As eternal and unchanging it has no activity or movement in it. Activity or motion involves change in some form or other, and cannot therefore really belong to the self which is unchanging. So it is said that 'all actions take place within the material world (*prakriti* or primal matter) and the self considers itself to be an agent or doer only when it is deluded by and wrongly identified with the ego'.[8] The self is different from the ego or the moral agent who strives for good or bad ends, attains them and enjoys or suffers accordingly. All changes and activities, all thoughts and feelings, all pleasures and pains, all joys and sorrows really belong to the mind-body. The self is quite distinct from the mind-body complex and is, therefore, beyond all the affections and afflictions of the psycho-physical life.[9] It is the mind, and not the self, that feels pleasure or pain, and is happy or unhappy. So also, virtue and vice, merit and demerit, in short, all moral properties belong to the ego (*ahankara*) which is the agent or doer of all acts. What belong to the essence of the self are thus eternal existence, consciousness, and bliss. As such, the self is also immortal and free. The self is the transcendent subject of experience, whose very essence is pure existence and consciousness, eternity, freedom, and immortality. It is pure existence in the sense that its being is not any particular form or mode of existence. It has being or existence *as such*, but not any particular form of being or existence. Similarly, it is pure consciousness, i.e. consciousness *as such*, and not any particular form or mode of consciousness. The particular changing modes of consciousness which, when taken collectively, we call the empirical consciousness, belong not to the self but to the mind. The self is the *subject* or *witness* of mental changes as of bodily or physical changes, but is as much distinct from the former as from the latter. The self is neither in space and time nor governed by the law of causality. Only particular physical things, made up of parts, are in space, and particular things and events are dated in time. The self being no particular thing or event is neither in space nor in time. Being above space and time, it is not subject to the law of causality which governs only those things which have an origin in time and interact with one another in space. Now a being that is not governed by the laws of space, time, and causality, is essentially and eternally free. The self is thus freedom itself in so far as it is above the space-time and the cause-effect order of existence. It is also eternal and immortal, because it is not produced by any cause and cannot be destroyed in any way.

The conception of the self, as explained above, is generally accepted by the Hindu thinkers and religious teachers of different ages. But there are certain schools of Hindu philosophy and religion which hold different views on certain points. The self, we have said, is pure consciousness which is its very *essence* and in reality, it neither acts nor enjoys and suffers the consequences thereof. But some schools of Hindu thought hold that consciousness is only the essential quality of the self and that it acts and enjoys and suffers, and is thus also the ego in us. Then we are told by the Vaishnava schools of Vedanta that

[7] *Bhagavad Gita*, II, 12-13, 20-25.
[8] *Ibid.*, III, 27-29.
[9] *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, IV, iv. 12.

the indiyidual self is not infinite and all-pervading, but finite and atomic. There are also different views with regard to the relation of the individual to the absolute or God. The *iadvaita* Vedanta stands for an unqualified monism and holds that the *jiva* or the individual is verily *Brahman* or the absolute itself and nothing else. The other schools, however, hold either that the individual is different in form but identical in essence with the absolute self or that it is distinct and different from the absolute in both. According to them there is a fundamental distinction between the two which can never be completely lost. Even when the individual self becomes liberated and perfect, it does not become identical with God. The liberated soul having pure consciousness as its attribute is *similar* to God, but cannot share in God's creative powers. It remains a part of God and as a distinct individual enjoys the blessed experience of communion with God. Almost all the different schools of Hindu philosophy and religion, however, agree in maintaining that the individual self is an uncreated and eternal spiritual reality which is quite distinct from the body and the senses, the mind and the intellect. The perfection of the individual lies in the direct experience or realization of this truth. To realize this noble truth is to be liberated from sin and suffering. Once we realize or *see* that our self is the unborn and undying spirit in us, the eternal and immortal subject of experience, we become free from all misery and suffering. It is possible for every individual to realize the self in this way and thereby attain liberation in life in this world. This kind of liberation is known as *jivanmukti* or emancipation of the soul while living in this body. After the death of its present body, the liberated soul attains what is called *videhamukti* or emancipation of the spirit from all bodies, gross and subtle. Here, however, some Hindu thinkers would say that it is only the latter and not the former that is the real kind of liberation, since it is not possible for the embodied soul to be completely free from the influence of bodily and mental changes. But there is a consensus of opinion that liberation is to be attained through realization of the self as eternal and immortal spirit, transcending the physical and the mental order of existence. Liberation through self-realization is the end of our life, and the aim of Hindu philosophy and religion.

INDIA'S CHALLENGE TO THE WORLD

By Swami Tejasananda

The present world war, despite all its accompanying horrors and barbarities, has done at least one good to mankind : It has brought to the surface the real stuff the militant civilization of the West is made of. When, even in these days of much vaunted enlightenment, we see before our very eyes on the theatres of the East and the West the enactment of such ghastly tragedies as the holocaust of human lives and the ruthless decimation of the finest fruits of culture in the name of Peace and World Security, we are led to wonder whether or not we have once again relapsed back into the primitive stage of barbarism. Verily, life on earth has become an ugly mockery,—an intolerable oppression, and that is why a philosophic mind exclaimed in agony, 'We have been taught to fly in the air like birds and to swim in the water like fishes, but how to live on earth we do not know.' Indeed, as Dr. Tagore has remarked in his *Religion of Man*, a scarlet fever with a raging temperature has attacked the entire body of mankind and a passion for political domination has taken the place of creative personality in all departments of life. Thus seems to have begun the last fatal adventure of drunken Passion riding on an intellect of

prodigious power. Even to a bold optimist it would be patent from a little reflection that man at the present day has only drilled himself into a sort of dull uniformity by his subservience to soulless machines, which has robbed his life of almost all its grace and beauty.

But what is the position of India today? Has she been able to remain a silent witness to the kaleidoscopic changes that are being wrought before her very eyes day after day? Has it been possible for her to cut herself off altogether from the stream of world-events and stand unaffected by the manifold forces playing all round? As a matter of fact, the fates of all the people on earth are so inextricably blended that any loss of balance in one part of the world is sure to produce its inevitable repercussion on the other. Willy-nilly all are sucked in the maelstrom and are constrained to participate more or less in actions which most of them would shun with positive abhorrence and disgust. This is exactly the case with India. As part and parcel of the far-flung British Empire, she, as in the past so in the present, has been forced to take part in this blood-curdling affair and contribute her quota of help in various ways. Besides, the forces of organized exploitation have been in operation in India for several centuries. The present war is only hastening her complete denudation and emasculation. The country has been drained dry of her material resources, and is experiencing today the bitterness of economic atrophy unparalleled in the history of any existing nation in the civilized world. The villages have become the veritable dens of jackals and hyenas, and a creeping paralysis has already begun to spread over every limb of her rural system. The famine victims in India are today at the lowest computation much larger in number than the casualties suffered by the Anglo-American forces in this greatest of all wars. Once a land of plenty and profusion —a veritable El Dorado, India has become the poorest country in the world and serves only as the dumping ground for all the exploiting nations on earth. The present condition of her economic life would hardly warrant any one to believe that she was the feeder of nations till the very beginning of the nineteenth century. The pristine glow of enthusiasm that characterized the sturdy peasantry of India is now lost in the hectic flush of a diseased life, and chill penury has frozen to stagnation the healthy flow of their nobler aspirations. The Indian masses are today no better than the Roman plebs of yore and the actual tillers of the soil seldom enjoy two square meals a day.

Force and fraud, the two great invisible weapons in the hands of the imperialistic nations, have for a long time been dominating the modern world and have more than neutralized the material benefits accruing from the present civilization. It is indeed time to seriously consider whether such a mechanized civilization should not change its character and rebuild itself on a better foundation. Swami Vivekananda has characterized this Western civilization as a piece of cloth, of which a vast temperate hilly country on the seashore is the loom, a strong warlike mongrel race formed by the intermixture of various races is the cotton, warfare in defence of one's own self and one's own religion is the warp. The one who wields the sword is great, and the one who cannot, gives up his independence and lives under the protection of some warrior's sword. Its woof is commerce. The means to this civilization is the sword, its auxiliary—courageous strength, its aim—enjoyment here and hereafter. After a careful study of the inner working of this civilization, this great patriot-saint of modern India declared, fifty years back, with a forecasting vision of possibilities :

> The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. You will find that the very centres from which such ideas as government by force sprang up are the very first centres to degrade and degenerate and crumble to pieces. And what will save Europe is the religion of the Upanishads.

The entire humanity is witnessing today, with grave concern, how the magnificent

fabric of modern militant civilization with all its vaunted material glory and prosperity is being blown away before its very eyes by the fiery fury of the malevolent forces of fraud and force, released from the cauldron of human nature that, for centuries, has been nurtured in the soil of an ego-centric culture. But how, it has been asked, can the religion and culture of a land that is politically prostrate, economically atrophied, and materially shorn of its pristine glory, come to the salvage of humanity? History tells us that the splendid civilizations of the great nations of the past,—the Egyptians and the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Persians could not withstand the ravages of time and were extinct long ago, and have now become subjects of mere antiquarian interest! No trace of these once famous races exists on earth to speak of their past glories and achievements. But how is it that India still lives and in spite of her manifold political vicissitudes and her present material prostration, she is still a power to be reckoned with in the domain of ideas? It is really a strange phenomenon that the culture of India travelling down the shining scores of centuries has kept her alive in the midst of the constant flux of political destinies and stands before the world today with an irresistible appeal! The reason is not far to seek. The greatness of Indian thought lies in her cultural conception of the Eternal. Her religion is the aspiration to spiritual consciousness—a clarion call to rise to the radiance of the spirit. Her philosophy, science, art, and literature have also the same upward look. Her founding of life upon this exalted conception, her urge towards the spiritual and the eternal constitutes the distinct value of her culture, and her fidelity, with whatever human shortcomings, to her ideal of renunciation and service, universal love and goodwill for humanity irrespective of caste, creed, or colour, all through her long and chequered career marks her people as a nation apart in human society. It is, to say the least, for this cultural characteristic which is radically opposed to the occidental gospel of 'enjoyment here and hereafter', that India still lives and commands unstinted homage from the intelligentsia of the world.

Romain Rolland, the celebrated French writer, in his *Life of Ramakrishna*, has beautifully shown the fundamental difference between the lines of cultural development in India and the West. He says:

> The age-long history of the spirit of India is the history of a countless throng marching over to the conquest of Supreme Reality. All the great peoples of the world, willingly or unwillingly, have the same fundamental aim; they belong to the conquerors who age by age go up to assault the Reality of which they form a part, and which lures them on to strive and climb. But each one does not see the same face of Reality. It is like a great fortified city, beleagured on different sides by different armies, who are not in alliance. Each army has its tactics and weapons to solve its own problems of attack and assault. Our Western races storm the bastions,—the outer works. They desire to overcome the physical forces of nature, to make her laws their own so that they may construct weapons therefrom for gaining the inner citadel, and forcing the whole citadel to capitulate. India proceeds along different lines. She goes straight to the centre, to the Commander-in-Chief of the unseen General Headquarters; for the Reality she speaks is transcendental.

In this titanic struggle for the realization of the primal aim of life, India has not yet lost her foothold, and her culture as such is tinged with the native glow and virgin beauty of the Spirit. But the genius of the West in its blind zeal for the conquest of the physical forces has switched off to the track of materialism,—to the orbit of enjoyment of pelf and power. This is one of the greatest tragedies in the drama of human struggles and endeavours.

It should not, however, be understood that a real civilization must necessarily be a lop-sided one as it is wrongly interpreted by some in India. Says Sir John Woodroffe,

> True civilization may and does produce some material comfort. But this is not an end in itself. When rightly employed, it is a means whereby mental and spiritual nature is given greater play in its increasing release from the animal cares of life. That then is true civilization which, recognizing God as its beginning and its end, organizes man in society through material and mental vehicles with the view to the manifestation of Spirit in its forms as true morality and true religion.

It is needless to point out that it is this vision of God—the ultimate Reality that forms the corner-stone of the mighty edifice of Indian culture. It is this spiritual outlook on life which has lent an abiding grace and coherence to the varied forms of her life and thought. There is something in it which is maddening in its imperturbability and insistence. The Hindu civilization is thus founded not upon the commercial and industrial interests of the people but upon the eternal moral and spiritual laws which govern their lives. In India, as already pointed out, the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre is religion and religion alone. This nation lives; the *raison d'être* is because it still holds on to God, to the treasure-house of religion which belongs to the supersensuous and not to the sense plane and makes one realize the same divinity immanent in every being from the highest to the lowest, from the noblest to the lowliest of creation. This lofty ideal of the Upanishads,—the universal religion of Vedanta—permeates every phase of Indian culture and offers to human life an unlimited scope for its boundless expansion and forms the very basis of universal brotherhood and love. The inner life of India like the phoenix of old has, under the stress of modern conflict of cultures, sprung back anew from the ashes of its material glory into a sparkling variety of creative forms. Says Dr. J. H. Cousins in the *Renaissance in India*,

> India has remained India, knit into invisible unity by the spiritual imagination that set its centres of reverence all over the peninsula, and wove between them an amazing net-work of saintly tradition, of poetical aspiration, of artistic achievement, of ethical wisdom, of interior illumination. This has become the common property of the India that is now finding voice to claim the duties and privileges of an adult and responsible member of the community of nations, and that in literature and the arts is providing a new instrument for the renascent power that moves from race to race and country to country seeking ever wider and deeper expression.

It cannot at the same time be denied that India is indebted to the West in ways more than one. With the spread of occidental literature and philosophy, history and science a new ferment has been created in India. The heroic deeds and adventures of the great patriots of the West have stimulated the dormant aspiration of India for political freedom and have thus been responsible to a certain extent for her present palingenesis. For, as Goldenweiser has aptly remarked, 'The civilizational role of borrowing is fundamental, and the culture contact is the veritable yeast of history.' But this cultural efflorescence in India is to be traced not so much to these extraneous circumstances as to her deep-seated spiritual powers. The great religious movements inaugurated by the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Indian Theosophical Society played their respective roles in reviving to a considerable extent these dormant spiritual potentialities. But something more was needed to bring into being a synthetic movement to harmonize the two fundamental instincts of India's social organism—the instinct of conservatism and that of expansion. This was fulfilled in the double personality of Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda who came to focus the attention of the self-forgetful Indians on the treasures of their indigenous culture which bears in it strength and vitality for infinite expansion and world conquest. The cumulative effect of these socio-religious movements of the nineteenth century as also of the culture contact was phenomenal. The people became self-conscious and learnt to appreciate the real worth and beauty of their own culture. Blind orthodoxy and conservatism that generally batten on ignorance and outworn usages have become almost a thing of the past. Healthy attempts are being made by many indigenous organizations to develop industry and to liquidate mass illiteracy so as to rescue the dumb-millions from the eidola of superstition and fear. Indian women have also boldly responded to the needs of the hour and are throbbing with a new life to liberate themselves to a reasonable extent from the galling fugitiveness of their social life. While recognizing the dangers of a blind pursnit of scientific culture

for sheer material power, Indians are fully conscious of what they still need for an all-round development of their national life. A spiritual civilization, they fully realize, must not necessarily be one of poverty and disease. Poverty is spiritual only when it is voluntary, but the crass poverty of the people is a sign of sloth and failure. India still wants that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-reliance, that immobile fortitude, that dexterity in action and that bond of unity of purpose which characterize Western life. 'Something of what West has to teach in the way of technical efficiency', rightly says Bertrand Russell, 'will have to be assimilated, since otherwise East will continue to be exploited and oppressed by West'. But in these days of mechanization of life, one must guard against putting too much premium on technical efficiency; for when man's main purposes are bad, efficiency is harmful. It would be far better to pursue common good with some slackening of efficiency than to pursue mutual destruction with the energy and ruthlessness which the West admires. The salvation of the West depends upon the acceptance of the highest rationalistic principles of Vedanta which form the conning-tower of Indian civilization, as much as the liberation of the East depends upon the learning of sciences from the West. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, science coupled with Vedanta is the ideal of future humanity. The West needs a temple bell to rest and the East a bugle call to action.

With the dawn of the modern age India is once again feeling her own ground. What with her spiritual resurgence and what with the scientific renaissance in the country, she is showing unmistakable signs of a buoyancy of spirit and a moral grit to wrench from the hands of destiny her long-lost freedom, and to advance the interests of peace by her cult of love and non-violence. 'Under our very eyes', writes the Editor of *The Times* in the *London Literary Supplement*, 'a veritable renaissance is springing to life in India, and a revival not only of art but also of science and philosophy, all three imbued with the vital spring of religion. Great men in every line are arising—men equal to any of the past. And what is most impressive is that this vigorous Indian culture is indigenous to the soil and derives without a break from a civilization which preceded that of Greece and Rome by at least 2000 years.' Behind India lies the long Indian summer of the soul, thousands of years of the contemplative life, and it is this which has given her qualifications for world efficiency in the higher realm of spirituality. The voice of India is still the voice of those mighty spiritual figures born on the soil of India from time to time to call the erring humanity to the cult of the spirit and to fight the forces of materialism which are playing havoc in the society of mankind. It is time that the master-minds of all countries should make a common cause to shed their racial and national prejudices and join hands to cry halt to this *crescendo* of massacre and savagery now raging with unabated fury throughout the length and breadth of the world. Once again India, with her rejuvenated spiritual culture, has thrown a challenge to the materialistic world of today. Declares Swami Vivekananda :

> Aye, as far back as the days of the Upanishads we have thrown the challenge to the world—'Not by wealth, not by progeny, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached'. Race after race has taken the challenge up and tried its utmost to solve the world riddle on the plane of desires. They have all failed in the past,—the old ones have become extinct under the weight of wickedness and misery, which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the new ones are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war, whether patience will survive or non-forbearance, whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We have solved our problem ages ago, and held on to it through good or evil fortune, and mean to hold on to it till the end of time. Our solution is unworldliness,—renunciation. This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her being, the *raison d'être* of her very existence, —the spiritualization of the human race.

Will the warring world listen to this gentle but virile message of India at this critical hour for the well-being of humanity at large?

MY VISIT TO THE U. K.

By N. C. Mehta, I.C.S.

I went to England as a delegate to the British Commonwealth Relations Conference, which had its meetings from the 15th February to 3rd March 1945. There was nothing remarkable as regards the journey by air in a flying boat from Karachi to Poole in South England. Our first hop was from Karachi to Cairo—a flight of seventeen hours —with a stop at Bahrein in the Persian Gulf, a place somewhat barren with a very scanty supply of water. These Persian Gulf territories are practically Indian in their make-up. Cairo was, as usual—gay, flippant, and devoted primarily to pleasures. The only sign of war was the number of troops seen in the streets, and the overcrowding of the hotels with indifferent service—incompetent and rapacious servants. From Cairo we flew to Jerba in Tunisia, a temporary landing place.

Flying over France was a wonderful experience. France is indeed a very beautiful country—fields well arranged, properly drained with carefully planned communications from every village to every arterial road. Nature has undoubtedly been kind, but the people have worked hard to make the soil of France rich both in wealth and to the eye. The signs of war were, however, visible from the air. The fields and occasional buildings showed the ravages of war, but the utter peace and beauty of landscape were a contrast to the horrors of war perpetrated by the human being.

Approaching the shores of England and crossing the Channel, the war was more visible from the number of ships sunk in the Channel and the fields marked by shell-holes. We landed at Poole, near Bournemouth, in the early hours of the evening of the 14th February. The efficiency with which everything was managed and the courtesy with which all the formalities on landing at the port were carried out, were striking even to those like myself who had known Englishmen in their country and here for quite a long time. Five and a half years of war had emphasized these qualities, and when we reached the hotel, run by British Overseas Airways Corporation, we felt as if we had reached a haven of peace and comfort.

On the 14th of February we reached London. Trains were crowded, but there was none of that unkempt disorder and want of cleanliness characteristic of our trains in India as if war has dried up even the waters of the Indian rivers and that it has become impossible to maintain a reasonable standard of cleanliness. Trains and buses were running and people going about as usual, except that the composition of the people in the streets had visibly changed. Here and there one saw the signs of war—houses blown up, or standing like dead skeletons, but still attached to their foundations. The bulk of the people that one met were old or elderly, for the youth of the country was hard at work. The gaiety of London had disappeared. One immediately noticed that the feminine hat had gone as had also silk stockings, for these latter were the rarest of rare luxuries. Silk and wool had become memories, or articles in very short supply; but the people walked erect and with a confidence that was born of inner strength.

It was indeed inspiring to see London after the trials of the war. One immediately felt that the fire of war—both literally and spiritually—had made this brave people into a really great people in every sense of the word, and a new factor of enormous significance had entered in their life. Women of all ages were for the first time working shoulder to shoulder with men. Class distinctions were forgotten, and everybody was and felt at the same level. Prices had

gone up—had almost doubled; but the administration had found an effective method of reducing consumption and confining it to the barest level of efficiency and directing everything else to the achievement of victory. The purchase tax of 100 per cent and more and complete cessation of manufacturing anything but utility articles—articles actually needed as necessities for the people—had effected an integration of economic life which was indeed a marvel of efficiency.

London—and this was symptomatic of England as a whole—was not exactly a place for luxury or amusement, though the Englishman could put up a grand show if he so desired. For example, the delegations of the Commonwealth Conference were entertained at a banquet by Lord Kemsley, a newspaper magnate, where one saw the most beautiful flowers coming from English nurseries decorating the tables amidst scenes of feudal splendour. The Englishman can be even more spectacular and effective by his accustomed reticence, than others more flashy and less efficient.

As regards the Conference itself, it was good to be talking to distinguished people from the various dominions about problems of international significance. It was something like a breath of fresh air, for in India we are obsessed with our own domestic ills, which do not seem to yield to treatment by mere clamour or ineffective denunciation. Our own maladies are indeed endemic; they require something more effective than declamation, or merely putting the blame on the shoulders of the administration. This is, however, by the way. The British Delegation was as usual extremely strong, well led, and excellently prepared; but the Canadian Delegation was perhaps the most remarkable in the matter of sheer calibre and outspokenness. The British people must indeed have a unique gift for making and maintaining friendships, for the experience of two great wars at an interval of twenty-five years had proved that England can not only retain the friendships, but also can demand from its friends a degree of sacrifice and help—from countries like the U. S. A., or from the dominions like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—as no other countries in the world have ever been able to do. The Indian Delegation felt that the Conference was a forum at which they could express themselves as freely as they liked. Every delegate was responsible only for his own views; he represented nobody but himself. But there was nothing to prevent him from speaking as a true representative of his country according to his lights and his courage. It is said that the Indian Delegation acquitted itself well. In any case, the Indian case did not go by default, or for want of courage. It was really remarkable how matters and differences of opinion which looked completely impossible of mutual settlement became very much simpler across the table. Points of dispute which seemed to be absolutely incompatible became reconciled and a *via media* was soon discovered.

The Conference was organized under the auspices of Chatham House or the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

The British people have doubtless contributed most to the progress of political science during the last three to four hundred years. Apart from a great and permanent civil service responsible for running the administrative machine from day to day, whether in administration or in big business houses, it has perfected a system of ascertaining the will of the common people by commissions, *ad hoc* enquiries and maintaining a standard of intellectual integrity by drafting distinguished individuals—experts in their own respective spheres—into specialized organizations and giving the latter a status by bestowing on them the title of a Royal Society or giving subventions or both.

Chatham House started as an organization of a few individuals. It has now grown into a powerful and influential international organization with significance and even influence on the deliberations of statesmen in the British Commonwealth. I was also interested to note that the Society of Indian Art and Culture—a modest organization—has also now become a Royal Society of Indian arts and

letters. An Englishman begins in a modest way and by sheer persistence raises his organization to a pitch of international repute and standing. He is a slow builder but a steady one. No wonder the German philosopher, Keyserling, said that the Englishman was the most perfect product of Western civilization.

Rationing in the matter of food and clothing and complete elimination of the manufacture of luxury goods were accepted as matters of course—whether in private houses or in public places. The Indian is as law-abiding as the Englishman; but he is not as self-assertive in the matter of his own rights and duties vis-à-vis his countrymen or the administration as the Englishman. It is not the want of education from which the Indian suffers, for as a matter of fact it is the educated who has perhaps to learn more of ethics than his uneducated brother.

It was exhilarating to see England poorer in material goods but so much richer in matters of the spirit—in qualities that make a people great. It was also good to see the reaction of the common man towards India and the Indian problems. What a great pity it is that India is presented to the outside world as a country of penury, suffering from every imaginable ill with hardly anything to contribute to the cultural heritage of the world—India obsessed and pre-occupied with her own problems of disease, subjection, quarrels and grievances against all and sundry. All countries have their own ills to look after in a greater or a smaller degree. But they are their own concern which each country must deal with according to its own capacity. In the comity of nations a country occupies a place only in accordance with the contribution that it makes and its innate worth. It seemed to me that India has another face to show to the world—of young and radiant people who are bent upon profiting by the experience of more advanced nations in the matter of social and economic life and equally determined to judge the problems of the world from an objective and impartial standpoint with a rare degree of tolerance born of centuries, to see the other man's point of view.

The problem of India is not anything peculiarly Indian. It is purely a problem of human welfare with very little peculiarly Indian about it. It is primarily a question of raising the standard of living and increasing the national wealth of the country. The problem assumes a different shape and significance once it is viewed in that light. It becomes a common-place problem, which is dealt with by every country at its own level and in accordance with its own resources. Imagination, efficiency, and organization are needed to level up backward populations. There is nothing impossible or Indian about them.

I am afraid that we have been hitherto harping on the 'Indianness' of everything, as if we were something peculiar and *sui generis*. We have also assumed that this peculiarity is valuable in itself, and is, therefore, a quality to be cultivated, whether in the matter of dress, habit, inefficiency, indifference to ordinary standards of sanitation or ineffective organization. We have even gone as far as to have our own systems of medicines, quackeries, and laws relating to property, and even to franchise. It is a malady which requires a lot of cleaning up.

I was struck by the amount of goodwill that the Indian soldier has been able to win for himself and his country. I have no doubt that the Englishman wishes to see India free, but as a Canadian delegate remarked to me, it is very difficult to find out from the Indian the next step that he wants to be taken in the matter of political emancipation of his country. The criticism is not altogether fair though it is correct as regards the reactions of the educated Indian in respect of such problems. The Englishman's attitude in England is not evident in the actions of his countrymen in the actual day-to-day administration in India and the distrust that is so common and universal at present as regards the promises of freedom for India in the post-war period will unfortunately continue so long as the gap between the profession and practice is not greatly narrowed down.

I have however no doubt that this is the time when India must draw freely upon the great reservoir of friendly feeling that has

sprung up in the U. K. and make a new approach to the rehabilitation of good relations between the two countries. India has certainly acquired a new significance in the world order. She has got men capable of guiding her destinies with capacity and integrity. But they will have to be quite uncompromising in the matter of principles, for India cannot be but a single unit in the world set-up of tomorrow, and the integrity of India cannot be a question either for discussion or for barter. The Englishman would understand this. What he would not understand is weak-kneed compromise in the matter of fundamentals. The present trend is towards large integrations of territories and peoples. Further divisions cannot be countenanced in the interests of human welfare. India's integrity and freedom are vital to the world peace, and we must never miss a chance of getting the breath of fresh air that these international conferences bring from time to time. This breeze has the effect of banishing the fumes of closed environment and lighting up one's intellectual landscape with new and welcome light.

It was indeed a privilege to have seen England after five and a half years of war.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES—AN ESSAY ON THE STUDY OF LANGUAGES

By Swami Vipulananda

After the passing away of the Master, the disciples of Jesus Christ were preparing themselves to go abroad and preach the gospel to the nations of the world. The touch of the Master's hand had fashioned heroes out of common clay and these men mostly drawn from plebeian ranks were ready to brave the perils of the high seas and journey across arid sandy deserts. Nevertheless, if we are permitted to hazard a profane opinion on a sacred theme, we may say that the courage of these sturdy soldiers of the Spirit gave way at the sight of an obstacle which appeared almost insurmountable. In their youth these brave men had not given much thought to the study of foreign languages. It was too late to begin now. The dangers of the high seas were nothing compared with the perilous venture of finding one's way through the quicksands of foreign idioms. Journeying across sandy wastes is far less arduous than crossing the dry deserts of grammar. Thinking thus, the disciples of Jesus were heavy at heart. We are told that the Holy Spirit came to their aid, blessed them with the 'gift of tongues' and—may we add—saved them from the rigours of pedagogic discipline. Let us quote from the holy book the verses which tell us how it all happened:

> 1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
> 2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
> 3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
> 4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spiritual gave them utterance.
>
> —*Acts of the Apostles, Chap. II.*

Now, let us digress a little and see how mankind, said to have descended from a single pair of ancestors, came into the possession and use of an ever-increasing number of languages. We shall again refer to the same holy book and seek the aid of ancient wisdom for the solution of modern problems. We shall begin by stating briefly the problem that confronts us at the very outset. What was the original 'mother-tongue' of mankind, the language used in the blissful Garden of Eden? Opinion is very much divided on this point. Nevertheless amidst the welter of contending views one definite

fact emerges and stands unchallenged. Learned doctors may decide in favour of Hebrew, Sanskrit, Greek, Arabic or Tamil. But none can refute the statement that the language spoken in the Garden of Eden was also spoken by the angels of Heaven and by the fallen angels, who had their abode in the subterranean region known as Hell. Holy lore informs us that there was free and uninterrupted intercourse between the dwellers of our Earthly Paradise, the denizens of Heaven and the recognized leader of Hell. Even after our first parents were driven away from the blissful garden and were forced to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, the intercourse between the three worlds continued to exist. It was, of course, less frequent than before. The daughters of men found favour in the eyes of the sons of heavenly dwellers. There were mixed marriages and a brand-new hybrid race of demigods came into being. Notwithstanding the incursion of a foreign element, all the dwellers of this earth, human beings as well as hybrid demigods, continued to speak the same language. Then came the great flood which left only Noah and a selected number of his people to carry on the affairs of this world. Mankind multiplied again and the leaders of men thought it worthwhile to erect a tower of vast proportions—subsequently known as the Tower of Babel—to serve as a place of refuge, if distressing circumstances comparable to Noah's flood were to occur in the future.

Not quite satisfied with this new project sponsored by the leaders of mankind and in order to create confusion in their midst, the Lord of the Three Realms decreed that thenceforward mankind would speak in diverse tongues. That decree holds good for all time. Therefore it is futile to think of a common language for all the peoples of this world. Esperanto, Lingua Mundi, and such other ventures are bound to fail. International goodwill and intercommunal harmony may best be promoted by making men and women polyglots. Now let us turn our attention to practical problems.

If it is the duty of all good citizens to master as many languages as possible, the leaders of the people assisted by men and women belonging to the teaching profession should devise ways and means to make the study of languages, both easy and pleasant. The child learns its mother tongue as well as other modern languages by listening attentively and endeavouring to imitate earnestly. The inquisitiveness natural to childhood prompts children to ask questions and acquire useful information. Boys and girls in the primary classes attain greater proficiency in their mother tongue by reading interesting matter, by writing real letters to schoolmates and others, by describing real and imaginary incidents, first orally and then in writing, by learning and reciting easy verses suited to their age, by writing dialogues and by acting plays specially written for boys and girls. Language work in the post-primary classes should be planned to meet the needs of the growing mind. As the interest of the pupil widens, the reading matter should become wider in scope, and written composition deeper in content and more varied in form. The class libraries should provide reading matter on scientific, historical and geographical topics in addition to purely literary matter. Throughout the post-primary classes the language lesson should include formal grammar. In the case of adults who have attained a certain amount of mastery over their own language and desire to study another modern language, the method to be adopted may closely follow that of the child in the early stages and that of the school-boy or girl in subsequent stages. The time taken is, of course, very much shortened. An intelligent adult whose mind is already formed can do in ten months what the school pupil does in as many years.

The child's method known as the 'direct method' has been used extensively and successfully in the learning and teaching of modern languages. There is no better method for acquiring speedily a working vocabulary, proper pronunciation and the

right kind of intonation. Objects or pictures of objects and in later stages mental pictures are always associated with their names and likewise actions are associated with verbs which express them. Consequently a fairly large vocabulary is acquired without resorting to the translation method. There is no reason why the same method should not be followed in the early stages of the study of classical languages. The present writer has seen it successfully tried in the case of Sanskrit and Latin. Dramatization and the recitation of suitable passages of prose and verse may be used as an extension of the 'direct method.' Above all, in language studies it is both necessary and desirable to create the cultural background of the subject matter of the language lesson. Training the learner to form clear mental images of the scenes described in a passage of prose or verse is perhaps the best means for making him comprehend the meaning of the passage. It will also help the learner to retain the passage in mind.

The traditional method of studying classical languages is the grammatical method. Translation from and into the language is done as an exercise in the application of the rules of accidence and syntax. The various declensions of nouns and adjectives and the conjugations of the verbs are easily absorbed by the mind when these are introduced by means of carefully graded translation exercises. Throughout the study a comparison is made between the classical language and the pupil's own mother tongue. Emphasis is laid upon precision and order and the study becomes a very valuable mental discipline. In the early stages translation into the language is the only form of composition that is attempted. When the pupil is more advanced, imitation of the classical writers is attempted both in prose and in verse. Fluency in conversation in the case of modern languages has been achieved by reading modern plays and acting them. The same method can be used with advantage in the study of classical languages. Pupils who have read through a play of Kalidasa will certainly add to their knowledge if they would stage the play. Memory work is essential for language study. But memorizing isolated words and uninteresting passages leads to boredom. Play-acting on the other hand is full of human interest and memorizing becomes a pleasant task. Acting of plays will also help the pupil's imagination to create the atmospheres in which the incidents related took place. Imagination should play a very important part in studying the classics. The learner should make every endeavour to live in the past, amidst the scenes and in the company of persons mentioned or described in the passages to be studied. Ancient India, Greece and Rome should be made to live again in the mind of the learner. The classics should be looked upon as immortal records of the activities of heroic men and women who played their part nobly in the past and thereby set examples worthy to be followed by posterity.

Now we shall turn our attention once more to the modern languages and evaluate their importance in bringing about good understanding among nations and communities and also estimate their practical value in the promotion of commercial and cultural relations. Communication by air is tending to bring the peoples of the world closer and closer together. The establishment of neighbourly relation makes it necessary to understand the mind of the neighbour. This can only be done by a system of education which includes a few of the modern languages. Owing to various circumstances English has become an important world-language. The old barriers between the 'unchanging East' and the 'progressive West' have broken down. Commercial and cultural relations will be closer in the future than in the past. Through the medium of the English language and two or three other European languages, the nations of the East can understand the mind of the West and establish closer contact. Western universities have already taken up the study of the ancient and modern

languages of Asia and Africa. When the war is over and peace once more reigns upon this earth, the universities and other educational institutions are bound to give greater attention to these studies. We in India should see to it that our universities make ampler provision for the study of the Western languages. Provision should also be made in each province for the study of the more important languages of the other provinces. Philologists and educationists should organize themselves and devote their attention to the devising of modern methods calculated to simplify language teaching.

WESTERN INFLUENCE ON INDIAN YOUTH

By Humayun Kabir

India was just emerging from the stage of rural economy when Europe appeared on the Indian scene. The family was still the centre of life. Even today our social consciousness operates on the plane of the individual or the family. Individually, Indians are one of the cleanest people in the world and yet our ideas of social cleanliness are lamentably low. Scrupulously clean in our persons, we hardly notice the dirt and filth in our surroundings. Into this world of ego-centric social feelings, the West burst in with its industrial capitalism and the concomitant development of a complex social consciousness.

The impact of British capitalism brought with it an emphasis upon national consciousness. Before the lesson could be fully learnt, the process in Europe had moved a stage forward. India, before she had evolved her capitalism or her nationality, was faced with the problem of organizing her life in terms of social collectivism. The first European war shook the basis of existing culture. It revealed the contradictions inherent in nationality and capitalism in a naked form. New ideas captured the imagination of the intellectually alert. The profound disturbance in man's accepted beliefs and habits culminated in the socialist revolution of Russia. It is yet too early to estimate its repercussions on the various levels of social life, but the challenge to private property and the profit motive is too great to be ignored by any type of social form. The capitalist urge towards monopoly was brought to its logical conclusion but the purpose of the monopoly was transformed from that of private benefit to social utilization.

The idea of nationality had profoundly disturbed the Indian consciousness. The disturbance was most pronounced in the minds of the student community. They were directly receiving the impact of new ideas. They possessed sufficient mental resilience to react to every influence brought to bear upon them. Also, they were relatively free from the stabilizing influence of vested interests. As students, they had not yet been fitted into the social framework in any specific form. Infinite possibilities were open before them. This very fact made their minds receptive and eager for new ideas.

There was another reason why the idea of socialism appealed so strongly to Indian youth. All over the world, the war disillusioned young men about the possibilities of capitalism. In India, it was not even full-fledged capitalism but a hybrid system under which the middle class continually expanded at the cost of both the workers and the capitalists. And all of them lived under the constant threat of unemployment and starvation. Students derived mainly from the middle class. The spectre of unemployment haunted the whole of their student life. The middle class evolved in India to serve the interest of British capitalism. Its natural growth was towards the evolution of indigenous capitalism, a process resisted by the British through political and economic pressure. And yet the relative comforts of the middle class continually attracted recruits from less developed strata of society. In the sequel, a middle class grew up which was too numerous for the purpose for which it had been intended. They refused to go back to

a lower level of economic competence and yet their march forward was hampered in a thousand ways. Unemployment increased and also discontent.

The sense of frustration so often exhibited by Indian young men today is the direct outcome of this state of affairs. Socialism with its ideal of social justice and equality of opportunities challenges their endeavour and their faith. The context in which they have to work and live seems far removed from the realization of this changed social order. The conflict between their aspiration and their surroundings provokes in the majority despondence and light-hearted flippancy. It is only in a minority that it challenges determined effort and striving. In the complex and often inchoate mentality of the Indian student of today, the three elements which cause the greatest ferment are the ideas of nationality and socialism and a sense of utter frustration and purposelessness.

This brief survey has been attempted in order to understand the genesis of the forces which are fermenting in the minds of Indian youth today. The conflict of ideals introduced uncertainty and hesitation into their convictions. Loss of assurance and poise was accompanied by manifestations which are often disturbing in their vehemence. Few impartial persons can deny the profound changes that have taken place in the last two decades. It has, however, generally been overlooked that these changes mark only the culmination of a process that began long ago. Like most other revolutionary changes in nature and in human society, a long period of silent and unobtrusive preparation went on unnoticed. Suddenly people realized with a shock the difference between the order in which they had grown and to which they had become accustomed and the new state of affairs with all its disturbing novelty.

The characteristic among students which compels our attention most is the attitude of defiance that has grown in recent years. To older generations and persons in power, this rejection of authority has appeared as mere turbulence and indiscipline. It has provoked regret and at times a horrified anticipation of the gloomy prospects of India. This is historically unjustified. Given the conditions sketched above, the modern manifestations were inevitable, yet the perturbance of older men is not strange or unexpected. They were brought up in a society which was based upon the conception of authority. The Indian religions emphasized revelation and sanction. Status was the basis of the order of society and status was immutable as the order of nature itself. Islam's democratic onslaught had shaken that edifice of sanction and authority, but had not demolished it. And there was in Islam, in its emphasis upon the finality of revelation, an element which buttressed the authoritarian structure of society. The same was the case with Christianity. In any case, till the revolution in the means of communication and intercourse through the railway, the post office and the printing press, the outposts of Christianity and Islam had to adapt themselves to the intellectual territory in which they found themselves.

Besides, Imperialism is incompatible with the rejection of authority. Whatever the inner meaning of Islam or Christianity, neither Moghul nor British Imperialism wanted to substitute authority by criticism as the intellectual outlook of society. Education was, therefore, in both the Imperial regimes based upon the idea of unquestioning acceptance. Questioning and criticism were discouraged by both alike. After the advent of the British, the interplay of political and economic forces operated against one another and introduced a new disequilibrium. The fundamental contradiction inherent in the British demand for an enlarged middle class first expressed itself as the political discontent of an intellectually alert minority. Soon it pervaded the whole of society as a spirit of unrest and rejection of old values.

The ebullience of spirit in the student community is, therefore, a symptom of the times and conditioned by the historical forces which are shaping the destiny of India. The authoritarian basis of society and education was challenged. In the first flush of intellectual emancipation, it was inevitable that there should be excesses everywhere. Student unrest today marks the transition from the atti-

tude of mind based upon acceptance of authority to one based on appeal to reason and the intellect.

The transformation, inevitable result of a long process of transitional changes, came as a shock to those whose mental and social habits had become ossified. On the other hand, the attitude of criticism and intellectual examination is still extensive rather than intensive. The confusion of nationalism with obscurantism has often attracted notice. A more novel and curious phenomenon is the amalgamation of doctrinaire socialism with sectarian communalism of an extreme type. The demand of social justice, which forms the basis of all socialist theories, is abstracted from its own context and distorted to suit the purposes of vested interests who use communal passion for their own ends. Instead of serving as a cementing bond to knit together the various sections of the exploited classes, the plea for socialism becomes, through the intrusion of extraneous religious circumstances, a guarantee of the iniquities which make the present social order so unacceptable to all thinking minds.

Revivalism and renascence are, therefore, working at cross purposes in India today. Deprived of their traditional moorings, moving away from the attitude of acceptance which has served as the basis of Indian social life till now, it is small wonder that the perplexity of the student community should express itself in unrest or even indiscipline. The old security of life has been shattered. With it has gone all the old and familiar ideals of life. The growing interlacing of world affairs is making the present-day student more keenly conscious of the utter futility of his attempt at maintenance of isolation or equanimity. Decisions, which have nothing to do with his own hopes and demands, and by men with whom he neither has nor can have any personal contact, determine the course of his life and decide between life and death for him and his generation.

It is reason alone that can, out of the crumbling ruins of the Indian past, build a heritage in which future generations might delight and pride. The attitude of criticism is growing but its objectives are yet uncertain and indefinite. Discrimination between what to preserve and what to reject of our great social heritage has not yet developed. Criticism is often directed at the external and the unimportant while fundamental weaknesses remain untouched. Nor is it always safe to point out such fundamental defects or weaknesses. On account of the confusion of renascence and revivalism, of communalism and extreme radicalism, the atmosphere is so charged with passion that the slightest spark may lead to a conflagration.

The blind imitation of the West was followed by its equally blind rejection. In this blind denial, values of great importance to India stand in danger of being unnecessarily sacrificed. If this tendency holds, India may again be dissociated from the general current of the civilization of the world. In the modern world of interlaced communications and connections isolation is impossible. Attempted isolation will lead only to economic and political disaster. It is easy to understand the reluctance of the average Indian patriot to accept the values of the West. To him they must bring memories of cultural imperialism and national humiliation. Inferiority complex often expresses itself through an exaggerated assertion of superiority. Much of the recent happenings in India become easy to understand when one remembers this.

The new leaven among students can help this fusion of the civilizations of the East and the West by adopting elements of permanent value in both. The ideal of social justice is today the most vital force in a distracted world. It challenges the sway of exploitation and imperialism. It attacks social iniquity and inequality at their very base. Its instrument of attack is the machine which liberates human energy and makes it possible to guarantee leisure to every single individual. For the first time in human history, the enslavement of nature renders unnecessary the enslavement of man. A new order of society dominates the vision of every intellectually alert man in the world. The increasing conquest of space and time, revolutionary changes

in the methods of warfare and attack, transformation of the means and scale of production and distribution and the growing integration of the social and economic life of different regions of the world compel a movement in the same direction.

Conflicts grow out of a sense of wrong. If the very bases of conflict are not eradicated, the whole structure of world civilization must come down with a crash. The present war in Europe is a sharp reminder of this truth. It has already shown how imperialism, in spite of frantic endeavours after compromise, cannot achieve a permanent equilibrium. Economic exploitation and the attendant sense of wrong are inherent in the nature of imperialism and cannot be removed without the liquidation of imperialism itself. Ideals of justice and the necessity of practical adjustment therefore combine in demanding a new orientation of society. Indian independence is an essential ingredient in that process. Young men in India must necessarily take an active part in that struggle for independence. The important function of preserving for India the elements of value from the already decaying civilizations of the past is theirs. It is they who must formulate and interpret the new demands which the emerging world civilization makes of individuals in every corner of the globe.

THE SOCIAL MESSAGE OF THE UPANISHADS

By Swami Gambhirananda

Be united ; talk unitedly ; let your minds know alike. Let their deliberations be alike, and harmonious be their assembly. Let their minds be alike and harmonious be their feelings.

The Social Goal

The Upanishads sought for unity—unity underlying all kinds of diversity and all levels of life's expression. True, their aspiration rose beyond this world to transcendental Truth; but this transcendence consisted not so much in a mere rejection of limited outlooks as in a positive realization of Infinity where transcendence and immanence get sublated. On the relative plane, the sole purpose of the Upanishads was to achieve a dynamic and progressive movement of life and thought. Thus the Upanishadic meditations were calculated to give a converging and integrated drive to individual lives in all stages of manifestation; but since individuals live in society, the Upanishads could not but think in terms of an ideal society where their teachings could find the fullest play.

The Upanishads were aware of two main bases of society. The *Chhândogya Upanishad* (VIII.vii-xii) gives us the story of Indra, king of gods, and Virochana, king of demons, who both went to the Creator to know all about the Self, whose realization, the Creator had declared, could lead to 'the conquest of all the worlds and the possession of all the values'. Virochana's search ended in identifying the Self with the body; and to the demons he said, 'This Self is to be adored and this is to be adorned; for by adoring and adorning this Self one can gain this world as well as the next.' As a result of this theory, the world still abounds with 'people who are demoniac in nature and are devoid of charity, faith, and sacrifices; for this is the theory of the demons.' Indra, however, following the advice of the Creator, pursued his inquiry still further till he realized the true Self. The gods got their theory of Self from Indra. 'They meditated on this Self; and so all the worlds and all the values came to their hands. Anyone else who learns about this Self from his teacher and then realizes It, gets all the worlds and all the values.'

These are the two main theories of society—the material and the spiritual. Needless to say that the Upanishadic people preferred the latter. In the *Kathopanishad* the conflict of

the two standpoints is clearly brought out, and emphasis is laid unambiguously on the higher one: 'Two paths present themselves to humanity—the preferable and the covetable. Those who are steady of purpose distinguish between them after thorough scrutiny. He who is unperturbable chooses the preferable rather than the covetable; while he who is not so accepts the latter to the exclusion of the former' (I.ii.2). 'He who selects the preferable is blessed with success, but he who selects the covetable achieves little' (I.ii.1). It was clear, therefore, from the Upanishadic teachings that each individual as well as the society of which he formed a part, was expected to bend all energies to the search after the Self. This was the goal of each individual life as of all organized efforts.

Briefly stated, the Upanishadic goal was nothing less than Infinity which by Its very nature is Unity. This Unity appears as diversity either due to a multiplicity of angles of vision or to the very nature of things. Thus from the human standpoint, the highest conception of Unity in spite of diversity was adumbrated in the words: 'Truth is one, but sages call It by various names.' This theory worked for social harmony without strangling variety. The door for newer outlooks, too, was left wide open. And this led to the growth of a rich culture. The other standpoint was that of Unity Itself from where the world of difference was visualized as the *leelâ* or disport of the One: 'He transformed Himself in accordance with each form; that form of His was for the sake of making Him known. The Lord on account of *mâyâ* (notions superimposed by ignorance) is perceived as manifold.'[1] This grand conception of one origin for everything, made all lives valuable. Nothing was insignificant, and nothing entirely damnable. Again, no achievement was too high for the aspiring soul, for it, too, shared a part of the Most High.

Contrary to the Western conception of 'social contract', the Upanishads postulated Unity as the source of all variety—on Unity all the units rest; and to Unity they all return: 'That from which all beings come, That by which they live after birth, and That towards which they progress and get merged into after death . . . is Brahman.'[2] Unity is discernible in all strata of society: 'All the hands and feet are His; all the eyes, heads, and faces are His; all the ears are His. He is the indwelling self of all; and He pervades everything.'[3] To this Cosmic Person, who is also the Social Person, the prayer goes up: 'Thou art men as well as women; Thou art boys as well as girls; Thou art the decrepit staggering along with sticks; Thou art the One who has assumed infinite forms.'[4] Society is pervaded through and through by this one Self. A service rendered to any part is so much good done to oneself; and a harm done to any part is so much pain inflicted on oneself.

The individual finds his life's fulfilment in Infinity; and life's success can be measured in terms of the progress made towards this greatest Whole which is called Brahman. Now, according to the Upanishads, this Brahman is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Bliss is the origin, substrate, and goal of every living being.[5] Bliss is in evidence everywhere, and a natural attraction towards Bliss prompts every action: 'He indeed is the source of all delight. Man becomes happy by realizing this Bliss. Who could ever inhale and exhale if this infinite Bliss were not there?'[6] Hence the questions arise, Where did fear come from; and how can fear, which is a prominent element in social activity, be accommodated in the Upanishadic scheme? Faced with this problem, the Upanishads declare, 'Brahman is indeed fearlessness';[7] but due to ignorance a sense of separation arises, and this leads to fear: 'From duality indeed rises fear';[8] 'He goes from death to death who sees difference as it were in It.'[9] Thus though Bliss should be

[1] *Brihadâranyaka*, II. v. 19.

[2] *Taittiriya*, III. 1.
[3] *Shvetâshvatara*, III. 16.
[4] *Ibid.*, IV. 3.
[5] *Taittiriya*, III. iv.
[6] *Ibid.*, II. vii.
[7] *Brihadâranyaka*, IV. iv. 25.
[8] *Ibid.*, I. iv. 2.
[9] *Ibid.*, IV. iv. 19.

recognized as the basis of society—and it is recognized as such by all good people—yet for the wayward people fear comes to vitiate the whole atmosphere. Even so, the supremacy of Brahman cannot be ignored; for according to this perverted view, even the strongest among the strong is afraid of a still stronger entity. This chain followed to its farthest limit reveals Brahman at the head of all; and through It social security is ensured: 'From His fear fire burns, from fear the sun shines, from fear move Indra, Vâyu, and Death' (*Kathopanishad*, II.iii.8). The remedy for this fear lies in identifying oneself with the Greatest Whole. So long as an individual persists in his self-centred existence, so long as he is bent on promoting his selfish ends, he feels lonely: 'Being alone, he was possessed with fear'; but as soon as he knows that his salvation lies in a unitive outlook, his fear abandons him: 'He reflected, "There is none besides me; so why should I fear?" From this consideration his fear left him.'[10]

Castes

Having enunciated the general principles so far, we now turn to the study of a specific social institution, viz. caste, which has gathered round it much prejudice and misconception. The Upanishads did not stop merely with a unitive outlook. They went further to enunciate the relationships that should exist among the different social groups, so that the social corpus might have a healthy growth. The *Brihadâranyaka* affirms the divine origin of the castes and emphasizes their interdependence. Society needs all of them for making itself a self-contained whole. Thus, though from one point of view, the Kshatriyas belong to a lower order than the Brahmins, from another standpoint the Brahmins have to bow down to the heroic Kshatriyas, for on their prowess depends their safety as well as that of society as a whole. The Vaishyas, that is to say, the bankers, traders, agriculturists, etc., who live in guilds, supply the necessary financial sustenance for society. The Shudras, i.e., the labourers, too, who are the actual producers of wealth, cannot be ignored, since on their service depends the day-to-day existence of all. And all these groups are unified at their head in Divinity Itself:

> In the beginning this (the Kshatriyas and other castes) was indeed Brahman, one only. Being one, He did not flourish. He projected an excellent form, the Kshatriyas—those who are Kshatriyas among the gods. . . . Therefore, there is none higher than the Kshatriyas. . . . The Brahmin is the source of the Kshatriyas. Therefore, although the king attains supremacy (in the sacrifice), at the end of it he resorts to the Brahmin, his source. . . . Even then He did not flourish, He projected the Vaishyas—those species of gods who are designated in groups. . . . He did not still flourish. He projected the Shudra caste—*Pushana*. This earth is *Pushana*; for it nourishes all this that exists.[11]

From these divine castes were derived the human castes: 'So these four castes were projected. . . . He became a Brahmin among the gods as Fire, and among men as the Brahmin. He became a Kshatriya through the divine Kshatriya, a Vaishya through the divine Vaishya, and a Shudra through the divine Shudra.'[12]

The Cosmic Person includes in Himself all classes of society; to Him all are subordinate: 'To whom Brahmins and Kshatriyas both become food' (*Kathopanishad*, I.ii.25). The *Purushasukta* presents a beautiful conception of the Social Person: 'The Brahmins were His face; the Kshatriyas were conceived of as His arms; His thighs were thought of as the Vaishyas; and from His feet arose the Shudras.' The *Brihadâranyaka* (II.iv.6) says that all these classes should be looked upon as identical with the Self; for otherwise friction will result. It is not a question of high or low, rights or privileges, but the practical problem of transcending individual limitations through the help of the social whole. The salvation of the social individual lies in recognizing his dependence on all and identifying himself with the best that is in others: 'The Brahmin ousts him who knows

[10] *Ibid.*, I. iv. 2.

[11] *Ibid.*, I. iv. 13.

[12] *Ibid.*, I. iv. 15.

the Brahmin as different from the Self. The Kshatriya ousts one who knows him as different from the Self. . . . This Brahmin, this Kshatriya, these worlds, these gods, these beings, and this all are the Self.' For a better order of things and progressive realization of the purpose of creation, there must be a concerted effort of the social whole, a continuous direction of effort towards self-effacement. Hence it is said in the *Purusha-sukta* that in the beginning the gods sacrificed to the Creator by imagining the Cosmic Person to be the oblation in a Cosmic Sacrifice, which, too, was none other than the all-pervasive Vishnu. It is through such a sacrifice for a higher cause that creation became what it is and it is this spirit that is still working for a higher evolution.

The Upanishads knew, too, that mere diversification and division of labour do not lead to efficiency and progress. On the contrary, division may end in disruption, unless there is a higher principle at work to bind the several parts together 'like thread passing through pearls'. So Brahman felt the necessity of the moral urge. Even after creating the classes 'He did not flourish. He projected that excellent form, righteousness (*dharma*). . . . There is nothing higher than that. So even a weak man hopes to defeat a stronger man through righteousness.'[13]

It is very difficult to decide from the stray references whether the Upanishadic age stood for hereditary or functional classes. But this much is sure—and this is implied in the high idealism of the Upanishads—that mere birth counted for little with them. There are flashes which reveal that social customs were often sacrificed at the demand of real worth. Thus in the *Chhândogya Upanishad*, Satyakâma Jâbâla is recognized as a Brahmin even though his lineage is extremely questionable. The deciding factor here was the boy's truthfulness (IV.iv). King Jânashruti Pautrâyana, who is deservedly called a Shudra twice, owing to his jealousy for others, is vouchsafed a knowledge of the all-consuming Brahman as soon as he shows a real spirit of sacrifice. Here, again, inner worth turned the scale to the King's advantage (IV.i-iii). Ushasti Châkrâyana sits as the highest priest in a sacrifice even after partaking of the remnants (*Ucchishta*) of the food of a Shudra (I.x-xi). In the same Upanishad, respect for the lower castes is palpable in more than one place. Offering of the remnants of food even to a Chandâla is condemned (V.xxiv.4). Birth among all the four castes results from good deeds (V.x.7). Gautama, a Brahmin though he is, goes to King Pravâhana Jaivali, who is a Kshatriya, for acquiring the secrets of birth and death (V.iii). And so do six Brahmins go to King Ashvapati Kaikeya—a Kshatriya to be sure —for learning the *Vaishvânara Vidyâ* (V.xi.4). The Upanishads had, of course, the highest regard for the Brahmins, both socially and spiritually. But, then, they had in mind the ideal Brahminhood. The *Brihadâranyaka* identifies the Brahmin with the knower of Brahman: 'Having known all about meditativeness and its opposite, he becomes a Brahmin' (III.v.1). The word is used in many other places in the same sense (III.viii.8, IV.iv.21, V.i.1, etc.). The *Vajrasuchikâ Upanishad* leaves no doubt when it says: 'Then who is a Brahmin? Anyone who continues to live after directly realizing Brahman that is beyond all castes, qualities, and actions . . ., is truly a Brahmin.' Thus even though caste might have been hereditary, each individual had to establish his claim to a particular caste through real worth. Not that there is no mention in the Upanishads of social disabilities; but the whole trend of their teaching was to discover the higher potential worth rather than the immediate drawbacks.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

We have dealt with the relationship that from the Upanishadic angle of vision should subsist among the different social groups. All these groups were to be looked upon as parts of a divine whole co-operating for unravelling a divine scheme of self-fulfilment.

[13] *Ibid.*, I. iv. 14.

Diversity came as the result of a felt want, and the want had to be removed by rearranging the separate parts into and realizing them as a unified and homogeneous whole: 'In the beginning this universe was but *Virâj* of a human form. He reflected and found nothing but Himself. . . . He was afraid. . . . He was not at all happy.'[14] And so He created everything. But this self-expression did not give Him full satisfaction. Then He came to know, 'I indeed am creation, for I projected all this'; 'This Self was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only Itself as, "I am Brahman". Therefore It became all.'[15]

Life was thus an effort at re-integration, at picking up the lost strings of identity with Wholeness Itself. The technique for this re-unification was worked out by the Upanishads both on the group plane and the individual plane. The social responsibility and obligation were brought home to each unit through the conception of fivefold duties which are also spoken of elsewhere as debts. Each individual was considered as indebted to the gods for the natural and supernatural advantages he enjoyed; to the seers of old for the culture he inherited; to the manes for the line he was born in; to society for all the neighbourly help he was entitled to; to domestic animals for the services they rendered unto him; and to all creation for the goodwill it bore towards him. He could be a real object of delight to all through performing his duties by them:

> That he makes oblations in the fire and performs sacrifices is how he becomes an object of delight to the gods. That he studies the Vedas is how he becomes such an object to the sages. That he makes offerings to the manes and desires children is how he becomes such an object to the manes. That he gives shelter to men as well as food is how he becomes an object of enjoyment to men. That he gives fodder and water to the animals is how he becomes such an object to them. And that beasts and birds and even the ants feed in his home is how he becomes an object of delight to these.[16]

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* enjoined: 'Let there be no break in thy lineage. . . . Be not unmindful of self-protection. Do not falter in beneficent duties. Do not neglect the study and preaching of the Vedas. Do not be unmindful of your duties to the gods and manes' (I.xi).

Duties rather than rights dominated the Upanishadic minds. Naturally enough, charity formed an important part of the Upanishadic life. But a worshipful attitude distinguished this from ordinary distribution of gifts. The *Taittiriya* enjoined: 'Give with reverence; do not give spitefully. Offer according to means; offer with modesty, awe, and friendliness' (I.xi). Charity was a social virtue and had to be practised liberally. Only people of demoniac nature did not recognize this.[17] Charity was not merely a flow of things from mortals to mortals. The gifts, giver, and recipients were all divine: 'Life (i.e., Brahman in the form of vital force) gives life to life. The father is life, the mother is life, the brother is life, the sister is life, the teacher is life, the Brahmin is life. . . . Like the spokes of a wheel fixed in the nave, everything rests on life.'[18] The *Taittiriya* made this more clear: 'I am food . . .; I am the eater of food . . .; I join the eater with his food . . . . He who offers me to a supplicant, saves me thereby. I eat Him who does not do so. I, as the Lord, rule this whole world' (III.x.6).

As God is all-pervasive existence, the Upanishads raised all social relationships to the divine plane. To the *Skandopanishad* 'man is but Shiva, and Shiva is man'. In social and family dealings all had to be looked on as gods: 'Look on your mother as goddess. Look on your father as god. Look on your teacher as god. Look on your guests as gods.'[19]

Hospitality formed one of the main planks of the Upanishadic society. The adage went: 'No guest should be refused lodging.'[20] But lodging implied feeding as a natural concomitant; one had, therefore, to multiply

[14] *Ibid.*, I. iv.
[15] *Ibid.*, I. iv.
[16] *Ibid.*, I. iv. 16.
[17] *Chhândogya*, VII. viii. 5.
[18] *Ibid.*, VII. xv. 1.
[19] *Taittiriya*, I. xi.
[20] *Ibid.*, III. x.

food;[21] food could never be neglected.[22] Earning and protection of wealth were thus a part of social service. Instead of pampering the acquisitive instinct, they served as the stepping stones to a higher divine life.

In addition to these virtues, the Upanishads recognized other social qualities without which no society can hold together for long. Tradition, for instance, is a great steadying force; and the Upanishads strongly recommended respect for the elders: 'If thou art ever in doubt about your duty or thy mode of life, follow thou the ways of those Brahmins there who are noted for their discrimination, activity, self-guidance, simplicity, and selflessness'.[23]

A peculiarity of the Upanishadic age was the division of life into stages (*âshramas*) each of which had its distinguishing virtues and duties, through which each played an important part in the social scheme. The *Chhândogya* enumerates three stages of life. First, there were the Brahmacharins who studied the Vedas under teachers whom they served according to capacity. Secondly, there were the householders who had to continue their study, teach others, and make their children useful members of society. Lastly, there were those who retired from the world after playing their parts fully; they practised non-violence, austerity, and meditation (VIII.xv. 1). To these three stages some Upanishads added a fourth, viz. the life of the anchorite wholly devoted to God. There is also mention of the *parivrâjaka*s (the wandering ones) in the *Brihadâranyaka*. From the nature of things it was to be expected that the householder was the pivot of society. He gave food and lodging to all others and provided the wherewithal for a cultured and God-absorbed existence. None the less the contributions of the other *âshramas* were invaluable. The Brahmacharin with his vow of chastity, devotion to culture, and urge for perfection reminded the householder of some of the fundamental principles of social stability and progress. The retired man with his store of experience, his self-inflicted austerity, and his purity—supplied a steadying force and drew pointed attention to the atmosphere that ensures creative thought. The monks with their self-absorption and renunciation emphasized the true worth of life and the goal towards which all must proceed. The wandering ones carried the message of the cultured centres from village to village and town to town. The *Chhândogya*, following its threefold scheme of life, speaks thus: 'There are three divisions of *dharma* (righteousness). The first comprises sacrifices, study, and charity. Penances are the second. And the third is the Brahmacharin (i.e. the celibate), spending his life entirely at the house of his teacher' (II.xxiii.1). The Upanishads are never tired of drawing attention to the importance of chastity, penance, and meditation. In a sense everything depends on chastity and everything can be derived from it.[24] The power of *tapasyâ* (i.e., penance as well as concentrated thinking) is almost limitless. The highest knowledge can be achieved through its help and creation itself came out of it.[25] Renunciation leads to immortality (*Kaivalyopanishad*). These virtues—chastity and study, activity and charity, penance and purity, meditation and renunciation—were to be emulated by people in all stages of growth, though their fullest manifestation could be possible in particular stages only.

The Upanishads taught many other social virtues which are common to all good societies, and, therefore, need no special mention. What is worth noting is that the Upanishads gave a practical bent to their morality. For instance, there is mention of *ishta* and *purta*—charity and hospitality, building of roads and rest-houses, excavation of wells and tanks, etc.

Before closing this article we should add a few words about the position of women in

[21] *Ibid.*, III. ix.
[22] *Ibid.*, III. viii.
[23] *Ibid.*, III. viii.
[24] *Chhândogya*, VIII. v.
[25] *Brihadâranyaka*, I. ii. 6; *Taittiriya*, II. 6, III. 1.

the Upanishadic society. There were two customs, to be sure, viz. child marriage[26] and polygamy,[27] which are repellent to modern taste. But these should not blind our eyes to the really high position of the Upanishadic womanhood. In the *Kenopanishad*, Umâ Haimavati instructs Indra, the King of Gods. In the *Brihadâranyaka* Maitreyi receives the knowledge of Brahman from her husband Yâjnavalkya (II.iv), and Gârgi is authorized to argue with the same sage on behalf of a vast assembly of erudite Brahmins (III.vi). The same Upanishad enunciates the relationship of husband and wife thus: 'He (i.e., the First Being) parted this very body into two. From that came husband and wife. Therefore this body is one-half of oneself like one of the two halves of a split pea. Therefore this space is indeed filled by the wife' (I.iv.3). In another connection the wife is compared respectfully by the husband with 'the adorable Arundhati, the wife of Vasishtha' (VI.iv.27). In the *Chhândogya* Ushasti and his wife are full of mutual consideration (I.x); and the wife of the teacher takes motherly care of the students (IV.x.3). And the *Aitareya* instructs that the wife should be taken care of by the husband (II.i.2). Strangely enough, the responsibility for prostitution is laid on men rather than on women.[28]

Thus the protective and inspiring wings of society spread over all fields of life; and yet the individuals were left with sufficient initiative and responsibility. Life as a whole was oriented with a cosmic outlook; and yet it admitted of expansion from stage to stage. In fact, the grand conceptions and practical achievements of the Upanishadic age far outstripped those of all contemporary societies and achieved for itself an almost ideal perfection.

[26] *Chhândogya*, I. x. 1.
[27] *Brihadâranyaka*, IV. v. 1
[28] *Chhândogya*, V. xi. 5.

MUSLIM INFLUENCE ON SANSKRIT LITERATURE

Dr. J. B. Chaudhuri, Ph.D. (London), F.R.A.S. (London)

Elsewhere we have dealt with the important question of Muslim patronage to Sanskritic Learning. Here, we intend to draw the notice of the lovers of Oriental Culture to only a single instance illustrating the influence of Islam on Sanskritic Learning. This benign influence is ever welcome; it cannot be over-emphasized that the more wealth we may amass in the domain of our Sanskrit Literature, the better for our learning, and for better understanding among the peoples of the world.

Islam influenced Sanskritic Culture and Learning in very many ways. Many translations, or adaptations, of leading Arabic and Persian works into Sanskrit are prominent examples of this. Srivara's *Katha-Kautuka* based upon the *Yusuf-Zuleikha* of Poet Nasr-ul-din Abdulrahman,[1] called Jami on

[1] Srivara himself speaks of his original in the following verses:

प्रणम्य विघ्नौघहरं गणेशं त्रिधास्वरूपामपि भारतीं ताम् ।
विरच्यते यावनशास्त्रबद्धकथा मया निर्जरभावयेयम् ॥२॥
क्रमेण येन भेदार्थो मलाज्यामेन वर्णितः ।
तेनैव हि मया सोऽयं श्लोकेनाद्य निरूप्यते ॥३॥

and aslo see V. 39.

account of his birth at Jam in Khorasan (1414-92), is one of the best instances in this respect. This metrical work in 15 Kautukas or chapters was composed at the instance of Mahammad Shah of Kashmir[2] whom the poet praises unequivocally (verses 20—36 of the first Kautuka), particularly because of his gesture of goodwill to Hindus by ordering the non-slaughter of kine :

प्रीत्यै तु गोसहस्रस्य येन धमपुरेण च ।
ज्ञात्वा पूर्वपदार्थैक्यं वधाद्गावो विमोचिताः ॥

The *Yusuf-Zuleikha* of Jami was translated in India in the Saka year 1427, i.e. 1505 A.D.,[3] only after 13 years of its composition at Khorasan[4]. This only shows what a keen appreciator of Persian poetry Srivara was. Srivara, Janaraja's disciple and successor in the composition of the *Rajatarangini* and one of India's champion historians states in the colophon to each of the 15 Kautukas of the *Katha-kautuka* that he was well-versed in Islamic Literature and Language and a thorough scrutiny of the work also reveals that Srivara very closely followed his original, even reproducing its marvellous grace in his metrical rendering wherever possible. It is regrettable, however, the poet broke off towards the end of the story for some reason or other.

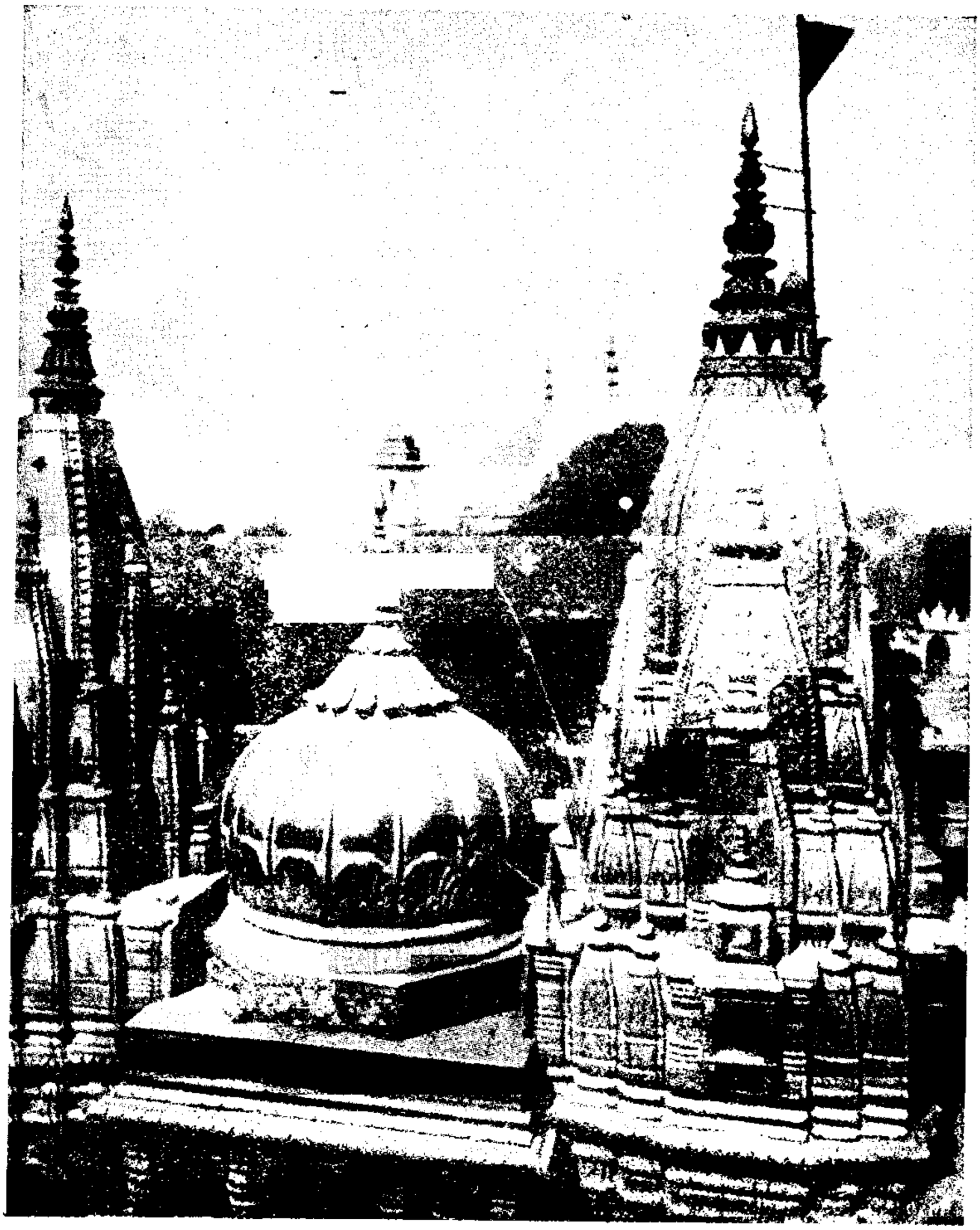
Srivara and many other Sanskrit poets of Mediaeval India were champions of Islamic Learning as well and there is no reason why Sanskrit scholars of Modern India, too, should be apathetic to Islamic Culture and Learning. Sympathetic understanding, true fellow-feeling and brotherhood are possible only through the appreciation of mutual culture and civilization. As a matter of fact, Sanskrit must hold within its fold, in some form or other, the knowledge contained in the leading works of any part of the world—Near East, Far East as well as the West, of the aborigines as well as the civilized—Science, Arts, useful Arts and everything else. Sanskrit is equivalent to Indian civilization; this language has stood the test of time for five thousand years, if not more; and there is no doubt that it will continue to do so in future as well. It is our National Language and all lovers of Sanskrit must realize fully their responsibility today for keeping it alive. Their watchword today must be—Translate or otherwise incorporate into Sanskrit everything that is best in any other part of the world so that our National Language may be all-comprehensive. And of original, modern solid contributions in Sanskrit, there must be any number. Sanskrit was, is and must always be a living subject—that has to be the slogan of all lovers of Indian Culture and Civilization.

[2] See V. 40, first Kautuka. Mahammad ascended the throne in 1489; he was thrice restored to the throne and died in 1534 A.D. See *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 288.

[3] शाके मुनिद्विवेदेन्द्रुगणिते । The remaining part of the verse refers certainly to some other era.

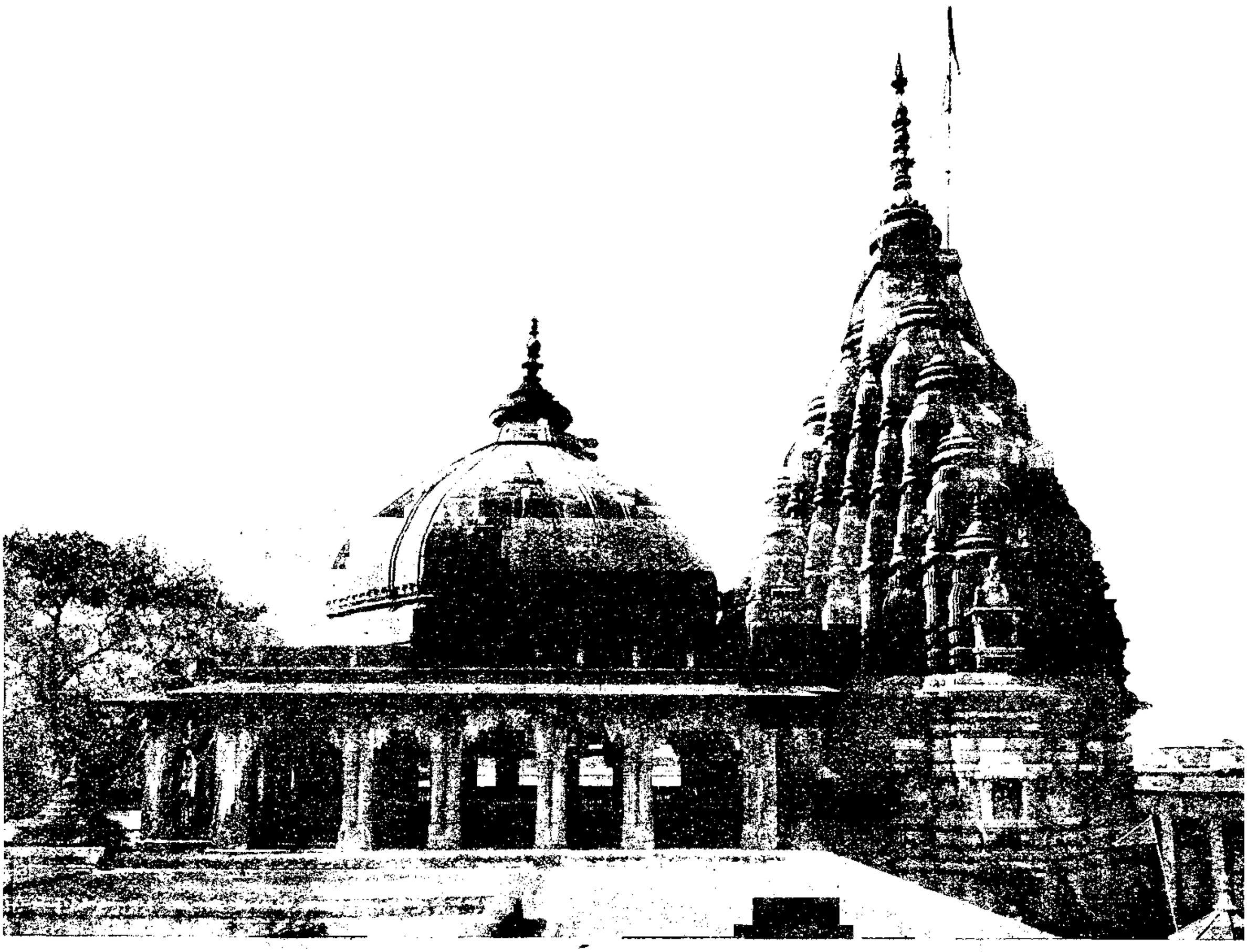
[4] The date Hijri year 898 is given at the end of the work itself.

TEMPLES THAT INSPIRE



VISVANATHA TEMPLE AT BENARES

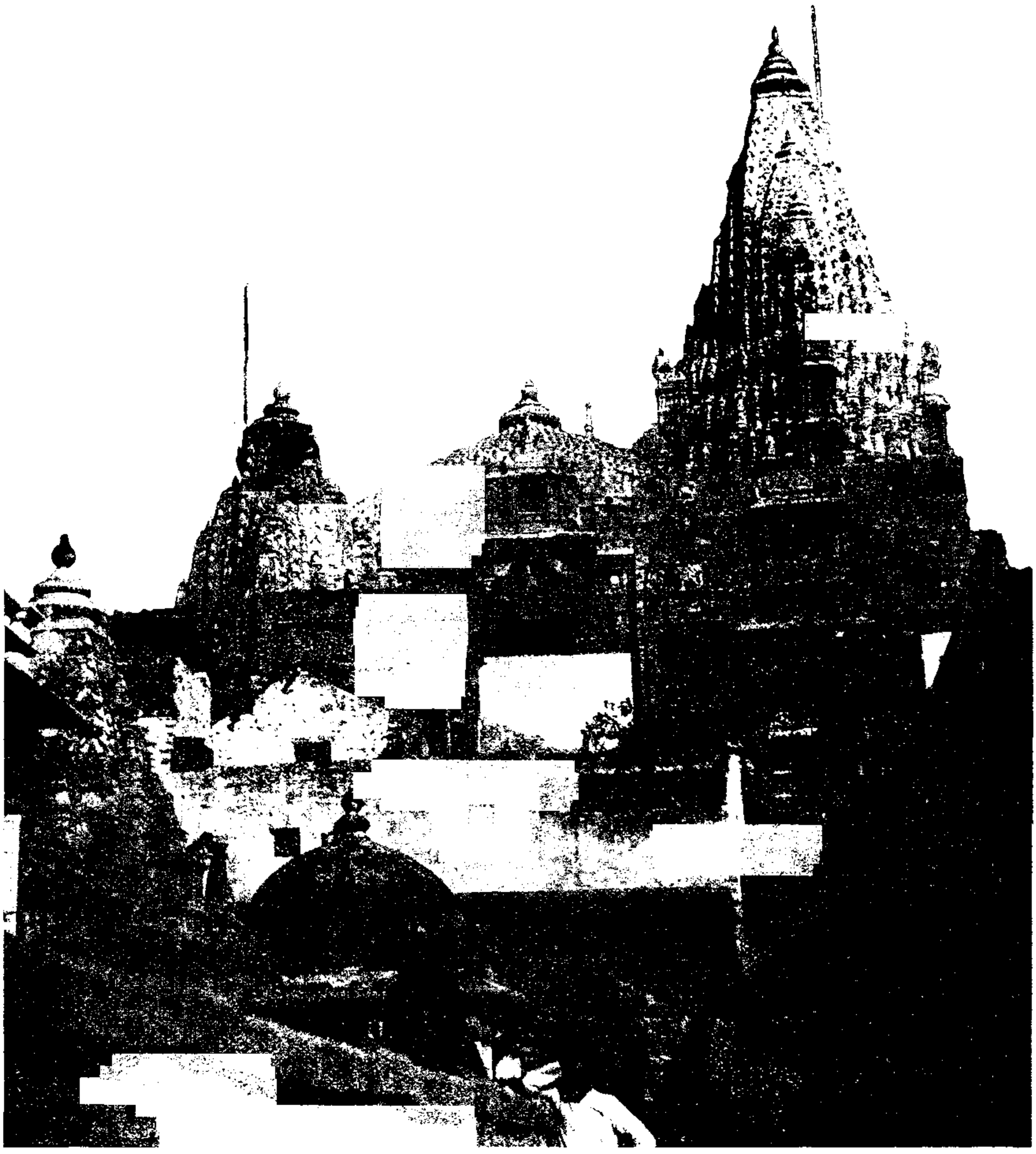
Courtesy : E. I. R.



VISHNU TEMPLE AT GAYA

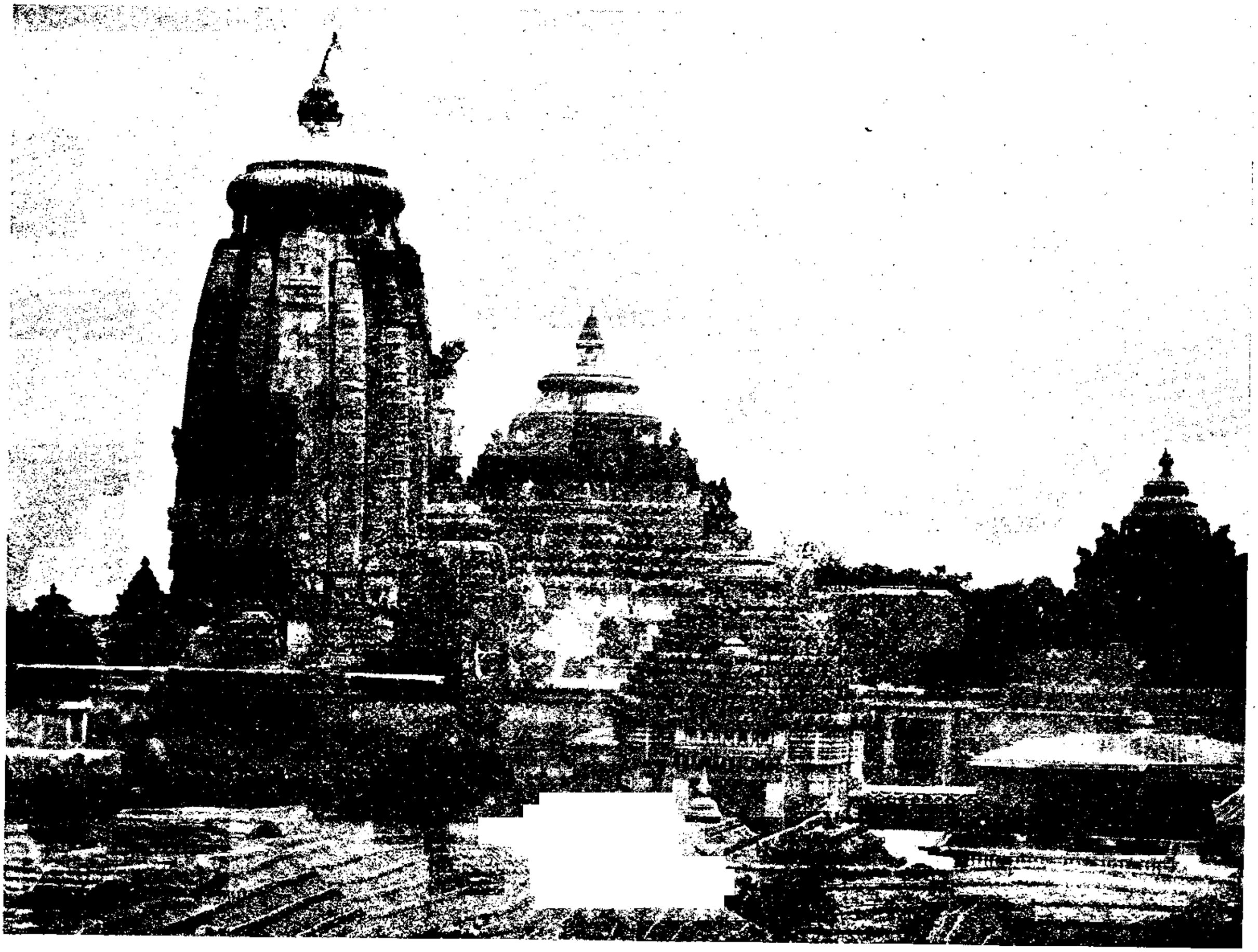
FAMOUS FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF OBSEQUIAL RITES TO THE DEPARTED

Courtesy : E. I. R.



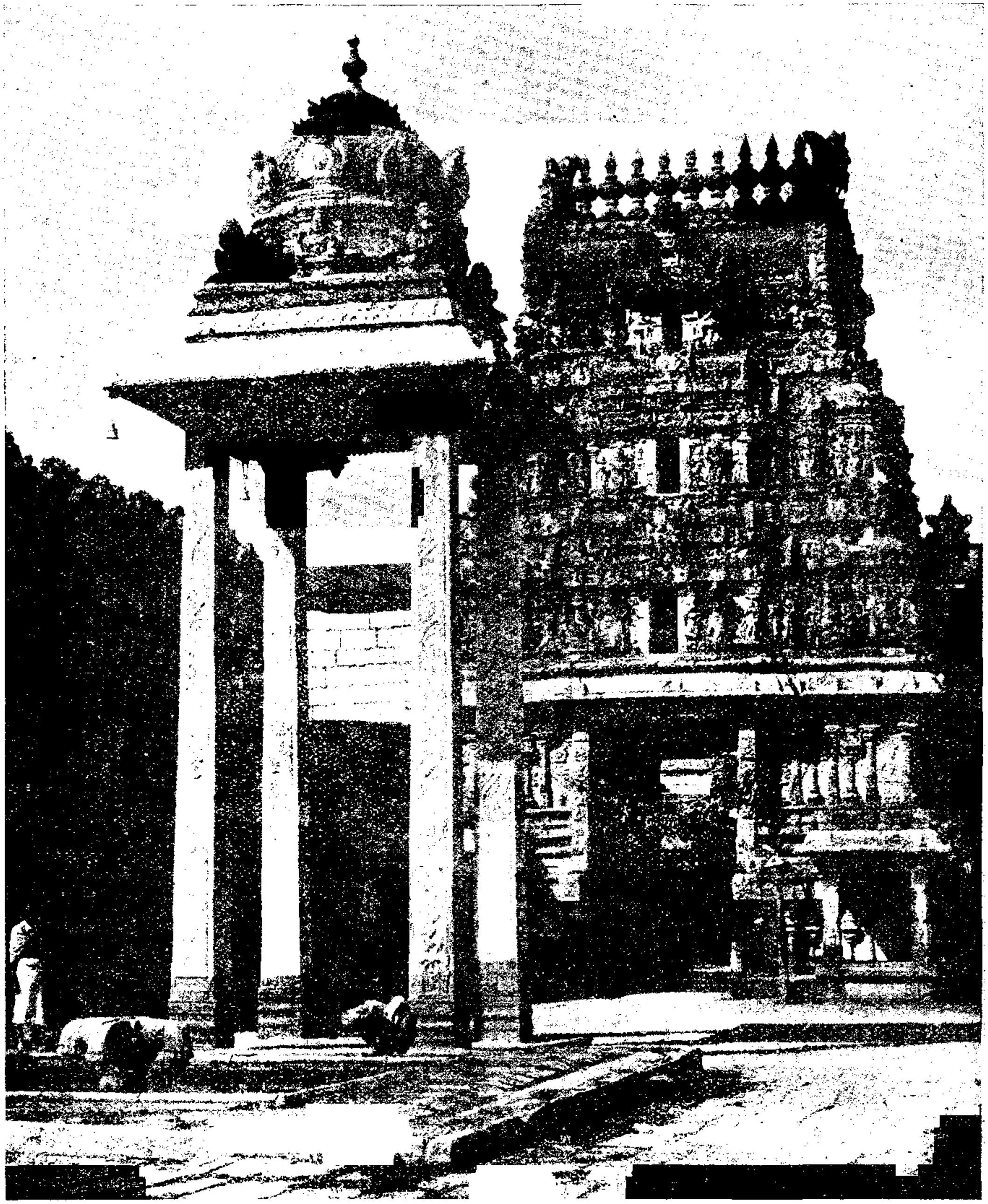
TEMPLES AT DWARKA

Courtesy : Mr. H. C. Chakladar



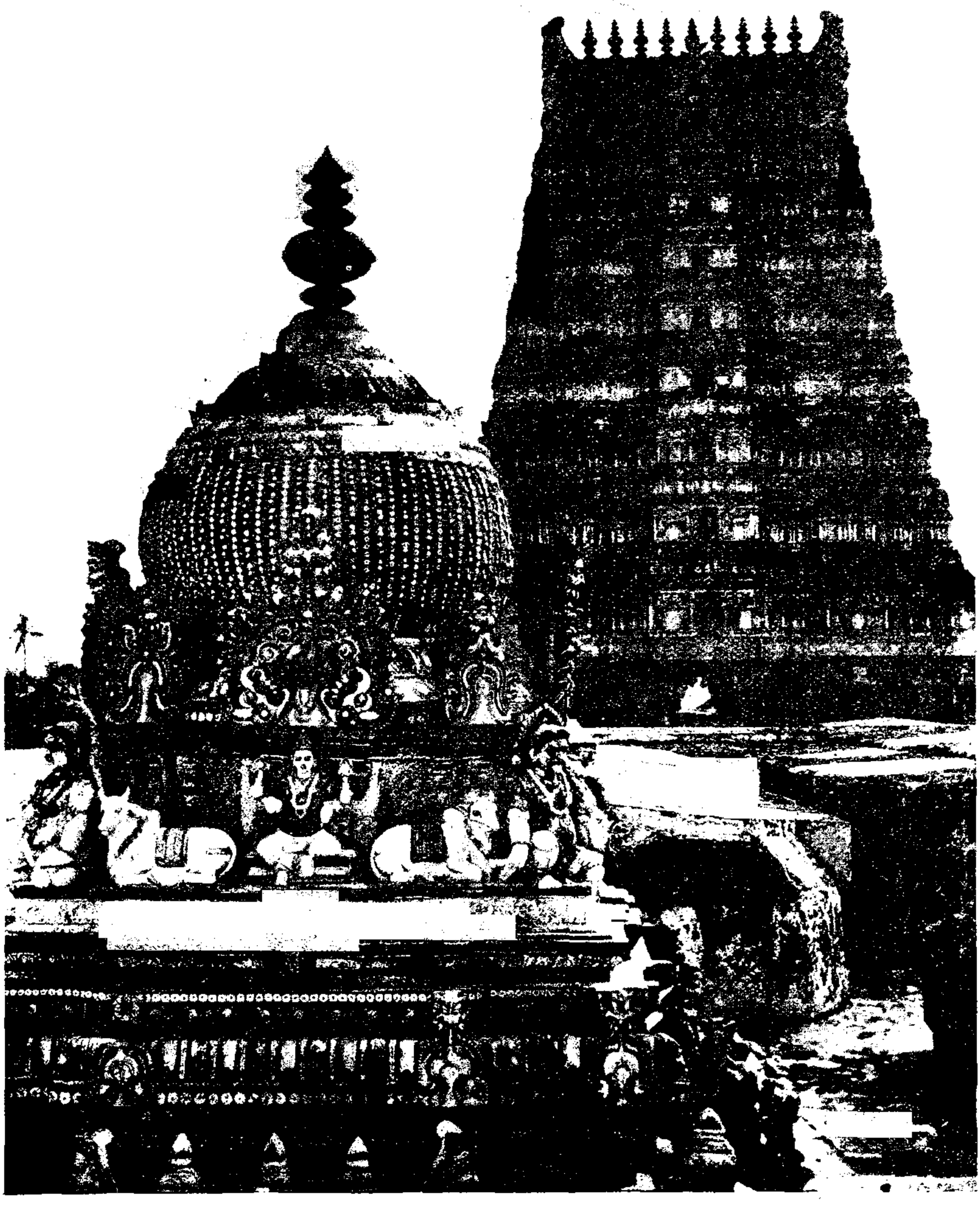
JAGANNATHA TEMPLE AT PURI
ASSOCIATED WITH THE MONASTIC LIFE OF SRI CHAITANYA

Photo : Bourne & Shepherd



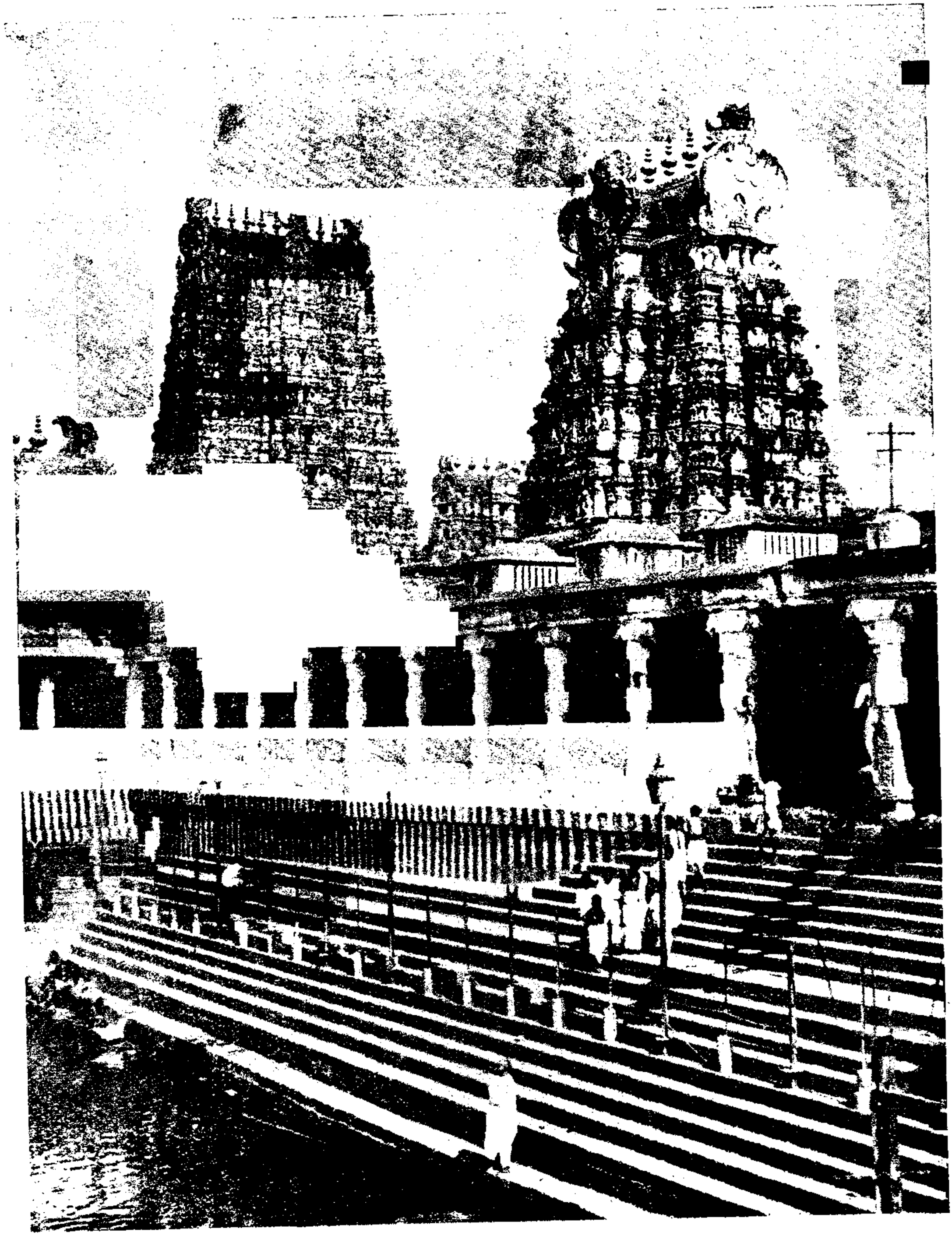
VARADARAJA TEMPLE AT CONJEEVERAM
MANDAPA AND SHRINE

Courtesy : Mr. O. C. Ganguly



RAMESVARA TEMPLE: DEDICATED TO SHIVA

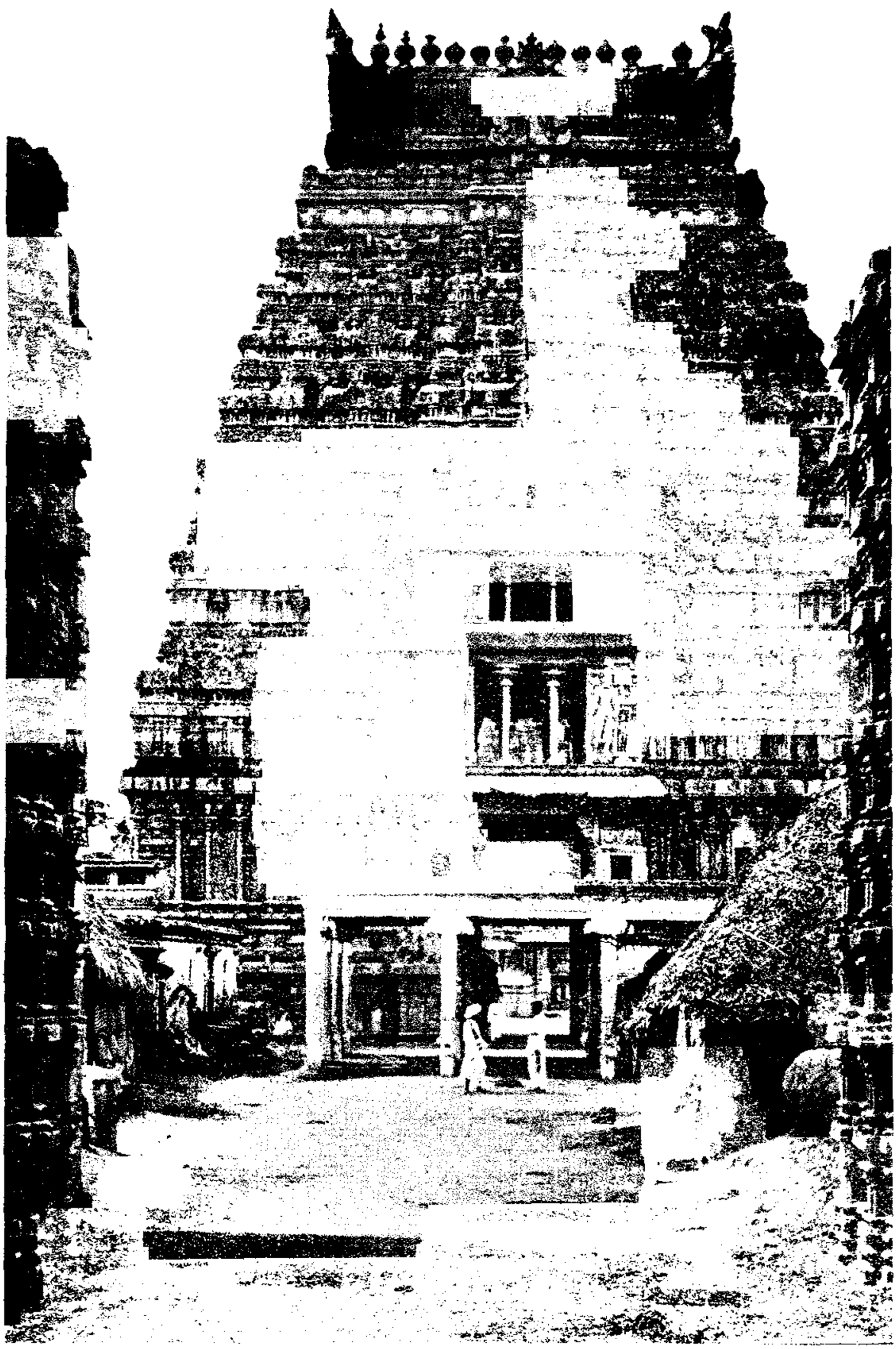
Courtesy : Mr. H. C. Chakladar



MINAKSHI TEMPLE AT MADURA

A SEAT OF SHAKTI-WORSHIP IN SOUTH INDIA

Courtesy : Mr. H. C. Chakladar



RANGANATHA TEMPLE AT SRIRANGAM
A GREAT SEAT OF SRI VAISHNAVISM IN SOUTH INDIA

Courtesy : Mr. H. C. Chakladar

BUDDHA'S SCHEME OF LIFE

By Dr. M. Hafiz Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.

The teachings of Buddha can in no wise be dissociated from the master current of ancient Indian thought. The dominant philosophy of ancient India was a spiritual idealism of a singularly pure and exalted type, which found its truest expression in those Vedic treatises known as the *upanishads*. His essential teachings are in no way antagonistic to the teachings of the ancient sages. We have every reason to believe that what Lord Buddha taught in his own way is the core and essence of the teachings of what we may now call higher Hinduism.

What Sri Krishna taught five thousand years ago is still in keeping with the Buddhist ideals, namely,

> Indifference to the objects of the senses, and also absence of egoism, insight into the pain and evil of birth, death, old age, and sickness, non-attachment, absence of self-identification with son, wife, or home, and constant balance of mind in wished-for and unwished-for events; unflinching devotion to me by yoga, without other object, resort to sequestered places, absence of enjoyment in the company of men, constancy in the wisdom of the self, understanding of the object of essential wisdom, that is declared to be the wisdom, all against it is ignorance.[1]

From these *shlokas* it is clear that there is a thread of close unity running between the teachings of these two great teachers.

The ideal of the divinity of man as envisaged by the *upanishads*, leads us to believe that he is not to lean on or depend upon an external agency for his salvation or liberation. In all conscience, he has to work out his own salvation; in the words of the enlightened one, Lord Buddha, uttered to his devoted disciple Ananda, 'He is to become his own light.' In Vedic parlance, freedom from the round of births and deaths, which is another name for liberation or salvation, is entirely in his own hands. Man is bound by his own desires, with their ceasing he becomes free; he is bound to this earth by the ignorance of his own nature on the ceasing of which he is liberated. It is clearly stated in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (IV. iv. 19), 'When all the desires hiding in his heart are loosened, then the mortal becomes immortal; here he enjoys Brahman.' Salvation depends on one's own self-effort. Such a view of man's nature gives dignity and strength and sobriety to life.

> Ye yourselves must exert yourselves; the Buddha is only the teacher.—It is good to restrain the body, it is good to curb the thoughts, good is perfect self-command. He who masters himself liberates himself from all suffering.

The thoughtful people do not take long to realize that every material object is subject to change, and is, therefore, unreal as compared with the real aspect of our existence.

It is worth our while to seriously reflect and enquire from our own selves, in our calmer moments, whether this earth-life is really capable of satisfying us. Cannot we see for ourselves that in the last resort it is hollow and unreal? Do the prizes of life for which we strive content us when we have won them? Everything that the earth can give us—health, wealth, pleasure, power, success, fame—proves to be either transient or illusory.

Once Gautama the Buddha, addressing the Bhikkhus, remarked:

> This, O monks, is the sacred truth of suffering. Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unloved is suffering, to be separated from the loved one is suffering, not to obtain what one desires is suffering, in short, the fivefold clinging to the earthly is suffering.

This is the fourfold truth on which hinges Buddha's whole scheme of life. Let us try to set it forth in other and fewer words: (1) Life on earth is full of suffering. (2) Suffering is generated by desire. (3) The extinction of desire involves the extinction of suffer-

[1] Bhagavad Gita, XIII. 8-11.

ing. (4) The extinction of desire (and therefore of suffering) is the outcome of a righteous life.

Buddha could say to his followers,

> What you deem happiness is unworthy of the name. There are better things than these in store for you—pure, perfect, and real happiness. These will be given to you freely, if you will but win them for yourselves.

He who could say this (or the equivalent of this) had reached the highest conceivable level of optimism. Thus what Buddha saw at the heart of the universe was not the darkness of sorrow, suffering, and death, but the glory of nirvana, by which, to quote Edmond Holmes, he meant

> a state of ideal spiritual perfection, in which the soul, having completely detached itself by the force of its own natural expansion from what is individual, impermanent, and phenomenal, embraces and becomes one with the universal, the eternal, and the real.

Most Europeans, not excepting many learned men, have very incorrect notions about nirvana. The word literally means 'being extinct', 'gone out'. This led to the erroneous idea that nirvana is the same as annihilation. What then is 'extinct', 'blown out' in nirvana? Extinct is the lust of life, the craving for existence and enjoyment; extinct are the delusions and allurements and its sensations and desires; blown out is the flickering light of lower self, impermanent personality.

In a few words, one might perhaps say that true Buddhism, theoretically stated, is humanitarianism, meaning by that term something very like the gospel of humanity preached by the positivists, whose doctrine is the elevation of man through man—that is, through human intellect, human experiences, and accumulated human efforts,—to the highest ideals of human perfection.

Buddhism highly values love towards all beings; but it also enjoins that one should not hate one's enemies. In regard to this teaching the actual words of the Lord are these:

> If someone should strike you with the hand, stick, or sword, you must abstain from revengeful thoughts and feelings. On the contrary you should meditate thus: May my heart remain tranquil, may no bad sound escape from my mouth. I desire to remain kind and compassionate, without secret resentment.

Buddhism is concerned with one idea only —man, and his immediate deliverance from all sorrow.

Lord Buddha was not concerned either with the First Cause or with the Last Effects, whether there was God or whether there was no God. Such speculations and theories were considered irrelevant side-issues and were completely ignored.

To be free from sorrow and suffering one need not be troubled with a first cause. The Pali word *kamma*—Sanskrit *karma*—literally means 'action'. In its ultimate sense *kamma* means good and bad volition. The Buddha says, 'I declare, brothers, that volition is *kamma*. Having willed, one acts by body, speech, and thought.' In the working of *kamma*, mind is the most important factor.

All our actions, words, and thoughts are coloured by the mind or consciousness we experience at such particular moments.

When the mind is unguarded, bodily action is unguarded, speech is unguarded, thought also is unguarded. When the mind is guarded, bodily action is guarded, speech also is guarded, and thought also is guarded. *Kamma* is action and *vipaka* is its fruit or reaction. It is not fate. It is not predestination that is imposed upon us by some mysterious unknown power, to which we must helplessly submit. It is one's own doing that reacts on one's self.[2]

'The beginning of beings is not to be perceived', says a Buddhist scripture. All we know is that the ending of *kamma*, of beings that suffer, may be achieved; all the teaching of all the Buddhas being nothing else but the pointing out of the way to that ending. Leaving aside, then, this question regarding the beginning of *kamma* as profitless alike to ask and answer, we may now turn to what is of more practical use in the life we now live; we may turn to the consideration of some of the details of the working of this law

[2] *The Life and Times of Lord Buddha* by Sister Vajra, pp. 27, 28

of the continuity of energy in the field of the life of conscious beings.

There is nothing settled and fixed and frozen into immobile rigidity in the universe as it is envisaged by Buddha. It is all mobile, flowing, fluid, changing, and therefore, at all times, at any moment to be changed and modified and given new shape to in some degree, however small. *Kamma* is never something settled and done with; it is always something that is happening now, and by its happening now, influencing and modifying and changing the results of the *kamma* of the past.

For this is exactly how *kamma* is continually working. *Past kamma*, past action, is continually being modified in its present results by present action, present *kamma*. And also, present *kamma* in its result is continually being modified and altered by past *kamma*.

Thus, at every moment, our lives are in our own hands to mould afresh in whatever direction we wish to mould them. The past is not unchangeable and fixed. We can change it now by our present action. Still less is our future inevitably fixed and settled by reason of our present action, our present *kamma*. When that future comes, then as now, we can pour into the stream of our *kamma* fresh water, good or bad, clear and white or muddy and dark and make it one way or the other, as we ourselves shall determine and no other. It should now be clear that a human being is not anything but is always becoming something; and that something which he is becoming depends entirely on his own action, his own *kamma* and on nothing else. Thus his fate is entirely of his own making.[3]

According to the law of *karma*, which Buddha was not the first to formulate but which he unreservedly accepted, the consequences of a man's action—foremost among which is its effect on his character—follow him, not merely through life (in the vulgar sense of the word) but also from life to life, until they have exhausted their influence.

What we have done has made us what we are. What we are doing is moulding our character and determining the direction of its development. When a man dies, he takes his character away with him. When he returns to earth, he brings his character back with him—a character which determines the very nature of his material surroundings, for the reincarnating soul seeks, or has assigned to it, the particular environment which is at once most in keeping with its nature and most suitable for its development.

The idea that pervades the whole of Buddha's teaching is that whatever we sow we must reap; in particular, that nothing can come between our conduct and its inward consequences; that every thought, every word, every deed is either making or marring us; in fine, that our spiritual destiny, which, after all, is our real destiny, is in our own hands.

If in anything, it is in evolution that Buddhism believes, in a slow gradual progress and advancement from the less to the more perfect. Nature loves no gaps, makes no jumps. Says the Lord:

> Just as the mighty ocean deepens and slopes gradually down, in hollow after hollow, not plunging by a sudden precipice—even so in this discipline of the way the training is gradual; it goes step by step; there is no sudden penetration to insight.

This is a perfectly modern scientific conception. It has taken the Buddha countless lives of strenuous endeavour to reach that perfection of wisdom and compassion for which he is revered by his followers as the perfect man. Every man can become a perfectly enlightened one, for each Buddha started his career with a nature essentially the same as that of any other man.

In all the three spheres—heaven for the gods; earth for man, brute, and ghost; hell, or better, purgatory for sinners—the stay for every human being is only temporary, however long it may be. Buddhism knows of no

[3] *Kamma* by Bhikkhu Silacara, pp. 14, 16, 19, and 20

'eternal' heaven or hell. Heaven and hell are worlds of effects in the *karmic* sense, dependent upon the life on earth, which in the same sense is the world of causes. Our actions in earth-life are the causes of which the retributions in the other worlds are effects. Good actions have the effect of a happy period in heaven, bad actions are followed by pains in hell, both of a limited duration. The end of the life in heaven and hell is always a rebirth on earth, whereby new actions, new causes are set in motion, of merit or demerit as the case may be. This round of births and deaths through the three spheres of being goes on in endless succession till final perfection and nirvana is reached, when these worlds dissolve as does a dream on waking.[4]

SEPARATE SELF

There is a thought which is the very epitome of all evil and unwholesome thoughts, which in one compact form sums up and includes them all, and that is the thought of the self. From this thought springs all the evil that is in the world without any exception. When a man thinks that he is a single separate entity, apart from all others with a destiny all his own distinct from that of all other beings, and that he can gain a well-being he can call his and his alone without reference to the well-being or ill-being of any other creature, he has taken into his mind a thought from which, as from some baneful seed of ill, every ugly and unlovely deed may spring. So long as a man gives such a thought room in his mind, so long as he cultivates this idea of separate selfhood, so long —following the law that thought is the foundation of all that is—will he be to the unhappy world a prolific source of the manifold pains and distresses that are inseparably conjoined with selfhood. And so it stands written in Buddhist scriptures: Above all things banish the thought of self (lower).

So do we find Lord Buddha again and again insisting that his followers shall come to a thoroughly correct understanding of the nature of this seeming self, insisting that they shall see it as it is, a transient everchanging phenomenon, no constant, enduring entity, no eternal *atta*.

For those who realize the transitory nature of their separate existence, there remains only the one wish, only the one aspiration, to cease for ever from the realm of the transient and to know and realize that which is constant, unchanging, eternal,—that which is the ending, final and complete, of every pain and sorrow, nirvana. This constitutes what is called in Buddhist phraseology *panna*, wisdom.

Let us, therefore, take the first step towards that high goal by renouncing in our minds the thought of separate self.

May we humbly hope that little by little it will also come to cease in our lives, and we at length will be of the noble company of those whose joy it is to live only for the helping of the world, only for the sake of the succour they may bring to each and every being that shares with them the *One Common Life*.[5]

[4] *The Way of the Buddha*, by Aryasangha, pp. 152, 155.

[5] *The Problem of Self in Buddhism*, pp. 359—362.

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

By Manu Subedar, B.A., B.Sc. Econ. (London), Barrister-at-Law

There is no subject affecting the life of human beings, on which more nonsense has been talked, more controversies have arisen, and every description of crudeness and coarseness has crept in, than the conception of God. More light has been thrown on this topic by the sages of India than anywhere else, and yet there is a bewildering variety of creeds and practices in India. Elsewhere in the world, it is what may be expected, viz. a lip-service to the idea of God, all activities being self-centred and directed towards self-gratification, and almost complete indifference (except what is enforced by processes of law) to the moral requirements arising out of belief.

The Gita and *upanishads* teach us to look for the Invisible beyond things visible, to look for the Imperishable amongst things perishable, to look for Him who is not tied up by limitations or conditions either of time or of space, to look for the One Element which survives the destruction of the five elements, the Immutable, Unchanging, who is everywhere and at all times, who gives life to life, light to light, strength to strength, joy to joy, who is Abiding, All-knowing and All-powerful. This, according to the four famous *mahavakyas*, is Atman, Brahman, and He who cannot be described by any words, cannot be known by the mind or intelligence, to reach whom experience alone is the vehicle. He is unborn and therefore immortal.

This true, but difficult, conception had to be reconciled with prevailing notions of spirits and deities. It had to be brought within the compass of the understanding of common men. As this conception of God was difficult, an all-powerful personal Lord was spoken of and, as reaching Him was also difficult, a link had to be established through the medium of prophets. The common man began to revere not merely sages, who had revealed, but descendants and representatives of the prophets and teachers.

The anthropomorphic conception of God arose and all human qualities were attributed to Him. He was cruel and stern as the God of the Jews. He was generous and merciful as God in Islam. Elsewhere even human form was given to Him and idols were made, some with more hands and more heads in order to indicate prowess and knowledge. In relation to human conduct, He was alleged to be hurt by evil deeds and to be pleased with prayers and repentance. Since He dwelt in the heart of all, He was regarded as the Father, and the germs of the sentiment of human democracy, liberty, and brotherhood are here found.

Still another line of thought described God as real and everything else as unreal. In this the worshipper had to explain to himself both God and *prakriti* or *maya*, i.e. the visible world. Some tried to soft-pedal God and picture prakriti as the Mother of all, all-powerful, cruel as well as generous. The Muslim sufis, with the ultimate intention of identification, conceived God as the Beloved, while a contrary trend put the worshippers as females (*Gopis*), striving to please the male lover.

The nobility and purity of the God-concept, reached by all true sages in every age and in every clime, was degraded by warring religions and cults and sects into something low and common, to which, again, only verbal homage was paid. The broad perspective of the Limitless was lost and mundane life of self-indulgence, greed, and passion became all-important. Even the glory of God was turned to worldly account for selfish ends. Man, who has the chance to reach divinity, deliberately chooses to slide down into barbarism and animalism. Faith was gone and

humanity, kindliness, generosity and charity became as scarce as they are in the jungle. The much-vaunted civilization—now known as V2 civilization—was an idle claim because it was nothing better than veiled cannibalism. Men preyed on other men inside the country. Groups of men exploited other groups of men both inside and outside. The basis on which a social group could exist is that the stronger must help all those who are less strong. Those who have been favoured by fortune with opportunities, resources, wealth, and knowledge, should help those who are less fortunate in these respects.

It will be seen thus that humanity has paid a very heavy price for its deterioration in the concept of God. The price is not merely in demoralization, but even in material set-back through avoidable wars caused by men with greed and ambition—men who have forgotten the true God-concept. For this reason, it is rightly said that every opportunity to bridge the gulf of differences between different human beings is blessed, and it brings men nearer to the truth. The highest truth is God, Atman, Brahman (the Oversoul of Emerson), before which everything stands explained and reconciled, where there is no conflict, where the unity of life is established and experienced, and he who knows, the knowledge, and the object of knowledge disappear. The experience of this All-highest is to be had at the end of a long route of faith and patient effort, of the elimination of everything that is evil, and of the acceptance of noble ethics and noble life.

With a variety of situations, with imperfections of language, with different types of mind in different stages of growth, numerous questions arise in the course of this journey of the seeker (some of which cannot be solved satisfactorily in one life). Things occur in this world according to their own laws, but, behind them all, there is a greater Law, which controls everything. The transition from worldly life into spiritual life necessarily consists of many stages. The puny individual, helpless and conditioned on all sides, marches towards the All-powerful. One ray of Light is enough to override all things material. But if he looks back and is overawed by the prowess which he is achieving, he falls down like a careless mountaineer. The mystic, therefore, never discloses what he is doing. Things reach him without speech. He understands by something higher than the mind and the understanding. The senses are often assailed by blandishments of strange phenomena on the way, but the seeker moves on, humble and grateful, without faltering from the straight path leading to the goal. Others less fortunate and more careless slide down from the vision principally through the growth of ego. Great devotees like Tukaram have, therefore, asked for nothing except constant remembrance. The woes of the world, in which one has spent many previous existences, searching the same objects, appear pointless to these great saints, whose effort is to continue for twenty-four hours and for the whole month and the whole year and the rest of the life, the glimpse of the Vision, the experience which has come to them for some moments.

In the Gita, one is enjoined to turn towards God and to be active in that effort all the time, because conditions in the world are transitory and they do not bring true happiness. To persist in increasing desires, few of which can be gratified and which, even when they are gratified, do not yield abiding joy or happiness, is stupid because it is farthest removed from the true conception of God. The most elementary inclination towards truth and divinity would instil moderation and restraint and, above all, charity and unstinting help to others. Those, who are advanced in this path, live and work for the welfare of others. If you must have something visible in pursuit of God, who is invisible, there are human beings, millions of them, whom you can help. The sectarian squabbles, communal, racial, and religious differences should disappear, if belief in One God were re-established in the world, from which, through the ignorance of men, through their animalism and greed, it has more or less completely vanished.

The propaganda machine of vested interests in the world, including the priestly section all over, is doing its best to emphasize differences and conflicts. It is the duty of good men and women all over the world to emphasize identity and reconciliation. The world is organized in different and warring groups. In military and official life, men are disciplined, but in the matter of religion, i.e. one's conception of and relation to God, men are still a mob and a crowd. They are afraid of the highest truth in what has been taught to them and they claim with avidity the chaff instead of trying for the kernel. They are encouraged in this task, permitted (and almost compelled) to remain in this condition, because militarists, diplomats, munition producers, exploiters, dictators, and war-lords dominate men's life. What is wanted is a war on poverty and irreligion. No man must be afraid to speak out that which is the highest in the inspired teachings of the sages and the prophets, or to shape his life accordingly.

Some people urge that religion is a personal affair; so it is, but it transforms the whole life of man. Thereafter he needs no police court and prison to keep him from theft, and voluntarily he dedicates himself to the service of fellowmen. Those who have attuned themselves to the Infinite, scorn all artificial barriers of racial prejudice and nationality. In the furnace of experience, all immature conflicts as to what is true are burnt up. This experience can only arise through the mercy of the Almighty. But it is the duty of everybody, towards himself and towards the human race, to create conditions for such favourable grace. The most important step in this direction arises out of the acceptance of the highest conception of God as vouched for by all great teachers of mankind.

THE DETERMINANTS OF MORALITY[1]

By Prof. H. D. Bhattacharyya

Looking at life one can see that it has progressed both in the individual and in the race from an amoral to a moral phase. The animal kingdom, where the rule of the jungle prevails, is characterized by an instinctive search after food and female in the interest of self-and-race preservation. Herding is a racial trait and not prompted by a desire to live an orderly life with a view to promoting social understanding and furthering social progress. When micro-organisms cluster in a drop of weak acid or when ants gather round a drop of honey or when bees build their hive or when wolves hunt in a pack they follow certain instinctive modes of reaction to a life-situation. The structure very often determines the function and an animal behaves in a particular way simply because it is so constituted that it cannot act otherwise. A drone will not work whatever the shortage of workers in a hive. The care of the wounded and the diseased is rare among animals and if the young are protected with a savage fury it is because the instinct of race preservation is at work. Where the male is satisfied with casual mating and has no concern with the bringing up of the young, even this instinctive paternal impulse is absent. A female whose duty ends with depositing the eggs in a safe place for hatching has similarly no solicitude for the young. The tom-cat and the cuckoo will readily come to mind in this connection. That there is strength in unity is not known to many types of herbivorous animals, for although they roam in large herds they will not combine to ward off a common

[1] By courtesy of the Director, All-India Radio, Dacca.

danger but would scatter to save their individual lives. Conversely, many carnivorous animals will combine to attack their prey but will fight among themselves during the division of the spoil.

Yet it is out of these instinctive tendencies that slowly social consideration and morality ultimately grew up. Parental instinct brought with it tender emotion towards young ones and so even among animals a mother would sacrifice herself to save her brood. Here there is no sense of moral responsibility for the safety of the helpless progeny as we find among men; but whatever the prompting force the resulting behaviour is designed or adapted towards the benefit of the brood, even at the risk of one's own safety. Love is therefore not only the first instinct but also the first morality and that is why those who try to outgrow all affections are at the same time champions of a life that is beyond good and evil. If feeling supplies the spring of all actions, then a *cold* intellectual perception, that something is in accordance with the moral law and therefore should be realized, may not command the necessary energy to bring it into being. All ideals must be emotion-tinged to prompt action towards their realization. Apathy and insensitiveness to social surroundings would bring forward no reaction. That is why instinct proves adequate where mere intellect proves a failure. A child starts his life with a fund of instincts that provide the necessary unconscious interest to a creature to react to its environment. The child is amoral at the beginning like the animal but it responds to love, and to hesitate to anger one whom it loves would perhaps be its first morality. Its ego-centricity receives its first check when in conflict with those with whom it has a relation of mutual affection. A Bengali proverb says that love naturally flows downwards : that is why the moral sense of parents regarding the maintenance of their children is much stronger than the complementary moral sense of children to be considerate and helpful towards their parents. But the persistence of family life has been possible because in it selfishness got its first formidable check not by any outward compulsion but by an inward admonition. The family is therefore the first moral unit and the extension of fellow-feeling to others and a solicitude for their welfare would come in the wake of a developed sense of family solidarity.

The truth of this would be borne out by the fact that in primitive forms of society the tribe is the realm of moral life. Inside the tribe the primitives develop a *modus vivendi* among themselves and are at peace with one another. But with other tribes this moral relation need not exist and so tribal warfare with its attendant violence, inconsiderateness, and immorality does not cause any uneasy feeling. The social self is enlarged just enough to cover the people who are supposed to belong to the same stock or to be descended from a mythical or totemistic common ancestor. In insular tribal groups the solidarity is likely to be greater and conflict within the group less frequent and less bitter, for the circumscribed area forces close living and this develops some sort of mutual accommodation. Moral sense in such a society would signify some amount of prudence, for in a small group one cannot make oneself a nuisance as the hope of migrating to other areas with safety is small. If rural life is characterized by a greater morality it is because it does not offer much scope of alternative grouping as urban life does. When you cannot pick and choose your company at will you cannot afford to disoblige your fellow men. Where contact with alien groups is small the quickening of the mind and a consequent appraisal of social values have little chance of development. The slow diffusion of culture in ancient times was the effect of casual contact between social groups and was itself the cause of stagnation in intellectual and moral life. The modern conception of relativity of morals could not have appealed to those who knew of only one standard of moral life, namely, that handed down from time immemorial in the social group to which they belonged. Primitive morality in its positive aspect is social habit and in its negative

aspect social taboo. By trial and error the group gradually evolves a method of social adjustment which serves the purpose of a moral standard in ordinary times with unchanging social duties.

We can now understand why all the words denoting the science of morality should have this social conduct in view. *Ethos* and *mores* signify social manners, and conduct and *acharana* (or *achara*) indicate modes of behaviour. Immemorial custom is not only the basis of social conduct but very often the source of law as well. Where enacted law is absent customary law would provide a sufficient justification of conduct. Manners are not laid down but evolved in course of time through social necessity and to effect social adjustment. If gregariousness is the basis of social conduct, social imitation is the basis of uniformity in conduct. We behave as others do, and they do so because others before them have done so. The unquestioning acceptance of the social norm in conduct is the root of all customs, and we have to start our life with faith—after all we have to trust our elders in infancy and childhood for our knowledge of the properties of things, and credulity and suggestibility complete the work of imitation and faith. Conformity to existing social ideals is a mere matter of routine with the majority of mankind—they have never consciously scanned the credentials of their conduct and justified it with arguments, good or bad. Once we begin to feel that justification is necessary, we pass beyond the stage of unconscious imitation. We begin to feel that acts are good not because society allows and even encourages them but because they can be defended on rational grounds. But how is such a quickening to come ? By contact with superior cultures and contrasting our mode of life with that of more harmonious social groups we may detect where the differrence lies; but in order to appreciate higher values we require not only the capacity to note differences but also the faculty of discerning the direction of the difference as between a higher and a lower value. The whole hedonistic calculus is designed to give us a formula for differentiating higher and lower values : but if we refuse to acknowledge that pleasure supplies the ultimate standard of social value we have to take in other aspects of life in order to determine the ethical value of any act.

Religious men have professed to find in man's moral sense the voice of God. Religion has magnified the realm of social adjustment to such an extent that the interests of group life on the temporal plane have paled into insignificance when compared with transcendental interests. Martyrs have neglected the primary need of self-preservation, and ascetics have suppressed the need of race preservation, and yet in a transcendental reference both have been valued very highly in some religions. If political ambitions of individuals and races have sanctified war and even made it a moral duty, religious susceptibilities have outlawed killing in all forms and even shrunk from exterminating vermin. It is not the voice of the people that is the voice of God, for God speaks through His chosen agents and oracles and messengers to apprise men of what He commends and what he condemns. We must go to God's revelations of His own will and intention in the scriptures if we are to know exactly what our duties are. Unless morality is based upon extra-social consideration, prudence would be the only moral maxim and enlightened self-interest the only motive of good conduct.

There is no doubt that religious motives play a large part in initiating and stabilizing moral life whether in the form of fear of hell or hope of heaven or pleasure of God or expectation of earthly blessings from favourably disposed deities. But if all religions had taught the same laws of morality, the justification of accepting a religious origin of ethical life would have been greater. Unfortunately, however, religions differ in their conception of what ought to be done even when they profess to be monotheistic, and blood of men and animals has flowed like a river on the altars of many gods. From a

wrong or perverted notion of what the gods delight in, religious communities have practised the most inhuman cruelties and outrageous immoralities, and religious persecution has disfigured the pages of history in many lands. It has required religious geniuses like Buddha and Christ to widen the scope of moral activity and to hammer the religious foundation on which the old morality was based. To be able to detect flaws in the customary morality of the time and to have the boldness to preach a new morality based upon a developed moral sense or a new revelation come only to religious reformers, and then there is a mutation of moral values, a sudden transformation of human ideals, which extends the bounds of the moral sphere in space, time, and kinds of creatures involved. Compared with the ethical insight of religious geniuses, the trial and error method, by which the social mind slowly evolves a better conception of moral responsibility, looks like a process of continuous and insensible variation in the direction of civilization and moral progress. But whether new moral sense dawns slowly or suddenly, it has an effect upon the conception of the supernatural power or powers who are supposed to be the guardians of morality—if gods are responsible for better morality, better morality in its turn is responsible for better gods. With a wider acquaintance with the religions of mankind and their ethical prescriptions, there is bound to be generated a searching of heart in some sensitive souls, and a criticism of existing moral standards leads to a better understanding of spiritual values and a chastened feeling regarding the infallibility of any particular creed. But morals have not always waited for revelation to prophets to advance the human race. At a certain stage of intellectual and emotional development, elements that make for social concord are discovered without supernatural aid, and the desire to live in peace and harmony not only with our immediate surroundings but with the entire human race may make humanitarianism our ethical creed. There is one danger that expanding morality must avoid, and that is to extend sympathy lengthwise without expanding it breadthwise also. Very often the alignment of duty has followed racial, national, or communal lines, and it has been supposed that furthering the interests of one's special group, at the cost of those professing other ideals of political or religious life, is morally justifiable. As individual religion is gaining wider recognition, this narrow moral outlook is being rightly condemned, and it is being recognized that this is a revival, under another garb, of the old tribal morality which ignored or opposed the interests of rival tribes. International organizations based on ideals of universal service, irrespective of colour, caste, and creed, are doing much towards breaking down national selfishness, communal prejudice, and racial arrogance. But it cannot be said that we are anywhere near the ideal of the equality of all men as the objective of moral obligation.

The fact is that so long as private, social, and national relations are guided by different standards of morality and what is wrong in private relation is applauded in social relation and connived at in international relation, our conception of duty will remain as chaotic as it is now. The supposed law of nature, on which international law was sought to be founded, proved a broken reed for the moral relations of mankind because the natural rights of man were never defined and it was never made clear as to whether it was meant to be universally applied. Nature has not been uniformly beneficent to all parts of the globe nor has social evolution progressed with an eye to an equitable distribution of the goods of the earth. International law, which tried to formulate the rights and duties of nations, and state law, which tried to regulate conduct of citizens, accepted certain existing facts as the permanent features of a future world or a future state of society. But now that the Have-Nots are demanding justice at the hands of the Haves, a new morality based on an equitable distribution

of the raw materials of the world and the goods of life is called for, and the best minds of the world in the fields of politics, religion, and thought are engaged in thinking out a plan of social and international adjustment as would give full scope for individual and national progress. At this juncture the arbiters of human destiny need reminding that unless we love our neighbours as ourselves and feel our kinship with the whole human race, a distracted world will never know peace.

THE ABIDING VALUES OF LIFE

By Prof. P. S. Naidu, M.A.

A thoughtful student of the history of science in the West cannot but be impressed with the significant shifts in emphasis in scientific research during the two or three centuries preceding the present. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were dominated by the physical sciences and their credo, the doctrine of mechanical causation; the nineteenth century saw the rise of biology and the law of evolution, and the present century, it is said, is the century of the psychological and the social sciences. So the emphasis has shifted from *matter* to *life*, and from life to *mind*. It will be noted that the steady shift of the centre of scientific importance has made for the increasing emphasis on human values. The moment we speak of evolution we have to admit the operation of values in evolution. A purely mechanistic conception of biological evolution is bound to be one-sided and unsatisfying. Evolution must have a goal, and it is only in terms of the goal may we speak of evolution or involution. Therefore the nineteenth century really made an important contribution to the emergence of the study of values in philosophy. And the present century with its pre-occupation with psychology and sociology has raised the concept of values to a position of supreme importance in scientific and philosophical thinking. Psychology and sociology are concerned with the study of behaviour, human and sub-human, individual and social. Behaviour is essentially purposive, and purpose is meaningless without values. We may conclude that science, in its broadest aspects, started with a purely mechanistic conception of the universe, and has gradually worked up to a teleological conception.

Philosophy in the West has always followed close on the heels of science. With every significant change in the world of science there has occurred a corresponding change in philosophy. The early rationalists, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz, were influenced by the mathematical outlook on the universe; their followers, the empiricists, with Kant at the end of their long line of succession, were predominantly *a posterioristic* in their viewpoint. Then followed the evolutionary philosophies starting with Hegel, passing through Spencer and ending with Morgan, Bergson, and Smuts. So, the emphasis has shifted in philosophy from ontology and cosmology to axiology in recent times. I do not mean to suggest that the philosophers in the seventeenth, the eighteenth, and the early nineteenth centuries did not deal with ethical and aesthetic problems. They did deal with them, but they were so pre-occupied with substance, attribute, modes, monads, and the thing-in-itself that the great values of beauty, truth, and goodness had to recede into the background on their philosophical canvas. Values, after all, have a peculiarly human tang about them, and has not science taught us that man counts for nothing in the scheme of things? If he himself counts for nothing, why should his values count for anything?

But the situation has changed completely in recent times. Even a realist of the type of Prof. Laird admits that ' our age . . . . seems, by predilection, to be axiologically minded '. In Austria, France, Czecho-Slovakia, and America, value-theory is the live subject in contemporary philosophy. ' In England,' says Prof. Laird, ' axiology is seldom regarded as one of the main arterial roads of the island's philosophy, . . . Indeed, it seems often to be considered as a by-road debouching from ethics and leading with difficulty to uninteresting if elevated regions.' (*Recent Philosophy*, pp. 223-224). Taken as a whole, however, Europe and America have become axiologically minded. That is an encouraging sign; but we are constrained to ask, ' How much has Western axiology achieved? What is the extent of its contribution to the study of the Abiding Values of Life? ' Let us attempt an answer to these questions in an impartial and objective spirit.

With its supremely analytic spirit Western philosophy classifies values into a few major types, namely, bodily values, economic values, social values, aesthetic values, and moral values. These types may be taken to constitute a progressively arranged hierarchical order. It will be noted that the lowest stages of this ascending scale are egotistic and materialistic, while the highest stages tend to altruism and idealism. *Kamini* and *kanchana*, condemned in unmistakable terms by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, belong to the two stages respectively of bodily and economic values. But Western thought, in its great anxiety to maintain the integrity of all the values in the interests of the harmonious development of the self (bless the expression !), has overshot its mark in boosting up bodily and economic values. Western thought has, no doubt, realized, from its very beginning, the beauty, purity, and exalted nature of asceticism. This attitude to detachment and renunciation is rather the exception than the general rule in Western philosophy. There has always been, among the Westerners, a sneaking admiration and desire for sense enjoyment, cloaked over with the grandiose sentiments of 'all-round development', 'harmonious growth', etc. The body, it is said, is of fundamental importance in life, and as such its demands cannot be neglected. So, with Browning,

Let us not always say
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground
upon the whole";
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now,
than flesh helps soul."
(Rabbi Ben Ezra)

So, bodily values are fundamental, and it is on a foundation of these values that other and higher values should be built up.

In regard to economic values and the attitude of the West towards them, nothing need be said. The whole world worships them. Economics, it is claimed, is the religion of the future. Wealth, its production, distribution, and consumption are *the* things that man lives for. 'How important they are in daily life is sufficiently evident when one considers what values human beings, for the most part, keep uppermost in their minds through the waking hours of their three score years.' So powerful is the hold of this value over man's mind that for many the word *value* means *economic value* or wealth and nothing else. The world war is being fought for markets, for raw materials and for increasing the consumable wealth of the conquerors. So, who would dare deny the sovereignty of wealth over man and his activity. It may be that Buddha and Christ have preached simplicity of life and have, both by example and precept, pointed to renunciation of wealth as the only means of salvation for man. But, says the *worldly-wise* philosopher of the West, 'Let us think of Christ only on Sunday, and during the six working days of the week, let us pursue wealth.' The spread of communism will banish the idea of Christ even from our Sunday thoughts and make all the days of the week money-conscious.

In spite of his blind adoration of *kamini* and *kanchana*, Western man feels restless and is moved by an unseen urge for values much superior to sense pleasures and money. Social, aesthetic, and ethical values have steadily made themselves felt in his life. Two impulses have been at work in shaping the Western *weltanschauung* as a whole, namely, egoistic self-assertion and the altruistic gregariousness, and the West has had an endless struggle in maintaining a balance between the two. The former is very powerful, and to offset its extremely fierce impulses, values belonging to the latter group have to be stressed. So it is that we find aesthetic and moral values are being stressed by the thinkers in the West with special reference to their social setting. 'Viewed in the light of purely practical considerations,' writes Watts-Cunningham, in his *Problems of Philosophy* (p. 349), '. . . . the importance of the aesthetic values of human life is not so obvious . . . And yet their importance is tremendous, and grows with the advancement of civilization. What life would be without these values one shudders to think; they are perhaps the purest joys that human frailty is capable of.' A faith in moral values is the very essence of the higher life of spirit, and this has been recognized by occidental thinkers too. Objectivity of the moral standard has been sought to be established by them by a series of ingenious arguments. The contributions made to the elucidation of the nature of the moral standard by European thinkers are well known, and among them Kant easily takes the front rank. But in spite of the sublime heights reached by the Western thinkers we witness periodically the unedifying spectacle of the degradation of values in the West. It is the brilliant psychologist William McDougall who has (though unwittingly) revealed the secret of the recurring phenomenon of dis-valuation of abiding values in the history of the Western man. For him the supreme master-sentiment in terms of which individual character has to be developed, and social organization has to be controlled, is self-regard. It is this self-regard that is the root of all mischief in European history and morals, for the self is understood not in the Vedantic sense, but in the purely materialistic sense. Had the self been merged in the Universal Self, and had *Parabrahma*-regard been substituted for self-regard, then the history of the West would have been different. But that has not happened, and so we find that truth, beauty, and morals have steadily deteriorated. Let us consider art. From its high, inspiring, and elevating sphere it has been brought down to the pavements and the street-crossings in Russia. The function of art, it is said, is to play to the gallery, to cater to the demands of the public, and to glorify that which is commonplace and even vulgar in life. The grandiose expression 'social function of art' is used to cover up the unaesthetic levels to which art has been made to sink in recent times. A similar degradation has taken place in the realm of ethics. We hear a great deal about the relativity of morals and moral standards, and here again the very convenient social cloak is used to hide all the ugliness in modern morals. But impartial and scientific-minded students of ethics will not be surprised at this *decline of morals* in the modern world as it is but one symptom of the decline of values as a whole. It will be remembered how even the great idealistic thinkers of the West who have spoken of Self-realization as the *summum bonum* have failed completely in their analysis of the Self. The Self, so long as it is attached to this world, can never be the final goal of moral life, and it is such a Self that is in the centre of attention of Western ethical thinkers. So they have ridiculed asceticism and renunciation of the world. 'St. Simeon Stylites' is a sickening example of the covert ridicule which the Western mind casts at the most exalted type of human endeavour to overcome the temptations of the flesh. Utilitarianism in some form or other is the basis of all Western morality, and it cannot be denied that hedonism is the progenitor of utilitarianism. In the last analysis we find that the ethical standards of the West resolve themselves into a refined and

unconscious egoism with attachment to sense objects veiled under a cloak of pseudo-altruism.

Nowhere is the covert egoism of Western values seen so clearly as in the *emergent theory of values*. Values, ethical and aesthetic, spring into existence as the result of social organization. Values are *late* emergents in the evolution of the world. Just as man, his life and mind, are emergents from matter, so values are emergents from man's mind. Values are consequent on a particular type of mental organization. The emergent theory has exercised a powerful influence over Western thought, and like Newtonism and Darwinism in their respective times, Morganism is accepted as gospel truth. The subtle fallacy in emergentism is not easily seen. If values are emergents, then they can exercise no guiding influence on the course of evolution. In fact, they are the by-products of evolution. What, then, is the foundation of evolution? Of course, the Dialectical Materialist will exclaim, 'Matter'. Matter is the primordial thing. Values are merely haloes round matter, the matter in this case being the brain. The Dialectical Materialist is at least outspoken in his confession about his faith in matter. The pseudo-idealist of the West has the same faith and the same creed, only he is trying to hoodwink others by his vociferous and meaningless talk about truth, beauty, and goodness. The only abiding value for the West is 'Matter' and the enjoyment of material goods. What, then, is the way out of this pathless jungle of Western confusion? There is only one path leading us out, and that is the path leading to religion, and it is the path which Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna has pointed out. It will have been noticed that the West is always fighting shy of religious values. But religious values are the crown of human life and without them matter, life, mind, and self are a meaningless jumble of words. Let us see how the Bhagavan establishes the supremacy of religion and maintains, at the same time, a very sane attitude towards the lower values.

The first duty of man is to realize God. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and other things will be added unto you later. 'Realize the Self', says the Bhagavan. But Self-realization, unlike the vague, aimless, and indefinite process envisaged by the barren moral idealism of the West, stands for the realization of the unity of the individual with the Divine Self. This is to be achieved through renunciation, discrimination, and, above all, through intense love and longing for God. This longing has been portrayed by Sri Bhagavan in many ways, but the most striking one is this: 'The attraction of the husband for the chaste wife, the attraction of the child for its mother, the attraction of worldly possessions for the worldly man—when a man can blend these three into one and direct it all to God, then he gets the vision of God.' When once the vision of God is obtained, then the physical vision as well as mental vision gets purified, and all objects show themselves up in their true value. What greater lesson is needed than the divine life of the Bhagavan himself in this connection? A reverent study of the great story of his life with childlike faith will reveal to us the abiding values of life. He who has realized God and yet has to live in this world has, no doubt, to pay some attention to his bodily needs. But after God-realization the mind will become so indifferent to the body that intense, excruciating pain will go unheeded. In fact, the body will take care of itself when you have realized God. So the bodily values which so engross the mind of the modern man will occupy the lowest rung of the ladder. And here comes in *kamini*. There is a supreme lesson to be learnt from the married life of Sri Ramakrishna. Christ evaded the marriage tie and remained a celibate; Buddha married, begot a child, and then left home; Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna married and lived with the married tie on, but what an exalted type of relationship he maintained towards the Holy Mother! It was a marriage of soul with soul without any physical relationship. In the present state of the world the outward tie of marriage is necessary, but all women—wife, mother, and little girls—should be treated alike as so

many goddesses to be worshipped. Married life becomes blessed only when it transcends the physical basis of sex. The sex-idea is completely effaced in a truly spiritual relationship.

As regards the economic values, we know how the Bhagavan treated gold and filth and mud alike. So, bodily values and economic values are to be shunned by one who aspires after God-realization. They have no place in an abiding scale of values.

The Bhagavan gave an important place to aesthetic values in life. He was himself an accomplished sculptor. Music and dancing in the service of God were highly valued by him. He had an enchanting voice, and his dances in divine ecstacy thrilled the devotees. He was a skilled actor and took great delight in witnessing spiritual plays. So, aesthetic values are abiding values indeed, provided they are used for arousing spiritual emotions.

Moral values are identical with religious values in the life of the Bhagavan. Morality outside religion is inconceivable. Moral virtues, service, and Self-realization must all end in God-realization. Otherwise morality is a meaningless discipline.

We have to conclude that the only abiding value is God-realization. When that value is attained, others will take rank below it in their true order, just as small pieces of iron, lying scattered in a confused mess, will all get properly arranged when they are placed in a powerful magnetic field.

THE EAST AND THE WEST

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The one peculiar spirit which sought to predominate over the international outlook of man during the whole of the nineteenth century found its congenial expression in the singularly bold statement: 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet'. It is very significant that this statement is the proud gift of a man who came of British parentage but who was born and brought up in India, a man who was thus a product of the East and the West. This man, Rudyard Kipling, represented the Western mind that had by that time become fully conscious of its power and privilege on the land of Asia and hence quite agreeably well convinced of its own supreme distinction. He only stated with perfect frankness what others of his race from Europe were then feeling and thinking very strongly. It was naturally a very oft-quoted and universally discussed statement which made Kipling one of the most widely known poets of his time. It revealed the passing of a very old relation which the people of Europe had held with Asia—a relation which was mainly characterized by their spontaneous feeling of inspiration, wonder and reverence,—and the rise of a new relation which stirred up in them an opposite set of psychological states and processes. The people of Asia became uneasy at the imposition of a wholly unwarranted social status upon them and began to wonder, while self-conscious Europe felt flattered and confident. The one saw a new genesis in the shaping of a reality out of the unreal by the fiat of a strange spirit emanating from the other and they both were moved. Indeed Kipling's was an inspired statement.

But no statement appears to be more fatuous and groundless than this particular one produced by the Anglo-Indian genius of Kipling. Taken in its purely geographical sense the term 'East' does not possess any absolute meaning. For in this globe of ours, which is quite round, every position has a relative meaning. From one direction it may be called 'east', from another 'west', from a third one 'north', and from a fourth one 'south'. So the East is not always East. And the same is true of the West. The position whence the sun rises every morning is, of course, always the east but that is an extra-global position having no bearing upon this statement. Standing on a particular place of this Earth

one bears some relation to another place of it, but that relation necessarily varies from varied directions where others are occupying their places. Nay, we may say that one bears not one relation but two different relations to the same place from his two opposite directions. Thus what is east from one direction may be west when looked at from the opposite direction.

Can the Continent of Asia which holds a large and prominent position on our globe be stamped as East from all directions? Can she be really called East from Australia, for instance, or from South Africa? Asia is East to Europe in one way which might be the most familiar and easy way, but she is also West to Europe in another way, no matter how devious and distant that way would look to be. To America, on the other hand, she is East when looked at from the long and devious way of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, while she is West when looked at from the nearest Pacific way. To give Asia still the general name of East irrespective of the directional relations of the various places of the Earth seems to betray a childish sense of geography.

Racially and culturally this great continent is even far more divided than any of the other continents including Europe. All the prominent stocks of human race such as are called white, yellow, brown, and black with the other miscellaneous blended types may be found in it living their settled community life from time immemorial. I feel constrained here to consider mankind in colour divisions, however superficial and arbitrary such divisions apparently are, because it is the colour of the skin that has been stressed by Kipling's race brothers as an important characteristic showing each racial type. With all these divisions of mankind each living its fairly independent life, possessing its own peculiar culture system, falling somewhere in the graded scale of civilization from the most primitive to the most profoundly developed, does this vast ancient land of Asia show any uniform existence to deserve the common name of East in any racial or cultural sense?

Not only are the various races of men in Asia very different in many important aspects of life but some of them have had even closer relation with the main peoples of Europe than with others of their own continent. The Persians, the Arabs, and the Aryans of India are said to be the blood-brothers of the white Europeans. Some of them, known as the Semitic people, have in common with the Christian Europe the religious tradition of the *Old Testament*. All of them have long been far more closely related through trade and commerce with Italy, Spain, and Portugal than with China and Japan. If India by her gift of Buddhism to her Asiatic neighbours on the north and east should be known to have come very close to them, Palestine too should be known to have done the same thing to Europe by her gift of Christianity. It was the close relation of the Hindus and the Arabs with Europe that made possible through an intensive process of cultural infiltration into the latter the passing of its Dark Ages and the coming of the great Renaissance. The currents of culture and civilization did not flow from ancient India and Arabia into the land of the Mongolian peoples in same profusion as they did in Europe. That happened, however, not because the Europeans were then more advanced and hence more appreciative and receptive of culture than the Chinese. The fact was quite different. The Chinese had long lived in their own ancient and glorious civilization their independent and somewhat exclusive life. Their own creative thinking, blossoming beautifully in the light of their own soul, produced things for themselves that were as good as those of anywhere else. The wonderful civilization which independently arose in China was the natural product of a great people justly proud of its own distinct individuality. China and India represent two distinct civilizations created, developed, and maintained by two distinct races of men living close to one another since prehistoric days, and yet neither contributing to obstruct or threaten the independent growth of the other. But the Europeans have not been like the Chinese. Racially being of the same original stock they naturally inherited a temperament not essentially foreign to the nature

of the Hindus and the Arabs. So the currents of culture from the latter sources found favourable routes to medieval Europe that was still living under a state of cultural starvation, rather than to culturally robust China.

Instead of going into a detailed analysis of many similar other cases of different peoples of Asia, each living its own peculiar ways of life, we may only consider the one great truth that this continent is the sacred home of all the living religions of the world. Each religion has its own peculiar form and content, its own colour and tincture, its own values and perspectives. It reflects the peculiar nature and tradition of the people among whom it arises. It invariably dominates the mass mind, life, and ideal of the people. Even when transplanted on another region from its natural habitat it does not fail to take enough indigenous colour to become acclimatized and accommodated. Thus it asserts the clear difference of its followers. Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism,—not to mention the many minor religions,—all arose in Asia, pointing to the existence of so many different peoples in those olden days, and all still have their strong followers proving the continuation of different peoples with their different ways of life. And if we consider a whole system of civilization which is a more exuberant and consummate flowering of a people's distinct individuality than a religion by itself, we may make no mistake in realizing the futility of looking at Asia's huge human masses as one single unvariegated whole. Of how many wonderful civilizations, especially if we consider those that are now dead with those that are now living, is Asia the bright unfailing mother! The Babylonian, the Assyrian, and the Persian civilizations that had their flourishing days in the dim past are now dead and gone. The Indian and the Chinese civilizations which also arose at about the same hoary ages and have passed through many a spiral course of ups and downs are still flourishing with their ever fresh hopes and aspirations. They all arose in Asia, not in the same area but in her different golden regions, providing different natural environments; not through the labour of one people but of peoples widely different from one another in form, colour, tastes, and inclinations. Islam represents a comparatively very young civilization having sprung up on the old soil of Asia where the aforesaid dead civilizations have left their precious lessons of success and failure in every piece of relic recovered from its depth. All these three great living civilizations and several other kindred breeds in and around them represent a rich and colourful variety of human evolution. Each is a proud achievement of a distinct type of humanity through its concerted labour for group self-expression and self-realization. Each by its splendid difference with the rest declares in unmistakable terms that here, in this great ancient land of Asia, humanity lives and moves freely in its diverse forms recognizing the one supreme truth that God fulfils himself in many ways.

When such huge heterogeneous masses of men living in Asia are taken for one body as represented by the name 'East' and are judged together for one thing or other, especially with a critical or condemnatory mood, there is little doubt that behind such an unreasonable act is an inordinate zeal to pass for truth anything which gratifies the craze for self-esteem. To say 'East is East and West is West' is plainly to speak no truth, but nevertheless, to speak a lot. It is a compound Judgement comprehending a lot of things, with less regard for their correspondence to facts or for the simple law of induction than for the expression of a complex frame of mind. Although it looks like stating a fundamental principle of identity, a little reflection will show that it is a principle not fundamental but temperamental, and not of identity but egolatry. This egolatry is very implicit in the statement itself which indirectly stresses the vaunted feeling of the West that it is not at all like the East but absolutely different from the East, and that it must always be so in order that the West may enjoy imagining in this difference its supreme distinction and even imposing, whenever it is safe and expedient, its assumed superiority.

SRI KRISHNA, GITA, AND WAR

By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D.

I

The Bhagavadgita is the most popular scripture of the Hindus, and has gained recognition even outside the borders of India as a marvellous piece of world's religious literature. In directness of appeal, simplicity of language and sublimity of thought, few philosophical poems can compare with this song of Krishna. Twenty-five centuries, on a modest estimate, have gone by since its composition. Yet its importance has not declined; on the contrary, it is on the increase. The poetic form and the conversational style, the idyllic career of Arjuna who was made the recipient of the gospel and the critical moment in national history which occasioned the teaching—these have contributed greatly to the popularity of the Gita. But perhaps these alone cannot account completely for the growing interest it arouses in the minds of spiritual pilgrims all over the world. William von Humboldt regards the Bhagavadgita as 'the most beautiful, perhaps the only true, philosophical song existing in any known tongue'. Sir Edwin Arnold writes: 'So lofty are many of its declarations, so sublime its aspirations, so pure and tender its piety, that Schlegel, after his study of the poem, breaks forth into outburst of delight and praise towards its unknown author'.[1] To be the object of such superlative adoration there must be something in the philosophy of the Gita which offers an unfailing solace to the grief-stricken soul, as it did to Arjuna, and resolves the tortuous tangles of life. Morality as known to us is caught up in a seesaw of claims and counter-claims. The Pandava hero was faced with a moral crisis. The ordinary codes of ethical life could not lift him out of the slough of despond. Krishna, his friend, philosopher, and guide, reveals to him a deeper realm, the region of the Absolute Spirit and lays to rest all his doubts and riddles. The way taught by Krishna has a meaning for all truth-seekers and can inspire with hope those that are heavy-laden and have to pass through the dark night of the soul.

The irresistible appeal of the Gita is greatly due to its non-sectarian character. It is a gospel, meant for the entire humanity, without distinctions of creed or colour, country or race. Narrowness and bigotry are foreign to the author of the Gita. In his Kingdom there are many mansions; and no soul that is sincere is refused admittance. 'Whoever with true devotion worships any deity,' declares Krishna, 'in him I deepen that devotion; and through it he fulfils his desire.' 'Those that devotedly worship other gods, they also worship me though only imperfectly'.[2] 'In whatever way men approach me, in that same way do I fulfil their desires; it is my path that men follow in all ways.'[3] In the true spirit of Hinduism which does not desire the regimentation of souls into a lifeless dull uniformity, and which prescribes doctrines according to the needs of aspirants, the teacher of the Gita recognizes all endeavour at reaching God as fruitful and meritorious. No effort made in spiritual culture is ever lost. And there is a way of salvation shown even to the lowliest and the lost.[4] 'The Gita is the universal mother,' says Mahatma Gandhi, 'she turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to any one who knocks.'

The popularity of the Gita is also due to the charming personality of Krishna, the darling divinity of so many spiritual lovers

[1] *The Song Celestial*, p. v.

[2] VII, 21-22; IX. 23; See M. Hiriyanna: *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 116.

[3] IV, 11.

[4] IX, 30.

in India. Those who are spiritually blind and have not learnt the language of mysticism see in the life of Krishna, as portrayed in the *Puranas*, indecency and vulgarity. They know not what God-love means. The Lord of all souls bestowed his grace on the Gopis of Brindavana, for they surrendered their little selves and died in order to live. Mystic poetry has been woven round the sport of Krishna, a beautiful tapestry of lyrical love with God as its object. All this, however, is a later development. In the Mahabharata of which the Bhagavadgita is a part, Krishna figures mainly as the cousin of the Pandavas, their friend and guide, and also as the God incarnate giving his teaching for the benefit of the world, having made Arjuna his channel. It is believed by close students of the Gita that the best commentary on its philosophy is the life of Krishna himself. At one place in the Gita, the Teacher refers to his own example. He says that in all the three worlds there is nothing for him to accomplish. Yet he acts in order that others who are still within the confines of ignorance might not refrain from doing what is good ont of a false view of the implications of *sannyasa*.[5] Towards the close of the Gita Krishna says: 'Giving up all *dharmas* seek refuge in me alone; I shall release you from all sin; do not grieve.'[6] What better commentary could there be on this declaration than the self-surrender of the guileless maids of Brindavana and their redemption by the Lord! The story of Krishna has produced in every age numberless devotees, matchless in point of purity, faith, and spirituality. From the philosopher to the rustic, all find in Krishna an abundant source of inspiration and divine rapture. Nivedita says of him: 'The Grand Personality that towers above Kurukshetra and enunciates the body of doctrine which all India knew...to be the core of *dharma*, combines in himself the divinity of the Indian Shiva, the virility of the Greek Heracles, the simplicity of the Judean Christ, the tenderness of Buddha and the calm austerity and learning of any teacher of the Upanishads.'[7]

Scholars are divided in their opinion regarding the origin of the Krishna-Vasudeva cult. According to some, Krishna was originally a God who was subsequently identified with a son of man. According to others, he was the founder of a cult who was later raised by his followers to the status of a god. The orthodox view is that Krishna, who was born as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva, was an incarnation of God, the all-pervading Vishnu. Shankara, the great commentator, says at the commencement of his Gita-bhashya that the Lord incarnated himself as Krishna-Vasudeva to preserve *dharma* for the world, and that, although really unborn and eternal, he appears as though born, endowed with a body.[8]

The name 'Krishna' occurs in several places in very early literature. We hear of a Krishna in the *Rigveda* who is said to be the author of some hymns. There is an allusion to Krishna Angirasa in the *Kaushitaki Brahmana*.[9] The *Chhandogya Upanishad*[10] speaks of Krishna Devakiputra as the pupil of Ghora Angirasa. It is said that from this teacher Krishna learnt that (a) 'the mystic meaning of sacrifice is the life of man himself;' that (b) 'the practice of certain virtues —austerity, liberality, uprightness, harmlessness, and truthfulness—is as effective as the offering of the customary gifts to the priests;' and that (c) 'at the hour of death a man should think, "Thou art the Imperishable, the Never-falling, and the very Essence of Life."'[11] These doctrines are strikingly similar to those taught in the Gita. The *Chhandogya* passage refers to Krishna explicitly as the son of Devaki; and the epithet *achyuta* (the Never-falling) which is a favourite appellation of Krishna in the Mahabharata and the *Puranas*, occurs in this passage of the Upanishad. From these considerations it has been suggested that Krishna, who later became a teacher and

[5] III, 22-24.
[6] XVIII, 66.

[7] *Footfalls of Indian History*.
[8] *Mem. Edn.*, Vol. II, p. 2.
[9] XXX, 9.
[10] III, xvii. 6.
[11] W. D. P. Hill: *The Bhagavatgita*, pp. 5-6.

object of worship, appears in the Upanishad *in statu pupillari.*

The story of Krishna cannot be a mere legend. Some amount of historicity cannot be denied to it, though many of the details found in the later versions of the story, especially in the *Puranas*, may be exaggerated and imaginary. Panini, who must have lived in the fourth century B.C., refers in his *Ashtadhyayi* to Vasudeva and Arjuna as objects of worship. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya, stated that Heracles (Krishna) was worshipped by the Souraseni (Shurasena Kshatriyas) in whose land are two great cities, Methora (Mathura) and Kleisobora (Krishnapura). An inscription found at Ghasundi (about 200 B. C.) records the building of a stone-wall round the hall of worship of Samkarshana and Vasudeva. The Besnagar inscription (about 180 B. C.) refers to Vasudeva as *deva-deva*. The *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali (about 150 B. C.) says that Vasudeva is the name of Bhagavan and not a Kshatriya hero, and speaks of early dramatic representations of the slaying of Kamsa. An inscription found in the Nanaghat Cave (about 100 B. C.) associates Samkarshana with Vasudeva. Besides these there are references to Krishna in early Bauddha and Jaina scriptures. It is evident, then, that the story of Krishna is not a fabrication of Hindu piety, and that there must have lived a great teacher and hero who even in his own time was regarded as an avatara or incarnation of God.

II

The Bhagavadgita forms a part of the Bhishma-parvan[12] of the Mahabharata.[13] The Mahabharata, as is well known, relates the story of the fratricidal feud between the Kauravas and the Pandavas of the Royal House of Hastinapura—a feud in which the latter vanquished the former with the help and wise counsel of Krishna. It was on the first day of battle, before the clash of arms commenced, that Arjuna, the valiant Pandava hero, felt unequal to the task of killing his own kinsmen, teachers, and elders, and resolved not to fight. Krishna, his charioteer, rebuked him for his faint-heartedness, and taught him the Bhagavadgita, as a consequence of which Arjuna fought. This is how this episode of the Gita occurs in the Mahabharata. But it is well to remember that the Mahabharata is not a mere narrative of the struggle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Were it so, it would not have gained the distinction of being the fifth Veda.[14] The main purpose of the Epic is to teach the high principles of philosophy and ethics in an easy and popular way that the masses can understand them. The concepts of Ultimate Reality and duty figure largely in the main and sub-stories of the Mahabharata. That is why even at the very commencement of the Epic, such epithets as 'Vyasa's philosophy' (*vyasa-mata*) and 'the story of Narayana' (*Narayana-katha*) are applied to it. The Mahabharata is, in fact, encyclopaedic in its scope and neglects to discuss no important phase of life and thought. It deals extensively with the fourfold *purusharthas*, viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*. 'Only what is found here', it is said, 'may be found elsewhere; what is not here can be seen nowhere.'[15]

The crest-jewel of the Mahabharata is the Bhagavadgita. A verse of the Epic says that the Gita which was given to Arjuna by Krishna is the cream of the Mahabharata.[16] The principles of *dharma* and the nature of *moksha* are explained in several contexts in the Epic. All these are taught to Arjuna in a concentrated form in the Gita. Though this teaching is imparted on the battle-field, it would be wrong to regard it as a gospel of war. Just as in the Mahabharata, the story of the rivalry between the Kuru cousins provides only the background for the inculcation of eternal truths, so also the dramatic setting of the war offers but an occasion for setting

[12] Chapters 25 to 42 of the Bhishma-parvan.

[13] The view that the Bhagavadgita was a later interpolation has been refuted by scholars like Lokamanya Tilak. See the *Gita-Rahasya*, Vol. II, p. 720 *et seqq.*

[14] Bharatah panchamo vedah. It is called a *Karshna-veda* in the Adi and Svargarohana Parvas.

[15] Svargarohana-parva.

[16] Bhishma, 43. 5.

forth the philosophy of Spirit.[17] To think that the Gita was taught for the specific purpose of asking Arjuna to fight is to miss the main purport of Krishna's teaching. The primary aim of the Gita is to save the soul from the bonds of *samsara*. It begins by explaining the true nature of the Self which is unborn and eternal, and proceeds to lay out paths to its realization. Even a casual study of the contents of the Gita will convince one that it is a philosophical song and not a treatise on the ethics of war. Far from preaching violence, the Gita praises *ahimsa* in at least four places.[18] A whole chapter of the Mahabharata, which is devoted to the 'Reviling of Sacrifice', extols the principle of *ahimsa* as constituting 'virtue entire' (*sakalo dharmah*). Violence is natural to the brute in man; and no scripture need teach it to him. *Himsa* is not enjoined by the *shastras;* it is only permitted under certain circumstances as a concession to human weakness. The very fact that the scriptures put restrictions on violence shows that the goal is *ahimsa*. That is why Shankara, in his commentary on the Gita, remarks that the duty of fighting is not prescribed by the Lord, and that 'Do thou fight' (*yudhyasva*) is not a command but a re-statement.[19] The purpose of the Gita-teaching, as of all Vedanta works, is to remove the cause of *samsara*, such as grief and delusion. The Mahabharata itself describes the Bhishma-parvan, of which the Gita is a part, as a treatise in which Vasudeva removed Arjuna's delusion-born dejection through reasonings that set forth the nature of *moksha*. And so, while studying the Gita undue importance should not be given to the opening scene of war. In fact, as one listens to the discourse of Krishna, one becomes oblivious of the din and clash of war.[20]

Why then, it may be asked, did the poet of the Mahabharata introduce the Gita on the field of Kurukshetra in the midst of violence and war? Was there no better occasion, more in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel? In reply, it has been suggested[21] that the propriety of choosing the battle-field for imparting the teaching is that nowhere else is the subordination of individual aim to the general good so complete. The soldier represents the specimen of an unselfish worker. He may know the cause for which he is fighting. But what will be the result he does not know. Even if his cause succeeds, he may not be there after all to benefit by it. On account of this uncertainty he is not to shirk his responsibility. He has to do his best and be prepared to shed the last drop of his blood. 'That represents the highest form of self-sacrifice. . . . to work for no profit to oneself, but yet to exert oneself to the utmost; and the finest exhibition of this spirit in the world is to be seen on a battle-field.'

Another reason may be added to the one given above. The Gita teaches the science of Karma-yoga; it shows a way of doing things without getting enmeshed in *samsara*. Fighting is the most violent kind of action, as it embodies 'the very quintessence of activity, the rush of it, the whirl of it, the turmoil of it, the din of it.' The meaning of selecting such a crisis to teach the gospel of Karma-yoga is to show that the Yogin is unperturbed and unruffled even in the midst of universal disaster. The Gitacharya says, 'The man into whom all desires enter as the waters enter the sea, which, though even filled, remains within its bounds—such a man attains to peace, and not he who hugs his desires.'[22] He alone is a true man of Spirit who has steadied his mind and who is not affected by the changing vicissitudes of life. The real purpose of the warlike setting is to teach that the godly man who has renounced all his claims to the fruit of his actions is guided by the true spirit and is not troubled by the results of his deeds. A well-known passage of the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* says that even such heinous crimes as matricide, patricide, theft, and infanticide do not affect

[17] For parallel passages in the Gita and the other parts of the Epic, see Tilak's *Gita-Rahashya*, Vol. II, pp. 727-730, and Dr. Raghavan's paper *Greater Gita* in JORM. (1938), p. 86.

[18] X, 5 ; XIII, 7 ; XVI, 2 ; XVII, 14.

[19] Mem. Edn., Vol. II, p. 31.

[20] See S. Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 521.

[21] See M. Hiriyanna; *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 123.

[22] II, 70.

him who has understood the Self.[23] This passage is interpreted not literally, but as an *arthavada*. It intends to eulogize the man of realization. As Deussen remarks with reference to this passage, 'Whoever has attained the knowledge of the *atman* and his unity with it, and thereby has been delivered from the illusion of individual existence, his good and evil deeds come to nought; they are no longer his deeds, simply because he is no longer an individual.'[24] We suggest that in the present context the reference to war is an *arthavada*. Even *if* a true Karma-yogin engages himself in a war, the results will not bind him. There is a big 'if' here. The real purport is that the Karma-yogin will be incapable of violence, even as the very nature of the *mukta* cannot lead him to sinful ways.[25]

That the Gita does not countenance violence will be evident also from the fact that it is held in high esteem not only by the Hindus but also by the advocates of other philosophies in India who have made it their special mission to preach the gospel of *ahimsa*. In the works of Haribhadrasuri, a Jaina writer of the eighth century A.D., there are verses which appear to be quotations from the Gita. Similar verses occur in the *Padmapurana*, a Jaina work, written in 678 A.D., by Ravishena.[26] Early Bauddha treatises contain passages that should have been inspired by the Gita. Works like the *Saddharma-pundarika* and the *Milinda-prashna* bear clearly the influence of Krishna's teaching. This would have been impossible if the Gita advocated violence.

The primary aim of the Gita, as of all Vedanta, is to teach the science of the Self or Brahman, which is the ultimate reality. The Upanishads, the Brahma-sutras and the Bhagavadgita constitute the triple canon (*prasthana-traya*) of Vedanta. The Upanishads are the final authority in matters of spiritual knowledge. They are rightly described as the Himalayas of the Soul, since they embody the farthest heights of spiritual experience reached by the ancient seers of India. The Brahma-sutras systematizes the Upanishadic philosophy in a set of aphorisms which are so short and cryptic that their meaning is difficult to be construed except in the light of one or the other of the traditional interpretations which have given rise to the different schools of Vedanta. The Bhagavadgita treats of the same topics as are to be found in the Upanishads, but in an easy and concrete way. Some of the verses of the Upanishads occur in the Gita. The colophon at the end of each chapter of the Gita describes it as an Upanishad sung by the Lord, and as *brahma-vidya* or science of Brahman. A familiar verse says: 'The Upanishads are the cows; Krishna, the cowherd, is the milkman; Arjuna is the calf; the wise man is the one who enjoys the eternal milk which is the Great Gita.'

[23] *Kaushitaki*, III, 1.
[24] *Sechzig Upanishad's*, p. 44.
[25] For a fuller treatment of this topic, see the present writer's article, *Is the Gita a Gospel of Work?* in the Journal of the Madras University, Vol. XIII, No. 1, pp. 105-113.
[26] See P. K. Gode's article 'The Bhagavadgita in the Pre-Shankaracharya Jain Sources', in BORI, Vol. XX, Part II, pp. 188-194.

ASCETICISM AS AN ETHICAL IDEAL

By Prof. A. R. Wadia

Nineteen years ago I had the honour and the pleasure of being introduced to Sir P. C. Ray, whose great loss India has just been mourning. When he was told that I was professor of philosophy, he smiled and benignly placed his thin hand on my shoulder as he said: 'India has had too much of philosophy. We could do without it for some years.' India through the ages has been synonymous with philosophy and can India really do without philosophy? Paradoxical though it may sound, even as a professor of philosophy I have to admit that there is something to be said for the philosophical holiday advocated by the great scientist and Indian patriot. If the philosophy of a nation is the expression of its life and serves in its turn as the inspiration of that life, what has passed as philosophy in India cannot altogether escape responsibility for the economic and political ills of Indian life. Caste as a social institution and asceticism as an ethical ideal have played their full rôle in emasculating India, and it is to a discussion of this ethical ideal that this article may be usefully devoted.

In human nature there is an interesting defence mechanism whereby we seek to rationalize our deficiencies and thereby make them appear to be praiseworthy. To this defence mechanism belongs the frequently heard claim that India is spiritual. That there is a core of truth in it cannot be denied. That there was a time when the genuinely spiritual in life held sway in India need not be denied. But whether it holds true today is an open question. From the earliest days of Hindu civilization one peculiar feature has marked it, and it is that the noblest Hindus have shown an aversion to the pomp and pageant of life and thereby evoked the homage and worship of the Hindu world. It is a feature which impressed Alexander the Great, even on the very threshold of his conquest of the Punjab, and that is a feature which is the secret of Mahatma Gandhi's hold on the millions of India today.

That there is a stage in the history of a soul when money and worldly ties do not count is the great spiritual discovery of India, and that is her title to spirituality. Another word to express the same fact is asceticism. It primarily connotes a severe physical discipline, but it connotes also a renunciation of the ordinary interests of life, for the outward physical discipline is an expression of the inward renunciation. It is interesting to note that the Chinese and the Japanese with their inherent practical bent of mind and their exceptionally strong attachment to children, are not ascetic by nature, and, Thibet apart, monasticism, as a type of asceticism, sits very lightly on them, and even this is only a legacy from Buddhist India rather than an indigenous growth. In ancient Greece there was such a full-blooded enjoyment of beauty in all its forms and particularly in the divinity of the body beautiful that asceticism could not flourish on such a soil. In fact, Aristotle refers to it as one extreme of temperance, but frankly admits that there is no word for it. The absence of a word in a language is a sure sign that the idea behind it is unknown to the speakers of that language. Iran and Arabia certainly show vestiges of asceticism, but they too have taken it up from India. Early Christianity showed a vogue of severe asceticism in Europe, but it has died out as thoroughly foreign to the genius of Europe. As a matter of history India remains the home and the greatest patron of asceticism right down till our own times.

It has two aspects: an inner and an outer. In strict theory the two go together. In

actual fact they often do not, and this explains why every type of asceticism found in India is not necessarily healthy or genuinely spiritual. The ascetic ideal has sunk so deeply into Hindu consciousness that the mere outward semblance of asceticism automatically draws crowds of credulous and blindly worshipping admirers, whose offerings make such an ascetic passing rich. Is it any wonder that India, poor India, is a paradise for beggars? If a man can get good square meals and satisfy all his sensual wants, and all this because he moves about with a loin cloth or in a saffron-coloured robe, is it any wonder that India presents superficially the appearance of possessing a far larger number of 'holy' men than is good for any country either materially or spiritually?

Genuine asceticism must imply a real renunciation of worldly ties, and this renunciation must go hand in hand with some high purpose, without which it becomes only a travesty.

Asceticism has become deeply rooted in Hindu soil because of the philosophic belief that this world of ours is only a passing show, in which our joys are shadowed by sorrows, in which every pleasure is marred by a lurking pain, in which wealth, fame, and power, and parents, wives, and children are only clogs that hinder the upward march of the human soul, and so there can be no salvation for the human soul till all these obstacles are shaken off, and the means to do so is asceticism. All this implies a certain pessimistic attitude to life, even though Buddhism offers the peace of nirvana and Vedanta offers the bliss of *ananda* to every soul that has succeeded in making itself free from the lures of life. Logically such a philosophy should have reduced all life in India to universal asceticism. But life is stronger than logic and that is why ascetic India is also the land of wealth, of song and dance, of the full-blooded love of woman, of rich temples and temple processions, of gorgeous *Dussera* pageantry and the worship of arms and vehicles, elephants and horses. India, the land of Shiva the ascetic, is also the land of Krishna and the *Gopis*. Life in India is by no means quite colourless and dull as the ascetic ideal would imply. But all this pomp and, pageantry are for the worldly only. The soul of real India is said to flower only in the ascetic, and that is why rajahs and maha, rajahs, potentates and merchants, gay men and beautiful women—all bow in reverence to the naked sadhu, for he represents the conquest of the soul over the body, and like the Athenian youths of old the rank and file of Hindus are prepared to admire what they themselves have not the strength or the will to do.

How widely and deeply the ascetic ideal holds the Hindu soul is writ large in all Sanskrit literature and is echoed in all the vernaculars. Take for example the following from *Padma Purana*:

> This body is but a lump made of bones, flesh, and blood. Give up regarding it as the 'I'! Give up also the feeling of 'mine' in regard to wife and children. Treat the world as ephemeral. Do not form any attachment for anything in the world under the false notion that it has a permanent existence. Fix your heart on dispassion and dispassion alone, engage yourself in the practice of devotion to God. Worship of God is one's highest duty. Devote yourself to its constant practice. Turn the face from all other earthly duties. Render constant service to saints. Renouncing all desires of enjoyment and all consideration of good and evil in others, devote yourself only to the loving service of the Lord and to drinking through the ears the sweet nectar of the Lord's stories.

This quotation is interesting as *Puranas* have no claim to be considered philosophical, but they do appeal to the masses and reflect philosophical ideas. Asceticism as renunciation implies such a total negation of our ordinary life that it is quite inconsistent with the demands of such a life. It is true that comparatively only a few can take to the ascetic life, and that asceticism can never become a universal ethical ideal.

The question next arises, Is it good even for the few? If it is taken as an end in itself with the sole object of escaping the cycle of births and deaths, it cannot but be described as a form of selfishness. It pales into insignificance before the will of a Christ to work and die for others or the will of a Buddha to seek enlightenment in order to

enlighten others. In its wilful repudiation of ordinary duties, in its unwillingness to soil its fingers with ordinary work, it represents an attitude of spiritual snobbery, and has no worth in the sphere of morality.

But asceticism would have a definite value if it is embraced with a purpose: some great purpose to fulfil a mission of life whereby mankind can be taken to some great height. A great mission requires preparation. Zoroaster and Buddha, Christ and Mohammed found it necessary to withdraw themselves from the world to meditate and develop their spiritual powers so that at the ripe time they could emerge into the world again and shoulder the responsibilities of their divine mission. Apart from the religious field, we find the same spirit of asceticism possessing great artists or poets or social workers, who give up the ordinary ties of life to devote themselves all the more to their set purpose. Here too asceticism stands justified, but only as a means to an end and shines only in the reflected glory of the end. Asceticism as an ethical ideal thus assumes the form of renunciation for service.

Roman Catholic Europe furnishes good examples of purposeful asceticism in the form of monastic orders of monks and nuns. These orders are open only to those who are prepared to give up their family ties and take the vow of obedience, chastity and poverty. The rigour of discipline may vary from order to order, e.g. the Trappists go to the extreme length of observing perpetual silence. But all the monks and nuns are pledged to celibacy and none of them has a penny that could be said to be his own, though many of the orders in their corporate capacity are wealthy. Both monks and nuns devote a good deal of their time to prayer and worship, but let it be said to their eternal credit that they are all, monks and nuns alike, devoted to a vast amount of social service, whether it be in the field of education as with the famous Jesuits or in the field of agriculture as with the Trappists, or relief of poverty and looking after the spiritual welfare of the people in their area. One cannot but admit that such a life of consecrated devotion and solid social work evokes our unstinted admiration and justifies the life of asceticism. It has also to be admitted that even among the Protestants, though there are no monastic orders, it is possible to come across individuals who, scorning a life of ease and plenty, are content to work for the betterment and upliftment of their less fortunate brethren. A supreme example of this is to be found in the Lady of the Lamp, the great and noble Florence Nightingale. Born in the midst of wealth, endowed with beauty and culture, she could have lived a life of ease and luxury. But in the midst of all the good things of life she was supremely unhappy. At the age of thirty-one her diary finds her writing: 'I see nothing desirable but death. Everything has been tried—foreign travel, kind friends—everything. My God! What is to become of me?' Deep down in her heart she was feeling a call from which an unsympathetic environment was holding her back and she could only cry out, 'O God! What is to become of me? How can I get away from all this? Let me do something.' And God did listen to her and an apathetic and even a hostile environment was converted into admiring crowds as she found her mission and found her joy in the grateful sunny smiles of wounded soldiers nursed back to life by her and her gallant assistants. Nursing became a respectable profession: sisters of mercy and light. But success had not come easily to her. It had to be paid for in twenty hours' work at times, hard work, insults, disappointments. But mankind can be grateful and appreciative, and sincere workers can look forward to ultimate success.

It is perhaps an irony that real high spiritual adventure should be found in the West, which we Indians, in our pride, are wont to describe as materialistic. India in her long history has produced great ascetics. Many of them have been of the sterile type whose heart has not echoed back to the woes of

their fellow men. But some of them—Buddha and Shankara, Kabir and Ramakrishna, with centuries separating them from one another but holding forth the torch of service through the long centuries—have not hugged asceticism as a means of *moksha* for their tired souls, but embraced it only to be of greater service to their fellow beings. Surprising though it sounds, the number of such selfless ascetics has been disappointingly small in our spiritual country. The Hindu *maths* have been in charge of ascetics. Many of them are quite rich. Some of them maintain a few Sanskrit *pathashalas* for brahmins, but none of them has cared to undertake or even to inspire schemes of cosmopolitan uplift in the form of educational schemes suitable to our times, hospitals and dispensaries, or schemes for the regeneration of humanity.

For these new conceptions India had to wait till practically the close of the nineteenth century, when the Western ideals of social service had taken root on Indian soil along with English education. In this new awakening no Indian has played so great a part as Swami Vivekananda. Filled with the ancient lore of the Gita and the *Upanishads*, inspired and roused to a new birth by the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and moved by the misery of India, he was ripe to learn something from the West: its vigour, its sense of social solidarity, its zest for social amelioration, its sense of the worth-whileness even of this life here and now. For the first time in the history of India—with the possible exception of the early Buddhist monasteries—he founded an Order, the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, pledged to chastity, obedience, and poverty, and to service. Schools and hospitals, printing and publishing, preaching Vedanta to the East and the West,—these constitute the work of the Order. Above all it has made Hinduism self-critical. Not content to let soulless shibboleths pass off as deep spirituality, it has revivified Hinduism and deservedly gained for itself the significant title of Neo-Hinduism.

In a letter from California, dated the 21st February 1900, the Swami wrote these passionate words:

> Wordy warfares, texts and scriptures, doctrines and dogmas—all these I am coming to loathe as poison in this my advanced age. Know this for certain that he who will work will be the crown on my head. Useless bandying of words and making noise is taking away our time, is consuming our life-energy, without pushing the cause of humanitarianism a step farther.

Humanitarianism—the blessed word! It really marks a new birth for India: humanity above warring creeds, above the tyranny of caste, crushing millions of Indians under its 'spiritual' heel!

This new message for India is miles removed from the 'spirituality' of the passage of *Padma Purana* quoted in an earlier paragraph. India has been for centuries in possession of the great discovery that man has a soul and that soul is superior to the body, but she lost sight of the other truth that the body itself is the sacred temple which houses the soul, and if the soul forgets the claims of the body it is apt to lose itself in the cloudland of fancy and dreams. Matthew Arnold, with a poet's instinct, has penned an apt commentary on the tragedy that is known as 'Indian History':

> The East bow'd low before the blast,
> In patient deep disdain.
> She let the legions thunder past
> And plunged in thought again.

India needed a Gandhi to show the world that she could oppose bare breasts to the thud of armed forces, and would have succeeded in the new technique of non-violence if the message of Vivekananda had really gone to the heart of Hindus. For, it is far easier to face armed forces than to shake off the hypnotism of centuries where words cover up the poverty of heart. Hinduism, torn into thousands of fragments with its castes and sub-castes, could not possibly hold up legions without the pangs of a new birth, without welding together the million jagged fragments of that huge jig-saw puzzle, which is called Hindu society. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda raised their prophetic voice, frail Gandhiji has sought to play the rôle of a soldier, and this new ideal of an active India

has found a voice in the poetic prose of Rabindranath Tagore in his *Sadhana*:

> Who is there that, sitting in his corner, would deride this grand self-expression of humanity in action? Who is there that thinks the union of God and man is to be found in some secluded enjoyment of his own imaginings, away from the sky-towering temple of the greatness of humanity, which the whole of mankind, in sunshine and storm, is toiling to erect through the ages ? Who is there that thinks this secluded communion is the highest form of religion ?
>
> O thou distraught wanderer, thou sannyasin, drunk in the wine of self-intoxication, dost thou not already hear the progress of the human soul along the highway traversing the wide fields of humanity—the thunder of its progress in the car of its achievements, which is destined to overpass the bounds that prevent its expansion into the universe? . . . He who thinks to reach God by running away from the world, when and where does he expect to meet Him ? How far can he fly—can he fly and fly, till he flies into nothingness itself? No, the coward who can fly can nowhere find him. We must be brave enough to be able to say : We are reaching Him here in this very spot, now at this very moment.

Thus we find in Tagore a brilliant and soul-filling union of philosophy and poetry, as in Gandhiji we find a brilliant attempt to unify thought and action. Till this is done it would be futile to expect the world to listen to India. A country that has permitted itself to let the legions thunder past and let herself be exploited, that has let millions of her own children be outcasts from knowledge and cleanliness and purity, cannot expect to hoodwink other countries into a tame acceptance of its self-praising spirituality. Not till India has achieved the oneness of humanity within her own borders and shaken off the hypnotizing lure of an asceticism that goads a soul to seek its own emancipation and leave the toiling world alone as if its very touch is contaminating, can she assert her right to teach the world or expect the world to take her at her own valuation.

Thus we find in asceticism a useless master but a faithful servant. As an attempt to shirk the world and its responsibilities, it creates only an illusion that leaves the world as bad as ever. As an attempt to control our selfishness so that we can devote ourselves all the better to leave the world better than we found it, it has both strong vitality and deep spirituality, for through it man recognizes his kinship with man, and in the sufferings of his own body sees the birth of a brighter and more joyous humanity.

Fifty years have glided by since *Prabuddha Bharata* first saw the light of day. It has voiced forth, year after year and month after month, the message of the great ascetic, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his soldier-like follower, the supreme heir to all the lore of his Master. Great things have happened in these fifty years. India has been slowly rising from her sleep of centuries and becoming self-conscious : conscious of her poverty-stricken millions, conscious of her lost self-respect, conscious that the religion of the kitchen must yield place to the religion of man as man. India has been awakened to the old *Upanishadic* truth that man is not divorced from God, and is rediscovering the lost secret of all spirituality that man is most divine when he sees God in man and serves God best when he serves Him in His children. In this great transformation of India's soul *Prabuddha Bharata* has played its rôle and can look back on its fifty years' work and say with humble pride : I too have served.

EXPLORATION OF THE PACIFIC WORLD

By Dr. Kalidas Nag, M.A., D.Litt.

The Pacific World was explored by various races of people, by the primitive negritos of Africa, the Veddoids or proto-Australoids from South India and Ceylon, the Austric or Indonesian races from Eastern India and Indo-China, and finally by the Polynesians from the Easter Island. The Maoris, occupying New Zealand in the thirteenth century, were probably the last of the adventurous explorers from Africa, India and western Pacific, reaching the western shores of the two Americas.

In the thirteenth century again, we find the Polo brothers from Venice travelling overland as far as Peking, and Marco Polo (1270) crossing and recrossing Asia and Europe to write the first authentic book on the Geography, Ethnology, and Folk-lore of Asia. The book which Marco Polo dictated as a prisoner at Genoa to his fellow prisoner, to avoid boredom, was a favourite book with Columbus (1446-1506) while he studied at the University of Pavia while the Turks were already the masters of Constantinople (1453). As the Mediterranean was closed by the Turks, the European Christian powers tried to open new and alternative routes to the orient just as the rival city-states, Genoa and Venice, tried to establish trade relations with the East breaking through the monopoly of the Arabs (1000 -1400). Columbus, born in Genoa, ever thought of reaching India by continuous voyage towards the west across the Atlantic. Thus the intervening continents of North and South America were just incidental gifts of audacious miscalculations.

Yet, long before Columbus, the Northern confines of America had already been discovered by the Norsemen and other Scandinavians (H. Hermannsson, *Northerners in America—982-1500*). They discovered the Farœs Isles, then Iceland, and finally about 900 A.D. Gunnbjorn Ulfsson sighted the snow-capped mountains of Greenland (East).

In 982, Eric the Red, exiled from Norway and Iceland came to south-west Greenland and returned to Iceland developing literary legends (*Saga of Eric the Red*). Leif Erikson was followed by his brother T. Erikson in exploring Greenland. During 1003-06, Th. Karlsefni of Iceland reached the New England coast of America, then called Finland, and returned to Iceland in 1007 bringing the first information of the American Indians who were very strong and hostile. In the sagas of this period we find Helluland Labrador and Markland-Nova Scotia or Newfoundland. In 1121 Bishop Eric of Greenland sailed for Vinland probably on religious mission but never returned. But up to the middle of the fifteenth century when Columbus was born, the Greenland colony of traders were going to and from N. America for timber. Columbus is reported to have visited Iceland before sailing for America. Ferdinand and Isabella were somewhat happy when after the loss of Constantinople to the heathen Turks, the heathen Arab kingdom of Spain collapsed with the fall of Granada in January 1492. So Columbus got the royal permission not only to discover India and Cipangu (Japan) but also to establish intercourse with the grand Khan of Cathay (China). The good old Kublai Khan and his descendants were long dead and cold in their tomb and yet, two centuries after, Columbus took from the Spanish sovereigns letters of introduction to the Khans! In his four voyages the Italian Columbus was to discover and donate to the Spanish Crown the continent of the New World which, however, came to be named after Amerigo Vespucci who never travelled up to America, but in 1497 floated a company; and in 1507 the name America appeared in the map published by Martin Waldseemulas. But the man who follow-

ed the line of continuous voyage from the Atlantic to the Pacific was Magellan the Portuguese (1520). In his last voyages (May 1502—Nov. 1504), Columbus explored Central America up to Panama, the West Indies and South America up to the mouth of the Orinoco river. In 1500 Petros Alvarez Cabral sighted Brazil on his way to the East Indies and permanently annexed Brazil to Portugal. In 1509 the Spaniards began to develop sugar plantations, and in 1513 Spanish Balboa sighted the Pacific Ocean from the hill-tops of Panama, and Portuguese Magellan finally succeeded in crossing across the Pacific in November 1520. Poor Balboa, the discoverer of the Pacific, got his reward by losing his head through the conspiracy of his rivals, and prominent among them was Francisco Pizarro (1471-1541). He got the permission of Emperor Charles V in 1528 to annex the Inca Empire of Peru (1524-33), the richest gold estate on the Pacific coast. He treacherously seized the Inca King in 1532 and got him murdered in 1533. Pizarro founded Lima in 1535 but was murdered by his own men in June 1541.

Another great addition to the Spanish Empire was Mexico and this was the act of Herman Cortes (1485-1547). Mexico was discovered by Juan Grijalva who dared not settle there. So Diego de Velasquez charged Cortes to conquer Mexico (1518-19). The last Mexican King Montezuma was treacherously killed by Cortes and the capital was captured in August 1521, and yet Charles V was quite cold to Cortes who once said, 'I am a man who has given you more provinces than your ancestors left you cities.' Lastly between 1535-53, the narrow strip of South American coast known as Chile came to be conquered by the Spaniards who crossed the South Andes and settled in Argentina (Buenos Aires) in 1580.

In 1480, the Portuguese Bartholomew Diaz was about to discover the trade route to India by turning the Cape of Good Hope, and in 1498 Vasco da Gama landed in India which Columbus was trying to discover in the West Indies. Thus within a century we find the Portuguese Empire extending from India and the Pacific Islands to far off Brazil, and the Spanish Empire extending from the West Indies, Central America, Mexico, and Peru to Argentina and Chile on the Pacific coast. Between 1524-42 French navigators Verrazano and Cartier planted the French flag in North America, and between 1583 (Sir H. Gilbert) and 1584-1603, Sir Walter Raleigh planted British colonies in Virginia and North Caroline Islands. In 1621 the Pilgrim Fathers from Puritan England landed in New England (Cape Cod) in their ship *May Flower* and gradually the thirteen States developed and unified to throw off the British domination in 1774-84.

The chance discovery of the New World and of the Pacific was, therefore, the result of the rivalry between Spain and Portugal; and both being Catholic powers and all Christendom being threatened then by the Turks, Pope Nicholas V tried to avoid civil war. Between 1452-55 he temporarily settled the dispute by an arbitration, the terms of which were modified in 1494 by the treaty of Tordesillas, and by the treaty of 1529 when, for 35,000 ducats, the Spaniards recognized Portugal's right to the Spice Islands while the Portuguese accepted the Spanish occupation of the Philippines, although according to the original arbitration, the Portuguese were assigned by the Pope practically half the world from Lisbon to Moluccas in the West Pacific, and the Spaniards got the rest of the world from Spain to America excepting Brazil.

In 1589 Jan Huyghen Van Linschoten left Holland to serve as a secretary to the Portuguese Bishop of Goa, then in Lisbon. Returning from the Indies to Holland he wrote a book referring to Java Major which was colonized by the Dutch from 1598.

In 1597, the Dutch geographer Wytfliet referred to Terra Australis Incognito as separate from New Guinea by a strait and as a very large continent; and this was nine years before the strait was crossed in 1606 by Louis de Torres.

Of the French adventurers we hear vaguely that one of them, in 1503, probably reached the southern land which may be some island like Madagascar or Mauritius near South Africa. In 1739 Pierre Bouvet found the Bouvet Island and after the Seven Years' War Louis Antoine de Bougainville explored the Pacific for two years (1766-68). He reached Tuamotu group, Tahiti, Samoa, New Hebrides, and Solomon Isles. He returned to Paris and wrote a most interesting book on the Pacific. In 1772 a Frenchman from Britanny, De Karguelen, found an island, named after him, south of Madagascar. The greatest French explorer was La Perouse. He fought in the Seven Years' War in 1759 and sailed for the South Sea in 1785 with a view to discovering the North-West Passage. Along the coast of America he came to Alaska and then via Hawaii and Necker Isle to the Philippines, China, Korea, Japan, Kamchatka, and Petropavlovsk (city of Bering). He sent his map to Paris, but while passing through Samoa and Botany Bay, was shipwrecked in March 1788 near Hebrides.

The North Pacific was explored under the initiative of Russia. Russia crossed the Ural in 1580 and reached Amur in 1640. In 1680 was born the famous Danish explorer Bering who served Russia in her war against Sweden; and Peter the Great asked him to cross Siberia in 1724. He walked across Siberia, reached Kamchatka and the Gulf of Anadya in 1729. He walked back to St. Petersburg to report that Russia must have a fleet in the Arctic in order to conquer America. But Peter the Great died and Bering sailed again in 1740, passed the Aleutian Islands and spotted the volcano, Mt. St. Elias, between Alaska and British Columbia. Thus Bering discovered Alaska for Russia, but it was sold by Russia in 1867, not knowing that Alaska was a mine of gold. Bering again tried to return via Siberia but died ice-bound, and only his heroic name stands today on the map, Bering Strait, just sixty miles wide, between the tips of the old and the new world. Alaska and Kamchatka are both on the life-line of defence for U. S. A. and Russia against Japan and vice versa. So Alaska was purchased in 1867 from Russia by U. S. A., and the Aleutian Isles which link up Siberia with America are both offensive and defensive bases, which may drag them into the whirlpool of war and diplomacy.

The British penetration into the Pacific was already a fact in the reign of Elizabeth when Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated (1580) the world, plundering the treasure-ships of Spain and Portugal, and offering two million pounds of booty to the queen. No wonder that Philip II was furious, but after the loss of his Armada (1588), the British began to dominate in the world of navigation. In 1592 John Davis failed in discovering the North-West Passage, but passing through the Magellan Strait found the Falkland Isles and explored the Greenland seas. He published two volumes on the *Art of Navigation* and invented the Davis Quadrant. He lost his life fighting the Japanese pirates off the coast of Sumatra in 1605. Even amidst the turmoil of the Stuart Revolution, the British naval supremacy was intact as we know from the Navigation Act of Cromwell (1650). But the Dutch began now to be dangerous rivals and in this age was born (1652) William Dampier. He started as a cabin-boy at fifteen to Newfoundland, and at twenty made trips (1672) to Java, Jamaica, and Yucatan, plundering the Spanish ships in Panama with the help of English pirates; he raided Colombia and Caribbean ports reaching Mexico in 1686. Then he crossed the Pacific via Guam, to Malay Archipelago, Cochin-China, and Tonking. Then he sailed south and spotted the Lacepede Isles (N. W. Australia) and observed the 'miserable' Natives (1688). He brought with him to England a tattooed Filipino who earned some money as Dampier's 'walking picture gallery'. To earn more, he wrote in 1697 *A New Voyage round the World*, dedicated to Earl of Halifax. In 1699 he was no longer a pirate but was Captain Dampier, R. N. with 50 sailors and food for two years. Via Good Hope he came

to the Sharks Bay in Australia and then visited Timor, Schouten Isle, New Ireland, New Britain, etc., reaching Batavia in 1700. On return home, he was given two ships in 1703 to do a little 'discreet pirating' on the west of South America. He picked up (1708) a rowdy sailor Alexander Selkirk on Juan Farnandez Isles where he was dropped by Dampier's crew five years ago. Dampier died in 1715, but Selkirk lived till 1723 and became the hero of *Robinson Crusoe* published in 1719. Defoe (born 1661) met Selkirk at Mrs. Daniel's house in Bristol. He used Dampier's book published in 1697 and Grimmelshausen's book the *Adventuresome Simplicissimus* (1669) and published *Robinson Crusoe* (April 1719), taking advantage of the South Sea Bubble of 1711, which ruined thousands of people. What was not less serious was that the South Sea savages were imagined to be perfect angels of an earthly paradise. It led Rousseau to make a veritable apotheosis of the Primitive Man untrammelled by civilization. This queer cult of the eighteenth century attracted, even a century after, Stevenson and Gaugain to the Utopia of the southern continent.

But meanwhile James Cook revised thoroughly our idea of the South Sea. Between 1756-59 (like Clive in India) he served in the Seven Years War in Quebec. In 1761 he was promoted by Admiral Lord Colville, and in 1766 the Royal Society sent him to the Pacific to observe the transit of Venus. In 1768-69, when James Watt got his patent for the steam engine, Cook sailed away reaching Tahiti which he re-named as Society Isles. Then via New Zealand he spotted Victoria (April 20, 1770), got stuck at the Coral Reef and escaped via Cook's Passage out into Cape York and the Coral Sea. He passed the Torres Strait and hoisted the British flag on the Possession Island in August 1770. Then passing through Java he landed in England in July 1771. He was kindly received by George III, and the Royal Society got his scientific manuscripts, maps, etc. Cook was helped by the map of Charles de Brosses in his Pacific voyages.

Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, was the patron of Cook's second voyage when he sailed in July 1772. Skirting the Antarctic Circle Cook reached Tasmania (January 1773) and New Zealand (May 1773) proving negatively that no continuous southern continent existed between South Africa and South America except the ice-bound South Pole. In July 1775 he returned home and was elected F. R. S. adding only a tiny island viz. Norfolk to the map. In his third voyage he tried to discover the N. E. Passage from Canada to Asia which Bering first explored in 1741. He left via Good Hope (July 17, 1777), Kerguelen, Tasmania, New Zealand, Tahiti, Cook Isles, Sandwich Isles, (Hawaii), and in February 1776 sailed for the Californian coast called New Albion. Then from Mexico he reached Alaska, but had no better luck than Bering in 1741; for the pack of ice forced him to return. (In 1878-79 Nordeus Kiold, a Swede, passed successfully through N. E. Passage and during 1903-06, Amundsen of Norway also crossed from the Atlantic to the Pacific by the Polar, or the North of America Passage). In September 1778 Cook returned to Hawaii and in January 1779 dropped anchor at Keala Kekua Bay. He noticed a change in the attitude of the natives who worshipped him on his first voyage (1777). His crew quarrelled with the natives who killed Cook and probably cooked him. His cousin Isac Smith brought back his relics, and attended, till his death in 1831, Mrs. Cook whom the Government forgot to compensate. She died in 1835. Lieutenant Charles Clarke threw into the ocean the mortal remains of the Captain, and died near the Bering Sea (August 1779), and the two ships were brought back to England in October 1780 by young officers. Dr. Joseph Banks who was in charge of the scientific papers of Cook's first voyage (1769-71) suggested, after England's loss of America, that loyalist Americans may be brought to Australia (N. S. Wales) but they refused and even the Chinese labourers whom he wished to import, refused. So the British Government made

N. S. Wales a penal colony which, within a century, became so prosperous (specially after the discovery of gold) that jealousy paved the way for war. If and when the Pacific Ocean would revindicate its original title by developing a comity of peace-loving nations, is a problem of the post-war epoch.[1]

[1] Written in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the crossing of the Pacific by Swami Vivekananda, the spiritual Ambassador of India to the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893.

CONVERSION AND ALTERNATIVES

By Dr. J. H. Cousins

In the February 1944 number of *Prabuddha Bharata* there was one of those weighty and intelligent editorial articles that give the magazine such distinction in what may be termed, in the highest sense, propagandist literature, that is, literature devoted to the propagation of principles and of convictions that have been arrived at through the contemplation and ratification of principles. The article, which was entitled 'Stop Conversion', has recurred to my mind when I had read in the newspapers of the intensification of proselytism in India by both sides of the Christian faith, the Catholic and the Protestant. I do not propose here to challenge the ways of sectarian propaganda. My purpose, in accepting the invitation to contribute to the Jubilee number of *Prabuddha Bharata*, is the less pugnacious one of suggesting two alternatives, in addition to those presented in the article, to Hindus, 'to save themselves and the values they stand for' from the proselytizing attention of non-Hindu religions. The two editorial alternatives are, either to 'persuade the other communities to desist from their present activities in the name of brotherly understanding and higher spiritual values,' or themselves 'take to proselytizing in an aggressive way'.

The writer of the editorial article indicates the impracticability of both alternatives, and the psychological and social evils to which, in his conviction, they would lead. In regard to this, and *en route* to my own alternatives, I pause to notice a statement that is not, unless I misread the intent, in strict accordance with what is generally accepted as fact. It is said: 'Neither Christ nor Mohammed, nor, for the matter of that, any great prophet, condemned other spiritual paths as wholly devilish and misguiding.' It is a long time since, in my questing days as a young hunter of truth in Ireland, I read Al Koran from cover to cover, and I shall not venture a commentary on the statement from the point of view of Islam. But I was nurtured in one of the numerous sects of propagandist Christianity; and out of my memory of verses of scripture comes one that, if it does not go quite the length of imputing devilishness to others, puts Krishna and the Buddha, not to mention others, in a not very respectable category: 'All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers', Jesus is reported to have said (*St. John*, X, 7, etc.) This is, as I was taught, one of the key sanctions of Christian antagonism to other faiths.

But (leaving Islam aside) the point I wish to make regarding the conviction on conversion is that that psychological process is the central Christian qualification for the salvaging of the soul from eternal damnation. Jesus is reported to have said: 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' (*St. Matthew*, XVIII, 2, etc.). That is an individual condition which, from the Christian

point of view, cannot be, in the language of the day, by-passed. From an individual necessity it is turned into a world-wide compulsion by the command of Jesus: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.' (*St. Mark*, XVI, 15).

The above texts from the New Testament make additional justification of the editorial opinion on the futility of trying to persuade proselytism to take a rest 'in the name of brotherly understanding and higher spiritual values'. To ask Christian proselytism to do so is to ask it to cease being itself. The only 'brotherly understanding' it would acknowledge would be the understanding of Christianity by followers of the 'false religions'; and it would not, in fact, ask for understanding but for uncritical acceptance. The only 'spiritual values' it recognizes have no higher or lower levels; it does not, in fact, calculate spiritual values as such; what it is concerned with is authorized doctrines. Hence the story published in the Press on June 2, 1944 of a missionary, at a conference, telling of how he had pleaded with Gandhiji, with tears in his eyes, to acknowledge Christ as his saviour and to be baptized. The fact that in Gandhiji he saw what he regarded as the Christian virtues that qualified him for conversion did not count in comparison with a mental acknowledgement and a ceremonial.

The alternative of counter-proselytism that Hinduism might adopt, would ultimately, in the editor's opinion, through the lowering of the 'spirituality' of Hinduism and its hardening by antagonism, lose more than it would gain numerically and socially. This may well be so; but there is what appears to me to be a deeper descent in either Christian or Hindu proselytism, a descent not only to worship of 'half-gods' but into the nether regions of untruth. For conversion, as ordinarily conceived by proselytism (that is, the repudiation of one formulation of 'truth' and the acceptance of another as not merely superior, which is conceivable, but as absolute and final, which is impossible), is a psychological fallacy; and for Hinduism to take up the counter-propaganda of its own statement of 'truth' would be to align itself with the final heresy of the unilluminated human mind. Within the sphere of reality there is no such possibility as conversion in the sense of turning away from one aspect of truth to another under the superstitious illusion that the second cancels the first, that the resolution of one factor of a calculation of many factors proves the others to be arithmetically false. But there *is* in human nature a true conversion that has nothing to do with exclusive mental or emotional attachment to any body of doctrine or to any personal embodiment of superhuman powers and qualities. This is a turning of the whole nature (*con*—together, *vertere*—to turn) from enslavement to the external things of life, not only from the desires of the flesh, but from the tyrannies of the mind and emotions; from the 'letter' that 'kills' (the literalness which has been deprived of the interpretative imagination) to 'the spirit' that 'maketh alive', the 'real meaning, essence, chief quality' (as a dictionary puts it), that releases its affinities that are inherent in the inner nature of the individual, and through these creates, with the mind as instrument, truth; with the imagination and emotions, beauty; with the actions, goodness. It is a fact, as the article says, that conversion from one faith to another is 'foreign to the Hindu nature'; but the real conversion, as indicated above, is the central theme of Hindu thought and the aim of the yogas from Vasishtha and earlier to Aurobindo and later. The Bhagavadgita is a handbook of psychological, not sectarian, conversion. The Hindus have no need 'either to accept it as a part of their religion or counteract it effectively by some suitable device'. It is second nature to them through their religious heredity: they have only to understand and live it. (This is an anticipation of my second alternative.)

The two editorial alternatives of persuading propagandists, to whom conversion is a cardinal article of their creed, to give it up, or of meeting proselytism by counter-proselytism and thus negativing the Hindu belief in

karma, having been ruled out, yet the need increasing to meet the once naked but now politely clothed attack on Hinduism, the question is, Cannot some prophylactic method be found of making the Hindu consciousness immune from the microbic invasions of proselytism without debilitating its own energy or breaking its own integrity?

Two additional alternatives have been in my mind. The first is a double one; the exposure of falsehood in both the propaganda of Christian tenets and in Christian criticism of the tenets of Hinduism. This would be but a turn-about of the Christian technique of propaganda towards Hinduism. A certain enjoyment of this pugilistic way of winning dialectical garlands comes to me by race; but my judgement, which is deeper than race, does not approve of it. For one thing, it would not make an iota of difference to anti-Hindu propaganda from either side of Christianity since, while each side has produced a large literature of proof of the errors of the other, both sides are at one in their assurance of the falsity of Hinduism; for another, it would call for a long, detailed, specialized study of Christian literature and history, and the devotion of men and women to the tracking of error instead of the more worthy work of finding and living truth. Flashy argumentation would also have a tendency to turn attention and interest to some extent away from the first duty of the heads of Hinduism to the people who have been born into it, namely, to develop in them the understanding of the tenets that spiritual experience and disinterested contemplation drew out of the mystery of the universe, and to carry out the implications and applications of these tenets in individual idealism and social beneficence.

Moreover, the exposure of error, while it might be the enjoyable work of a group of intellectually equipped Hindus, and of first-rate value to the literate and mentally trained minority of the Hindu people, would not meet the needs of the situation, since it would not get at the vast mass of the unsophisticated; and even where it got at them might tend more to the generation of sectarian asperity than to the expression of the tolerance to followers of other faiths that is integral in Hinduism.

Hence, while I do not rule out the desirability or at times the necessity of a Hindu hit-back against non-Hindu error, I set it among things secondary to what I have long felt to be the primary need of a systematic movement for making the fundamentals of Hinduism known to the masses of the Hindu people and of indicating to them how such fundamentals can be translated into the simplest actions of daily life. This is my second alternative. In this I see the possibility of the surest prevention against external attack. In it, of course, there is no threat of diminution of such efficacy as religious ceremonial may possess or of the study of the Hindu scriptures and commentaries by those who are capable of doing so. Rather would the democratization of understanding lead to the development of an increased depth and power in religious observance and to the widening and enrichment of intellectual comprehension. What I have in mind is rather the development, within Hinduism, of a movement somewhat on the lines of Christian movements 'for the deepening of the spiritual life'. There would, however, be this cardinal difference, that, whereas such movements, when subjected to the scrutiny of psychological science, do not reach the deeper levels of the psyche, where credal and institutional superiorities and exclusions do not exist, but are temporary centres of emotional infection; the study and practice of the cosmic and psychological verities within the ambit of Hinduism engender emotional calm and intellectual clarity that are two of the basic essentials of the world crisis today.

In this connection I recall a striking statement made by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, in May 1941, at the opening of the new buildings of the Arya Samaj in Madras. Referring to the condition of things that the world will have to face after the war, he said: 'To such a world of stricken humanity the fundamentals of our faith, Hinduism, will be the

salvation and solace and the real refuge.' 'What is that faith?' he had already asked. 'That faith,' he answered himself, 'and that philosophy is tolerance, that faith and philosophy is understanding of one's own personality and harmonizing that with other people's personalities.' A very different objective *that* from the bottomless abyss that proselytism puts between not only Christianity and the non-Christian faiths but between both the major divisions and the minor sects of Christianity itself, with harps being played by the saved on one side and flames crackling around the lost on the other. True, there has been some diminuendo in the music of paradise and some damping down of the fires of the inferno since science began to make religion in the West sit up and take notice; but the fissure remains, and will not be closed up by the artificial triumvirate of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish men-in-the-street who (according to a Press wire of May 31, 1944) are to 'share the responsibility of putting the plans and actions of statesmen to the tests of religion' in the making of peace. To ask the question, Which religion? would be to renounce my renunciation of pugnacity in this article. To return to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, just such a movement as my second alternative to Hindu proselytism has in view was put by him into two concise sentences. 'If this vision is to be realized, it needs missionaries with faith, organization, finance, and business habits. Faith we have enough, but in the translation of that faith into something definite and concrete we are lacking.'

The three ingredients of the faith of Hinduism, according to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, are tolerance, self-knowledge, and harmony. The order in which they are set down does not to any serious extent matter; yet there is something in me that would put understanding first as the basis of tolerance as between individuals, and harmony in the whole. Be that as it may (understanding as a preliminary and guide to action; or action as a way to understanding, what Christian experience put into the phrase that as you live the life you know the doctrine), the organization of a Hindu mission to Hindus, such as Sir C. P. Ramaswami suggested, would actually result in a parallel collaboration of what he throws into the word 'traditions' and their fulfilment in action. 'If they,' he said, referring to Hindus in general as well as to sacrosanct groups, 'if they were true to their traditions of catholicism and tolerance, traditions of valour or *veerya*, traditions of non-offence of a dynamic and active character, traditions of defensive fights, traditions of a belief in our own system and determination not to be allowed to be trampled upon by any agencies, however powerful or well organized, I have no fears for the future.' That is the assurance of one who is at once scholar, visionary, and man of affairs. To those to whom the tenets and implications of Hinduism are familiar, the assurance will come as the expression, not of a fluctuant sentimentality, but of an intelligent and tested realization of the unshakable verities from which the universe came forth and through which nature and humanity move towards their perfect fulfilment. A short account of certain of those verities may serve not only as an indication of their application to Hindus and Hinduism, but of their larger significances that lie behind Sir C. P. Ramaswami's bold assertion of the fundamentals of the Hindu faith as 'the salvation, the solace, and the real refuge of stricken humanity'.

Within the vast elaboration of Hindu thought there is a plain realizable conception of the nature of humanity and its relationships within itself and to the universe of which it is a part. Man, in this conception, consists of a central self (*atman*) which uses its instruments of mind, emotions, and body for larger purposes than those of any or all of its instruments. Further, just as no human body could maintain its existence in complete independence, but relies on the co-operation of other bodies, as they do on it, neither could an individual self exist without the other individual selves that along with it make up the Self of the universe. The essence of awakened human life is the realiza-

tion of both the external and internal interdependence of all individuals, man and woman, Easterner and Westerner, Hindu and non-Hindu, and the organization of individual human activities and group institutions on the basis of this unity and interaction. In carrying out this conception in daily life, ancient Hindu India developed the four main divisions of service (*dharma*) which correspond to the modern divisions of culture, administration, capital, and labour. It may be that this division of service, known later by the foreign term 'caste', is unsuited to modern conditions of number, speed, and intercommunication. But the essential matter is that the divisions of service were not themselves the *dharma* but means to its fulfilment in the conditions of the time. The means of service to the community as a whole may go through change; but the spirit of service based on the Hindu conception of the unity of all beings behind their external differences (which are variations, not separations) and the interdependence of all details of life, is the unchanging law. Human organization and feeling in the West, and under Western influences in the East, being the reverse of the *dharma*, has brought the world outside Hinduism to its present state of antagonism, and threatens the Hindu community with the same disruptive influence. For the sake, therefore, of the world, as well as for the sake of the Hindu family within the world family, an earnest and continuous movement, such as Sir C. P. Ramaswami suggested, and which is in effect my fourth alternative to Hindu proselytism, is urgently needed.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE VEDANTA AND THE TANTRAS[1]

BY DR. MAHENDRANATH SARKAR, M.A., PH.D.

Though the spiritual ideals in the Vedanta and the Tantras have been almost the same, still the method of realization has not been the same. The Vedanta represents the classical Hindu thought in which philosophy and spirituality have found the same goal. Its discipline has been essentially intellectual, endowing us with the supreme understanding. Understanding gives wisdom. The Vedanta has placed understanding before everything. The final illumination comes with philosophic habit. A system of discipline is enjoined but it is secondary. The philosophic insight together with a fine discrimination gives us the final knowledge. Intellectual intuition has been the source of transcendental wisdom. The Vedanta as a system of discipline is more intellectual; for intellect is supposed to be the highest faculty endowed with the power of intuiting truth. In this supreme effort, knowledge is released from its subject-object limitation and its reference to creative thought. Liberation is more often characterized as denial of the empirical outlook on life. It is better to look upon it as the release of concentrated being and consciousness.

The Samkhya, with the Vedanta, follows the path of philosophic discrimination and transcendent intuition. Its method is analytical, separating the gross from the subtle, and finally separating the transcendent *purusha* from the creative *prakriti*. This process of intuitive discrimination—intuitive because the discrimination here gives direct knowledge by entering into the heart of the different strata of being—goes up to the end, recovering false identification between *purusha* and *prakriti*. The Tantra differs from the Vedanta and the Samkhya in its approach. It is essentially a discipline of our central being in a way which can release consciousness from its limitations; but this

[1] This forms a chapter in Professor Sarkar's forthcoming book, *Hindu Mysticism—(Studies in Tantric Mysticism.)*

discipline is not like the Vedanta essentially philosophic or logical or analytical. It is on the other hand essentially psychic, directly acquainting us with every part of our composite being. It is interesting because it discovers truth through the direct relation of the life-forces, through their finer modulations and activity and through the acquaintance with the unconscious.

Our life-force is connected with the central being. A barrier between them is established by the creation of an individuality which resists the continuous stream of light and force from the central source. The Tantric discipline removes this creative individuality and directly connects it with the central being and cosmic consciousness. Its method lies in correct aspiration and the descent of force which removes the barrier created by individuality. This is the distinctive character of the Tantric discipline; it has indeed been the chief source of its attraction. The psychic life is potential in us, it becomes active when the divine aspiration moves our being. A psychicization of our being with new oscillations is the result.

Through the psychic the cosmic consciousness can directly act upon our being and liberate the subtler from its rigidity and restrained vision. It instils more energy into our vital being, it makes the mind intuitively more active; it discovers the centres which are directly exercised by the cosmic will. The individual will is the cosmic will focussed in a centre. In being associated with it, it naturally becomes limited in being and operation. This limitation is to be removed.

This indeed is definite emergence of our being, which withdraws its cabined existence. The true nativity of man takes place when we are in a position to invite the re-creating force in us by going over our inherited tendencies and by removing the narrow individuality. The Trantras make the individual ego the centre of the cosmic will, and therefore, the will in its humanistic sense is overshadowed. This loss is compensated by the power it acquires and by the guidance of the superior reason, which it releases. This power is in the super-conscious. The Tantras lift the veil from it.

In the super-conscious is stored up the fine spiritual power which instils superb harmony into our vital and mental being. To this end, the Tantras instruct us to surrender ourselves completely to the prompting of the higher spiritual force which can further the fine evolution of our being.

Abstract spirituality which gives understanding, but does not face the actualities of life finds no important place in the Tantras. Here the problem is concrete—how to activate the immanent spirit in us. The Tantric discipline unfolds the spiritual consciousness together with spiritual power. It is illumination, but above all education and remoulding of our being. The Tantras evoke graces and powers which can give us the taste of coficrete spirituality. They discover the sun-lit path which can make life easy and beautiful and at the same time can invest us with transcendental wisdom.

The Samkhya and the Vedanta have not emphasized so much the creative harmony and the psychic resonance of our being. The Tantras accept them as of spiritual value and significance, inasmuch as they indicate the scattering of spiritual light and power by moulding our being and consciousness. The Tantras do not ignore the fine poise in transcendence and as instrumental to it the dynamic being in consonance with the spiritual harmony. The sun-lit path cannot ignore any side of our nature in spiritual realization. By following the stream of light that occasionally visits us, the Tantras reach the highest consummation. Transcendent spirituality they do not forsake, but they make the transcendent light reflect through the centres of our being, making them more powerful, graceful and easy. The Tantras give illumination, but in addition, they make the most of life by drawing from the uncon-

scious, and in evolving a course of life and expression in spirituality and grace.

The Tantras affirm that spiritual force is hidden in us and cannot be fully active because of the defective system. Before the spirit-force can be operative fully, it introduces changes in our physiological and vital system to make it a fit vehicle of spirit. The reserve spiritual force can then function. Then the cosmic sense and cosmic power grow in us and the veils of ignorance are lifted and the subtler layers of existence with subtle forces become facts of clear knowledge. These, indeed, are indirect fruits of spiritual progress but its direct result lies in widening our knowledge until it reaches the transcendent consciousness. The Tantric realization makes room for varieties of spiritual expe-riences, for the adept has to make his progress through grades or strata of being. These experiences have value showing the subtle forms of being and the subtle powers of consciousness in higher planes. But these are smaller considerations before the end that is placed before us, the realization of the transcendent truth or Shiva. The Tantras are often looked upon as disciplines which evoke uncommon powers in us. That is quite possible inasmuch as they make the central being active in the astral and the still higher planes; but these powers are not the end that is consciously sought. In spiritual life the Tantras along with the tradition built up lay more stress on the attainment of the supreme light than on the attainment of power. Powers are the natural consequence of unfettered being in knowledge.

With this aspiration the indrawing force reveals its many phases and produces infinite harmonies that make us fully acquainted with them. Different harmonies suit different psychic temperaments. For this, the Tantras prescribe different paths for different individuals. This must be the case since the psychological moulding takes distinct shapes according to inherited tendencies. This is the great art in the Tantras to suit our mental and psychic constitution to the different kinds of spiritnal modulations. The Tantras, to this end, allow our spiritual nature to assert itself by completely surrendering our being. The spiritual surrender does not produce a merely negative state—it evokes gentle spiritual modulations in consonance with our psychic being.

It is because of this it has been made possible for the Tantras to assimilate love, power, and wisdom in spiritual life and to embrace all kinds of spiritual attitudes either in love or in beauty or in wisdom. These attitudes become dominant according to our psychic formation. Generally the Tantras give the order as love, power and wisdom. Love gives the dynamic identification whence is the emergence in power and wisdom. The Tantric mysticism indicates different phases in response to the definite modulations. Occultism has different shades. It is not definitely fixed for a particular kind of experience. It stands for the delicate experiences associated with the spiritual tremor of our being. The occultist sees through the definite expression and traces out the spiritual vibrations through them. But this does not mean that all spiritual experiences have the same value and potentiality. The spiritual tremor is felt through our vital-mental and higher mental being. It rejuvenates them and produces pleasing vibrations, but the vibrations that emanate from the depth and the height of our being have greater values because they touch the higher strings of life. Their great contribution lies in withdrawing the barrier of matter and making life more shapely by drawing directly from the creative force. By evoking the cosmic creative will, the Tantras displace the determinism of nature and establish the indeterminism of spirit. This does not remain a philosophic concept, this becomes an actual force in life.

This consummation becomes possible because the Tantras realize in the *Mahâ-shakti* (the Transcendent Will) the power eventually to dispense with the supposed antagonism of matter and spirit or to spiritualize matter. Matter is more a convention than an accept-

ance. It has no reality. It originates out of the creative will in the process of emergence. It cannot sufficiently resist the creative will. The creative will has in it potency to re-shape mind and matter for more exalted expression. The emergence of a new creative order is possible and the Tantras make effort in this direction.

It will be the height of indiscretion to suppose that the Tantras are the disciplines in will-culture in the modern sense. The training of will makes will effective, but does not make it one with the cosmic will. The Tantras give the finest art of evoking the cosmic will in us which alone possesses the power of re-orientating our being. The trained will has not this power. To move the divine force in us, to regulate all the centres of our being by it makes our being elastic, fit for a still higher emergence in spirituality, wisdom, and power. This becomes possible because matter, life, and mind emerge out in finer existence by the pressure of the creative spirit. Evolution is the assertion of spirit over nature. Matter is dematerialized and the creative will becomes highly active to work out the cosmic possibilities in man.

The concrete spirituality of the Tantras acquaints us with these exalted possibilities. The divinization of our being is the Tantric ideal; though the extreme transcendence of the Vedanta has not been ignored, still the Tantras, especially as an applied art in spirituality, have removed the barrier between man and God—by elimination of the earthly bent of being. The Tantras have not only theoretically denied matter, but practically have eliminated it by redeeming life from its infiuence. In the Vedanta the identification of the human and the divine will has been accepted, but the ideal has been supposed to be inferior to Transcendence. The Tantras are spiritually alive to the dynamic aspect of our existence, and therefore have worked more thoroughly the process of activism of the divine will in man. Our psychic being is so influenced that our divine possibilities are actualized and a new consciousness with new powers is directly established. The whole being moves with a new tune.

There is no purifier on earth as great as this knowledge. When a man attains perfection in Yoga he knows the truth of it within his heart.

The man of faith who is devoted to spiritual knowledge and practice of self-control gains wisdom. Having obtained wisdom, he gains supreme peace at once.

—Gita

SRI CHAITANYA AND HARIDAS

By Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji

Haridas was one of the closest companions and disciples of Sri Chaitanya Deva, the great Vaishnava saint and reformer of Bengal (1486-1534), and he is universally honoured as one of the greatest saints of Bengal Vaishnavism. He was considerably older than Sri Chaitanya himself, having been born about A.D. 1464. He was a Mohammedan and came from a high Muslim family with landed properties in the district of Ambua. His father's name was Malai Kazi, and, as the epithet Kazi implies, he was either a magistrate and judge under the Muslim Sultan of Bengal, or he was descended from some eminent Kazi whose official title was adopted as a sort of family surname. Haridas was born in the village of Budan near Bangam (Vana-grama) in Jessore (Yashohara) district, and his original Mohammedan name is not known. The great Vaishnava teacher Advaita Acharya (1434-1539), who was a precursor as well as a disciple of Sri Chaitanya, converted Haridas, while quite a young man, to the Vaishnava faith, when the latter came to Santipur, and he obtained the name by which he is known after this conversion. As he was a Mohammedan he was usually called 'Jaban' (i.e. *Yavana*) Haridas—the original meaning of the word *Yavana*, viz. Greek, being extended in later times to mean any foreigner, and then particularly a Mohammedan. He gave up all claims to his family estates, and became a wandering Vaishnava preacher, singing the name of God as Hari and preaching the message of Chaitanya. In Nadiya he lived, during 1508-10, in the house of Srivasa; and Nityananda, another apostle of Chaitanya, was a great friend and fellow preacher of his. Gorai Kazi, the Mohammedan magistrate of a part of Nadiya, on the express order of the Sultan of Bengal to whom the matter of the conversion of a Mohammedan to Hinduism was reported and at whose instance judgement was given in a court consisting of twelve Kazis at Gaur, the capital city, warned him that he was not to sing the name of God as Hari and preach the Vaishnava cult; but as he persisted, he was severely whipped publicly at twenty-two different markets of the area of Nadiya. The punishment was so severe that at one time he was left for dead.

Haridas had met Chaitanya at Nadiya, and it was this personal contact that strengthened his great love and devotion to Chaitanya, a devotion which amounted to regarding Chaitanya as God incarnate on earth. At a dramatic performance organized by Chaitanya at Nadiya, Haridas was given a part, that of the *Sutradhara* or actor-manager who introduced the play : and this shows the intimate relationship which existed between Haridas on the one hand and Chaitanya and his other followers on the other. Haridas, by his piety and his character, made such an impression that even brahmin scholars were not ashamed to acknowledge him as their *guru*, a spiritual teacher.

Yet Haridas, in a spirit of true Vaishnava humility, was quite content to give to brahmin orthodoxy what was regarded in Hindu society as its due. He followed his master Chaitanya when the latter went to live at Puri, but he would never embarrass the orthodox by visiting or coming near the sacred shrine of Jagannatha, at Puri, as he, being a Mohammedan, was looked upon as being technically outside the pale of Hindu society. Chaitanya appreciated the spirit in which he showed his deference to the accepted conventions and outward formalities of the faith he had adopted, yet he treated him in a fashion which demonstrated that in his personal dealings he expressed his disapproval of the orthodox ideas and usages. The fine picture by Nandalal Bose, reproduced in

colour in the current number of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, presumably depicts a scene described with infinite beauty in the *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishnadas Kaviraj (Madhya-lila, Chapter XI), that remarkable and authoritative biography of Chaitanya written during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, within 50 years of Chaitanya's passing away. Sri Chaitanya, as a *sannyasi* who had renounced the world, had come to Puri, and the King of Orissa, Prataparudra Deva, treated him with the greatest honour and housed him in Puri as a distinguished man of religion and spiritual teacher. Chaitanya asked the king's men who were in attendance on him to arrange for the proper residence of all his followers, which was done. He met Haridas in Puri, and Haridas told him that not having the high-caste Hindus' right to mix freely with the attendants of the temple of Jagannatha, he would be very happy if he got some cottage in some remote garden within Puri where he could live and perform his devotions all by himself. After his other followers had been properly accommodated, and arrangements had been made for their meals, Chaitanya chose a separate room within a flower garden, close to his own dwelling room, for the residence of Haridas. He then went out and met Haridas where he was, and Haridas prostrated himself before the Master. But Chaitanya raised him up and embraced him, and both of them began to shed tears of joy and showed great emotional exaltation at meeting each other. 'The servant or disciple was profoundly moved by the great qualities of the Master, and the Master, in his turn, by those of his disciple.' Haridas said to Chaitanya, 'Lord, do not touch me; I am a lowly sinner, an untouchable!' And Chaitanya replied, 'I touch you that I myself may be sanctified; your saintliness is something which I lack; you make one more holy than a brahmin who is a *sannyasi*.' With these words he took Haridas to the very secluded room within the flower garden, and told him to live there in peace, perform his devotional exercises, and sing his hymns every day, making his obeisance to the deity, Jagannatha, by looking at the temple spire crowned with the discus of Vishnu which was visible from the garden. And Chaitanya and his other disciples used to come and meet Haridas in this garden every day, and to send him consecrated food from the temple.

This pleasing account of Sri Chaitanya in relation to his erstwhile Mohammedan disciple, the saint Haridas, is the one evidently pictured by Nandalal Bose. Chaitanya has come to visit Haridas, his senior by over twenty years, in the latter's residence in the garden. Chaitanya was at the time quite a young man, and his handsome person was set off by the glow of renunciation which seemed to suffuse it. Nandalal Bose, with his sure eye and strong hand, alone knows how to depict great spiritual ideas and personalities through outward form, and he has given new meaning and content to some of the deathless ideas of Hindu symbolism through mythology, as for example, the figures of Shiva and Uma. The strong and gracious personality of Chaitanya also attracted Nandalal Bose, and he has given us some very beautiful pictures—drawings and paintings—illustrating Sri Chaitanya and his life: and the present picture is one of them. Chaitanya, as a tall, handsome young man, with a fair complexion, 'bright like molten gold,' is seated before the faithful Haridas, and while listening to his eager discourse of self-abnegation is, with his detachment from mundane affairs, about to fall into *samadhi* or a spiritual trance—his half-shut eyes showing the inner spiritual calm of the saint and mystic. Chaitanya is clean shaven, without his sacred thread as he is a *sannyasi* and like a *sannyasi* he has a loin-cloth of coarse cotton, dyed in ochre or saffron colour; and on his shoulders he has a *kantha*, a quilt sewn of old cloths, while his wooden begging-bowl is in front of him. Haridas still has his beard proclaiming his Mohammedan origin—probably there was no formal admission into the Hindu fold, and he has a small skull-cap and a quilt also of patched cloths. But he has the Vaishnava insignia of a bead necklace of *tulasi* round his

neck. The contrast between the Master—the God-man Chaitanya—with his innate far away existence showing through his half-closed eyes, and the devoted Haridas who loved and worshipped him is beautifully brought out. The gnarled old flower tree, spreading its protecting branches over the two, seems to act like a third person in the drama—the silent, yet none the less interested, observer in this great scene of quiet love and devotion, of a spiritual communion between two God-intoxicated personalities.

HENOTHEISM AS A RELIGIOUS CULT

BY ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE, M.A., PH.D.

There is a certain religious attitude which one comes across in different ages, and which is typical of the religion as found in the Vedas—the most ancient poetry of the world and the earliest and most characteristic expression of the spiritual idealism of the Aryan type of civilization—to which Max Müller gave the name Henotheism. Henotheism resembles monotheism in that it describes the Divinity as One. It resembles polytheism in that it contemplates the Divine as a God, or a Goddess; and Gods and Goddesses named by it are many. Often several are named together. But the Deity is not the same as in Semitic monotheisms, nor are the different Gods and Goddesses so well defined and individualized as in polytheistic cults.

MONOTHEISM

Monotheism as a religious creed, as distinguished from a philosophical theory, has a number of special features. We enumerate a few of them here.

It is a belief in a single personal God; a Father who is in Heaven. The monotheistic heaven implies a superior order of reality: God and the angels who live there are holy whereas men, who live on the earth, are sinful. God is the King of heaven. Monotheism considers the relation of God and man as that of king and subject. Monotheistic worship—implying allegiance and obeisance and regular demonstration of loyalty—is in keeping with this conception. God is the sole King and every creature His sole subject. This introduces the idea of suppressing those who owe allegiance to some other person or object—the infidels, for whom no punishment appears too severe. Monotheism imagines an anti-God—Satan—who is constantly at work trying to tamper with the loyalty of God's subjects. Hence the non-believer, according to monotheism, is not a morally innocent person of a particular intellectual persuasion, but an ally of Satan and therefore wicked. The will of the King of heaven is made known to the world through His accredited agents called prophets, whose records are believed to be revelations and make the scripture. Monotheism recognizes theology—the attempt to interpret the scripture, not philosophy—the exercise of free thought over problems of existence. Monotheism having to enforce the known will of God on human society needs a regular institution which could completely govern the life of people. It has attempted to establish one state for the world under a Pope or Khalifa.

Really speaking, monotheism can have only one creed. More than one monotheistic religion means rivalry between several groups to be the interpreters of the only God. It is customary for an early monotheism to treat a later monotheism as spurious.

POLYTHEISM

Polytheism believes in many Gods and Goddesses and goes on adding to the number and selecting and rejecting them according to the temper of the people professing it. Those Gods and Goddesses are sometimes crude, belonging to primitive animism, but are sometimes poetic and symbolical representations of abstract ideas. In respect of Indian

temple worship, for example, there are two schools of thought—one that follows the path of knowledge and interprets images symbolically; another, the orthodox school, which takes images as divinely animated objects which perform many miracles.

Polytheistic Gods and Goddesses, whether in India or Greece or Rome, are not perfect. Each has some good and some bad points. The evil points of some Deities are set right by the good points of others; so, as it is found specially in the case of Greek polytheism, one God or Goddess is invoked to counteract the power of another. Each polytheistic God is a definite, particularized person.

Polytheism, especially in respect of the crude features, is inferior to monotheism. But the vision of polytheism is more comprehensive than that of monotheism. For example, the monotheistic Divinity is masculine, whereas polytheism conceives the Deity both as Father and as Mother. Again, polytheism is more liberal than monotheism in that it is hospitable to other people's Gods. The Roman conquerors, for example, adopted the Gods of the defeated Greeks. A greater claim to superiority lies in this : that while monotheism must interpret its scripture in an historical and factual manner and constrain freedom of thought, polytheism soars on the wings of poetry and philosophy and allows liberty to imagination, to fancy, and to thought. Polytheism has flourished through the activities of private agencies, whereas monotheism has needed the backing of a state. While monotheism has depended on the soldier of God, polytheism has trusted itself to the poet, the myth-maker and the philosopher. The new birth (Renaissance) of Europe after a long period of monotheistic sovereignty, was a return in spirit to polytheism and paganism.

Henotheism

Henotheism, as a religious creed, differs both from monotheism and polytheism. It differs from monotheism in that, though it believes in One God, it finds that this belief does not affect its contemplation of many Gods.

The speciality of Henotheism lies in this that there is a general devotional attitude towards the Divine, and this attitude remains unchanged even if the Deities addressed are changed.

Not only this, but by clear statement the different Deities are identified with One Deity (e.g. with Agni) or as the One Divine (*ekam*). And in such identification the difference of number or gender is ignored. Thus Henotheism is the worship of the One Divinity in many names and forms.

'Heno' is Greek for 'one'. 'Henotheism means the belief in One God; but as its features are different from monotheism where 'mono' also means one, the new term has been coined. The Vedic expression for the One Divinity is '*ekam*,' which has been spoken of as Advaita ('not two'). So we may describe Henotheism as 'Advaitist Theism' and distinguish it from the general Advaitist philosophy which tries to prove the unity not of God only, but of all orders of reality.

Two essential aspects of Henotheism arrest our attention.

First, the subjective aspect. If we consider the attitude of the worshipper the cult appears to be monotheistic, in the philosophical sense. Every Vedic prayer is born in a spiritual mood, a praying attitude, in which the mind receives the vision of the Divine. This attitude and this feeling remain constant, though the contents of the vision vary. This psychological factor provides the point of unity.

Secondly, the objective aspect. If we were to ignore the subjective feeling and contemplate the multiplicity of forms, the cult would look like simple polytheism. Hence observed externally, in relation to the form, the Vedic cult would appear polytheistic except for the amorphous character of the Deities. It is usual nowadays to describe it as polytheism. The description, as a purely formal one, is not quite inaccurate. But it loses sight of the spirit, and it is the spirit which is its chief point and which gives the cult its characteristic speciality.

Considering the spirit we find that one important difference between Vedic Henotheism and polytheism is that Vedic Deities do not combine in their character virtue and vice, goodness and evil like polytheistic Gods and Goddesses. All of them are good. Each represents the highest moral standard conceivable by the poet.

Not only is there no moral defect, but there is no aesthetic defect either, in the Vedic Deities. No Vedic God or Goddess is deformed or decrepit. All are beautiful and noble.

Here we find the secret of the identification of one Deity with another. In form the Deities are many, but in spirit they are one. This is the basis of Henotheism as a religious cult.

THE CRISIS IN MODERN INDIAN CULTURE

BY DR. NANDALAL CHATTERJI, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT.

Two divergent sentiments dominate the cultural outlook of Modern India. One is represented by Rabindranath Tagore according to whom Indian culture is at bottom the complicated history of racial harmonization. According to him, the problem of Indian culture is in fact the problem of the world culture in miniature. The India that Tagore envisaged is one which cannot be restricted by the fetters of nationalism and isolation. This India is said to be marching in quest of a high ideal of universal brotherhood, which shall be for the gain of all humanity. Tagore says,

> This new India belongs to humanity. What right have we to say who shall and who shall not find a place therein? Who is this 'we'? Bengali, Marathi or Punjabi, Hindu or Mussalman? Only the larger 'we' in whom all these—Hindu, Moslem and Englishman, and whosoever else there be—may eventually unite shall have the right to dictate who is to remain and who is to leave.

Evidently, the poet sought the root principle of human culture in synthesis and harmony, for he believed that this principle of synthesis has been inherent in the history of India throughout the past centuries.

The other school of thought is represented by the ardent nationalist who shuns the influence of the materialist civilization of the West, and strives for the self-expression of India's own spiritual genius. The religious reform movements that have developed in India since the last century form the seed-ground of this intensely patriotic conception of Indian culture. This school believes that Western scholars have so far misunderstood the spiritual culture of India, for there is a fundamental difference of outlook on culture between the Indian mind and the Western mind. To the Western mind a fixed intellectual belief is the most important element of a culture; but to the Indian mind the spirit matters, not the dogma. The Indian thinker believes that all the highest eternal verities are truths of the spirit. That is the idea which distinguishes the Indianness of Indian culture. In its totality it has been from the ancient times a unifying system of cultural values. It is this feeling for Indianization which at the present day is fully conscious of itself, which revitalizes and unifies the diverse movements current in India in all spheres of cultural activity—literature, painting, music, dance, architecture, philosophy and religion. These cultural movements might appear at first sight to be unrelated to one another, yet it has to be admitted that they all seek to realize the soul of the people. Jointly, they represent the cultural awakening of Modern India, and their common motive force is the spirit of nationality or *Swadeshism*.

Having indicated in brief the two standpoints regarding Indian culture, let me pass on to the crisis which faces the Indian culture

of today. The products of English education in India in their first flush of enthusiasm for Western culture paid almost fetish worship to all that was supposed to be best therein, Modern India began by imitating, and the craze for mere imitation assumed almost ludicrous proportions. It is against this foolish craze for imitation that poets and writers like Sayyid Akbar Husain Akbar in Urdu and D. L. Roy in Bengali poured forth their caustic satire. The following lines from Akbar are an illustration in point:

> What though thou wearest coat and trousers,
> Livest in a Bungalow, hast soap and articles of Western toilet?
> Let me just ask thee this question, O man of Hind;
> Hast thou in thy veins perchance a drop of European blood?

Similarly, D. L. Roy ridiculed the so-called 'Babu' who represents this hybrid type in the following comic song:

> We are neither fish nor flesh;
> We are curious commodities, human oddities, denominated 'Baboos'.
> We are a beautiful muddle, a queer amalgam of *Sasadhar*, Huxley and goose.

The reaction against this *Babuism* in Indian culture has brought in its train complications of another variety. It has, for example, led to an aggressive Hindu or Muslim revivalist tendency which has deeply embittered the political life of India. In general standards of culture there seems to be growing up a feeling in certain quarters in favour of Hindu or Muslim ways, manners and ideals of culture. The ultimate tendency of this separatist feeling is to cut up India into sections, political as well as cultural. This attitude of mind of a section of Hindus and Muslims today shows the danger that Indian culture will have to face, if it is to survive as an organic unity.

The keynote of ancient Indian culture was its unifying tendency. The Aryan culture, despite its aggressive tone and temperament, quickly assimilated the culture of other peoples belonging to this great land. This cultural assimilation covered long centuries of our national history. Out of this tangled web of bewildering diversities, the organic unity of Brahmanic culture came into existence. In fact, Brahmanism itself was a principle of cultural union and synthesis. It easily absorbed into itself other speculative systems of culture such as Buddhism and Jainism. This socio-religious system was based on the assumption of a unity of an organic cultural unit.

The history of the middle ages in India fully illustrates this process of synthesis and there never occurred any violent clash of cultures. At times some priest-ridden Sultan may have allowed religious persecution or temple-breaking, but this was more an exhibition of individual puritanism than a clash between two peoples or cultures. There was no wide-spread communal antagonism even in the worst days of Muslim rule because of cultural interchange and fusion. Living side by side in the same country, the communities easily evolved a common platform in all spheres of cultural activity. Even in the religious sphere there was some interaction and inter-borrowing.

This process of synthesis not only saved the organic unity of Indian culture, but promoted the assimilation and union of the different races that made India their homeland. In all departments of national culture —science, philosophy, art, literature and religion—there was an exchange of ideas which provided an enduring meeting ground between the Hindus and the Muslims. In short, culturally, India was one and indivisible even during Muslim rule.

Under the impact of purely political forces, opinion has now swung to another extreme in some quarters. The communal antagonism of today has led to doubts as to the integrity and unity of Indian culture itself. It is even suggested that Hindus and Muslims belong to two mutually incompatible cultures and that the ideals which underlie these cultures are a direct negation of each other. This sort of reasoning lies at the bottom of the demand for a partition of India. Such a

zealous insistence on cultural isolation or separatism is actually the product of a new sense of nationalism among the Muslims, but this separatist feeling is only a passing phase and is clearly due to the interaction of forces which have no direct bearing on culture.

What is the cause of the present crisis in our national life? It is, I humbly submit, due to the maladjustment of the old and the new conceptions of culture. India's conception of culture is different from that of the West. Culture in India was a spirit that transcended the barriers of race, language and religion. It was therefore an essentially spiritual process. The modern Western conception of culture emphasizes the individuality of man, and leads to strife and isolation in the political sphere. This conception is a product of the Industrial Civilization of the West under the impact of which culture is being starved by an intensely materialist civilization. India has accepted this industrial civilization of the West, yet no attempt has been made to bridge the gulf between her old civilization and that of the West. The struggle between the old and the new civilizations has inevitably produced strife and isolationism in our political life.

The culture of the West emphasizes the individual, and so leads to aggressive nationalism, whereas our ancient civilization emphasized the collective life of a caste or community, and as such led to a balanced and harmonious development of the whole people. That India has come under the influence of the Western civilization cannot be denied, and it is impossible now to shut out that influence. It is a synthesis between the Indian and the Western cultures that will set matters right and establish a neo-Indian culture which may even lead to the betterment of the entire humanity on the basis of world peace and brotherhood of nations.

Those who have begun to despair of India's cultural unity need to be reminded that once there is a harmonization between India's ideal of cultural synthesis and unity and the ideal of individualism that the new industrial civilization of the West has produced, the present-day misunderstandings and rivalries will vanish, and every son and daughter of India will experience a new spiritual pride in the organic unity of Indian civilization. It may not be easy today to analyse all those psychological and spiritual factors that would eventually constitute the cultural synthesis of Modern India, but we have to rely on India's genius for harmonization of cultures to attain the much desired goal of self-expression and self-realization.

If the past of India's cultural heritage were totally wiped out, there would remain nothing but diversities of race, language and creed with no prospect of any cultural harmony. Hence, we must insist on the awakening of a sense of history among our leaders. Indeed, it is this very lack of a sense of history which explains our present inability to grasp the true import of India's cultural past. On the realization of the unity of Indian history alone will depend an enduring cultural understanding among the different communities, without which the future of our motherland is dark indeed! I have no wish to underrate the difficulties that lie ahead, but I do believe that India will eventually adjust her age-old culture to modern conditions of industrialism and nationalism and evolve a synthetic culture which will be India's contribution to world peace and world culture.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

By Swami Vireswarananda

The Ramakrishna movement was initiated by the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna soon after his passing away in 1886. It was inspired by his life and teachings and worked out chiefly by his monastic disciples. Swami Vivekananda, however, gave to this movement a more practical shape in 1897 on his return from the West.

Sri Ramakrishna (1836-86) was born in a distant village of Bengal; and early in life he became the priest of the Kali temple (temple of the Mother of the Universe) at Dakshineswar, a beautiful spot on the Ganges some four miles north of Calcutta. He had great love for God from his very childhood; and this led him, now that he was placed in favourable environment, to make an intense search for Him. Through mere intense longing to see God and dispassion for things material, he, as it were, laid siege to the citadel of God and took it by storm and attained God-vision. His entire life afterwards was lived in the highest plane of spiritual consciousness.

Sri Ramakrishna had attained God-vision not only through the disciplines prescribed by Hinduism but also through those prescribed by other religions, thereby proving by direct experience that all religions are true paths to God-vision. Such a bold assertion of proof of all religious faiths was the greatest need of the age. It infused new life into religion, and what appeared to be mere superstition so long acquired significance. Through his variegated spiritual experiences he arrived at a synthetic harmony that reconciled all conflicting views of life and religion. To him all beings were little bits of that infinite Godhead; and his love, therefore, was all-inclusive, irrespective of class, creed, race or nationality. Today this great soul is worshipped in India and abroad as a spiritual luminary of the first magnitude like the great saviours of the past.

The Ramakrishna Order

During the last few years of Sri Ramakrishna's life many sincere and yearning souls had come to him attracted by his spirituality. With great care and love he trained these disciples, a good number of whom later embraced the monastic life, true to the spirit of renunciation the great Master had infused in them. Foremost amongst them was Swami Vivekananda. After the passing away of the Master the Swami travelled all over India leading the life of an itinerant monk; and in his travels he saw with his own eyes the miserable plight of his motherland steeped in squalor, poverty, and ignorance. He was filled with a fervour to uplift his motherland; and with this object in view he crossed the seas and went to the United States of America. There he represented Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. His interpretation of Hinduism impressed enlightened Americans of various walks of life, and all earnest seekers of Truth were drawn to him. For four years he preached the eternal truths of the Vedanta in U. S. A. and Europe, which the Westerners were sorely in need of. And these years of his life in the West gave him an opportunity to study the good and weak points in the Western nations; and by comparison and contrast with his own motherland he realized the greatness of India in many fundamental things. But he had also realized that there was much superstition, poverty, and ignorance in this country.

On his return from the West the Swami formulated for the monks of the Ramakrishna Order the true significance of the monk's life in one pithy sentence, 'For one's own liberation and for the good of the world.' He ad-

monished them to give up the selfish idea of leading the life of a recluse and dedicate themselves to the service of others, to see God in the sick, the poor, the ignorant and render service, rather worship, to this God in man. With this angle of vision he asked them to distribute spiritual, intellectual, and material food according to the needs of the sufferer. The stress was on God-realization. Such a *sâdhanâ* or spiritual practice was presented as on a par with the traditional disciplines. Social service was, as it were, a by-product of this divine worship. The Swami's message, therefore, cannot be evaluated in terms of philanthropy or social service, for fundamentally it is a spiritual one. This service to man, seeing the God in him, is the Swami's greatest gift to the modern world of strife, competition, and war.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

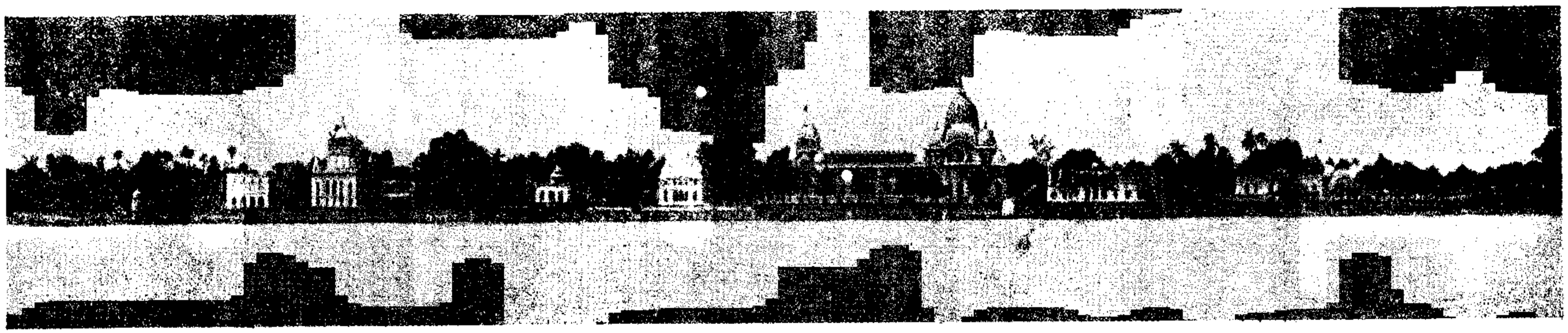
On May 1, 1897 Swami Vivekananda had established an association called the Ramakrishna Mission Association to unite the lay and monastic followers of the Master in a common organized effort for the service of humanity. After the starting of the Belur Math in 1899 this association ceased to function as an independent organization, and the Math itself carried on the preaching, educational and philanthropic activities. With the extension of the activities it was found necessary to have a separate organization for better facilities and efficient management and for giving a legal status. So in 1909, a society under the name of the Ramakrishna Mission was registered under Act XXI of 1860. The management is vested in a Governing Body who are also the Trustees of the Belur monastery. This Governing Body is responsible to the Association consisting of lay and monastic members. Everyone who has full sympathy for the objects of the Mission and is prepared to accept all religions as paths to God and to live in peace and fellowship with the followers of all religions, is eligible as a member of the Mission. The Mission membership today includes men and women of various religious faiths and nationalities. The branch centres of the Mission spread all over India and abroad are under the control of the Governing Body though often placed under the management of local committees most of whose members and office-bearers are public men of the place. The principal workers of the Mission are the monastic members of the Ramakrishna Order. They are helped by local friends and admirers. The activities of the Mission, which entail enormous expenditure,—in 1944 it was about 30 lakhs for its permanent activities alone—are maintained by subscriptions and donations from the general public. Funds earmarked for any purpose are spent for that particular purpose; and funds of the branches are exclusively used for the welfare of such institutions and promotion of their respective objects. The branches and headquarters publish reports of their activities and audited statements of their accounts by certified auditors nominated by the Association at their General Meeting. The Mission renders service irrespective of caste, creed, colour or position.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATHS

These are monasteries devoted to religious study, worship, meditation, and preaching. They, like the Mission centres, are scattered all over India and abroad. The monks of the Ramakrishna Order get their spiritual training in these monasteries. The Ramakrishna Maths affiliated to the Belur Math, started by Swami Vivekananda in 1899, are under the control of the Board of Trustees of the Belur Math with its headquarters at the latter place. All the Maths have temples or chapels where the presiding deity is Sri Ramakrishna. These Maths are financed by friends and devotees unlike the Mission centres, which draw their funds from the general public.

The above distinction between the Math and the Mission proper is only a technical one; and the two sister institutions are by no means water-tight compartments, being placed as they are under the management of the same group of monks as the Trustees and Governing Body members respectively of the two institutions. There are again many

SRI RAMAKRISHNA TEMPLE



THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION, BELUR
(VIEW FROM THE GANGES)

centres which are combined Math and Mission centres and again there are purely Math centres carrying on activities of the kind undertaken by the Mission, as is the case with all Math centres in the Indian States, where the Mission as a registered body is not recognized by the local law. For these reasons it is very difficult to review their activities independently.

The activities of the Math and Mission in India can be broadly divided into three groups: (a) Spiritual and Cultural, (b) Educational, and (c) Philanthropic.

SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

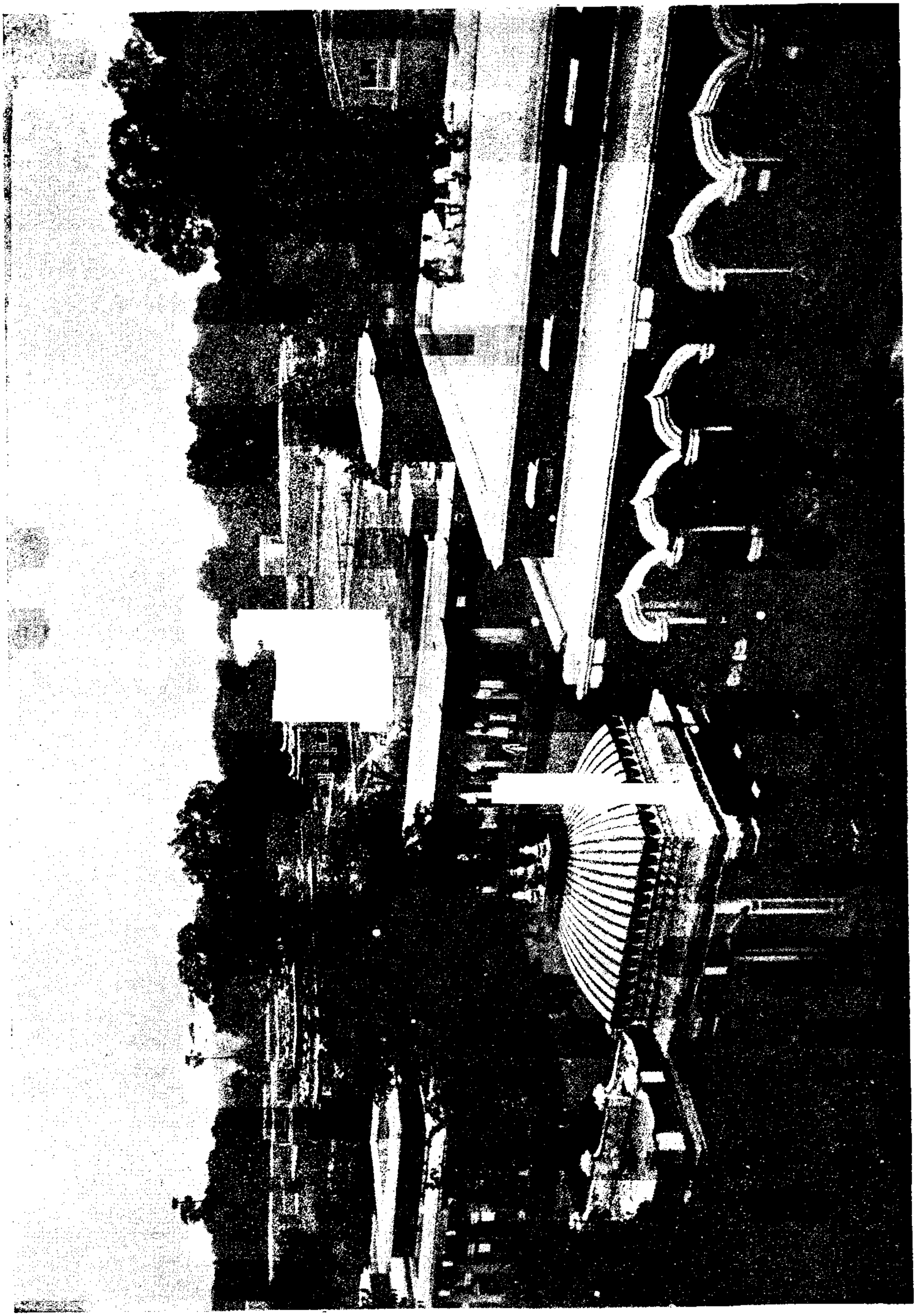
The Math and Mission centres, specially the former, spread the spiritual teachings and cultural ideals as illustrated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. This is done through public lectures and classes, birth-day celebrations of the Master and other great Incarnations and Prophets, celebration of Hindu festivities like the Durgâ Pujâ, etc., running of reading rooms and public libraries and by the publication of religious literature and magazines. Some of the centres have published a good amount of literature in various provincial languages besides English on the life and teachings of the Master and his disciples as also translations of standard Sanskrit works on philosophy and religion. Seven religious magazines are conducted, three in English and four in different Indian languages.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Education is not to be merely informative or practical and useful. The development of intellectual capacity alone will lead us nowhere. People who are all intellect and nothing else, may not be quite welcome members of any society, for without moral control such an intellect may be a danger to society. Nor can mere bread-winning be the ultimate aim of all education. Education to be worth its name must help one to build character and to be a good citizen doing one's duty by one's fellowmen. 'Education', as Swami Vivekananda put it, 'is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.' To attain this goal of education, living with the Guru (teacher) as of old is quite essential. So, many of the Mission educational institutions are residential or partly so, and religious instruction forms an important feature in all. In addition to the college and school curricula, vocational training in various arts and crafts like cane-work, carpentry, weaving, leather-work, etc., is given to the students in most of these institutions, specially in the residential ones. Sports and physical training are encouraged. In short, an attempt is made to help the students manifest the perfection already in them by making the environments suitable for building a healthy body, intellect, and mind.

In the education of girls, while all these ideals are stressed, particular care is taken to see that they imbibe all that is best in the Indian womanhood of the past as seen in characters like Sita, Savitri, Mira Bai, and others. Fine arts, domestic hygiene, cooking, etc., form a part of their education.

In 1944 the Math and Mission conducted in all one Residential College, 26 Secondary or High Schools, 4 of them being residential ones, 11 Middle English Schools, 66 Primary Schools, 17 Night Schools, 7 Industrial Schools, 1 Vedanta College, 3 Sanskrit Schools, and 40 Students' Homes. In all there were 19,076 students in these institutions, of which 5,723 were girls. Of these, 3 High Schools were entirely for girls, viz. the Sarada Vidyalaya, Madras, the Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, and the Sarada Siksha-Mandir, Sarisha, 24-Pergs., the strength on the rolls being 1,165, 500 and 184 respectively. Education in the Nivedita Girls' School was free. In other schools also a large number of students got free or part free studentships. Most of the industrial schools also gave free education, boarding and lodging. Of the 40 Students' Homes, excepting 3, all the rest gave free board and lodging to the students and their total number exceeded 1,200 in 1944. A large orphanage was started in 1944 at Rahara near Calcutta which had a strength of 122 boys at the end of the year, most of them being orphans of the recent famine in Bengal.



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES

Activities in this line are either permanent ones, or of a temporary nature. Under the first category come Sevashramas (hospitals), Dispensaries, Invalid Homes, Widows' Homes, etc. Under the second category come all temporary relief works which are launched now and then whenever there are famines, floods, fires, earthquakes or outbreak of epidemics like cholera, smallpox, plague, etc. On such occasions every monk who can possibly be released from his ordinary duties is moved to the scene of the catastrophe for rendering service to suffering humanity. The hospitals and dispensaries are called Sevashramas or Homes of Service. A good number of them are located in places of pilgrimage like Benares, Brindavan, Hardwar, etc., in the interior of the Himalayas and in distant villages. In large towns such dispensaries render service to the poorer section of the people.

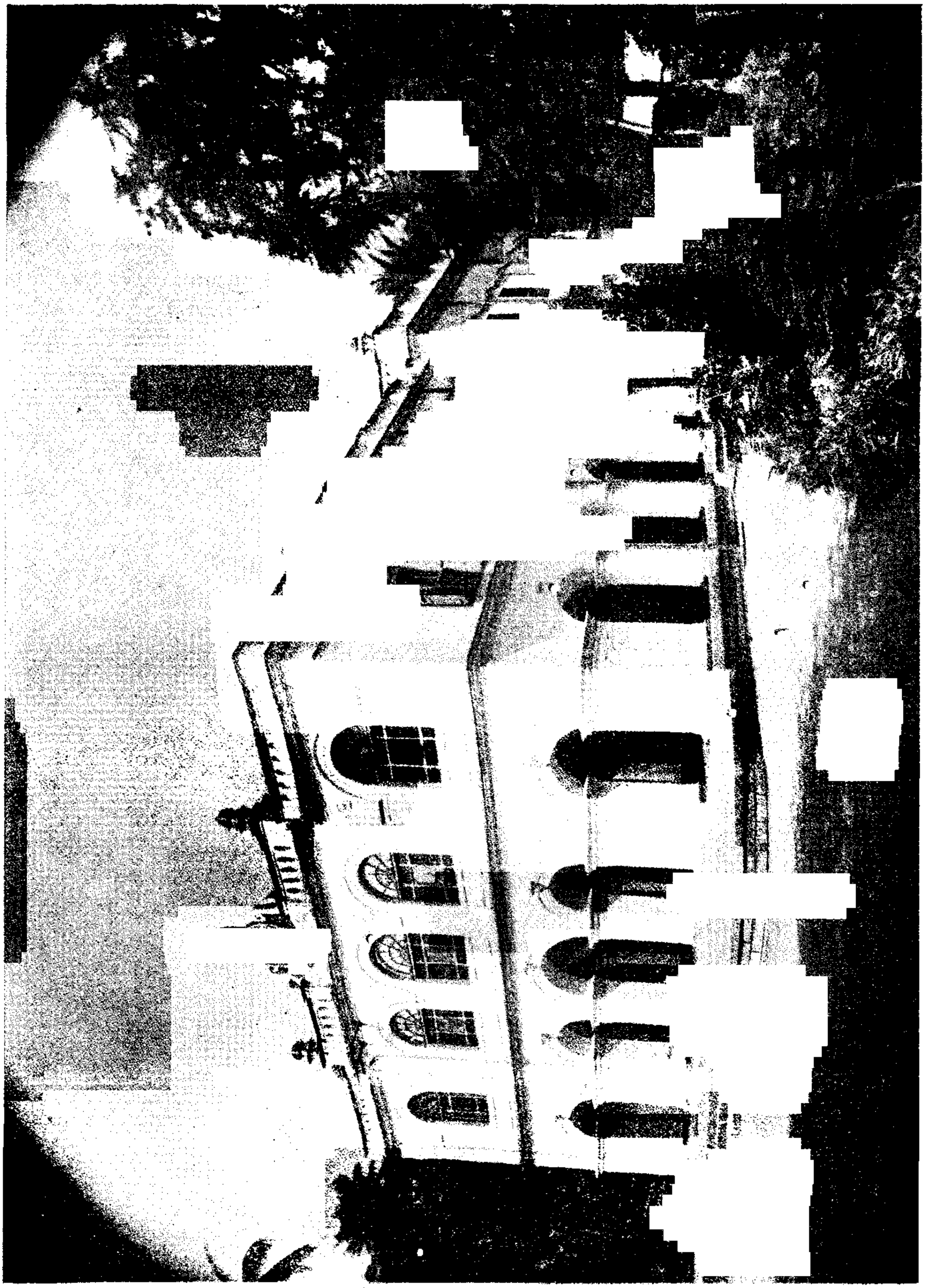
In 1944 there were 8 general hospitals and 2 maternity hospitals with a total of 506 beds. The total number of indoor cases was over 10,000 and the surgical cases over 4,500. There were 63 outdoor dispensaries including the T.B. Clinic at Delhi and the Eye Clinic at Karachi, the total number of patients treated being 16,04,985. Homoeopathic, Ayurvedic and Allopathic systems of treatment are adopted according to the needs of the patients.

Of the temporary relief works, the most recent one which is just closed is the Distress Relief work that was carried on in Bengal and North Travancore. The Bengal Distress Relief work was started in June 1943 and lasted till March 1945. At its peak it covered through its 75 relief centres 1,169 villages and 22 towns, spread over 19 districts, the number of weekly recipients being 1,28,972. Free doles of rice mostly and other food-grains, cloths, blankets, banians, frocks, *châddars* (cotton wrappers), etc., were distributed among the famine-stricken people. Rice and other food-grains were also distributed at cheap rates. Free kitchens and milk canteens were opened in several places. In 1944 alone medical relief among the distressed people was administered to 3,35,760 people suffering from malaria and other diseases; and 9,01,129 patients, nursing mothers, and children were helped with special diet like milk, sugar, barley, and multivitamins. Test relief work of various kinds like paper-making, cane-work, smithy, weaving, etc., was organized to reinstate craftsmen who were thrown out of employment during the famine. Works of public utility were started to give work to the able-bodied unemployed. The total money value of the work done in this connection is more than rupees 25 lakhs, exclusive of the free personal services of monks and volunteers.

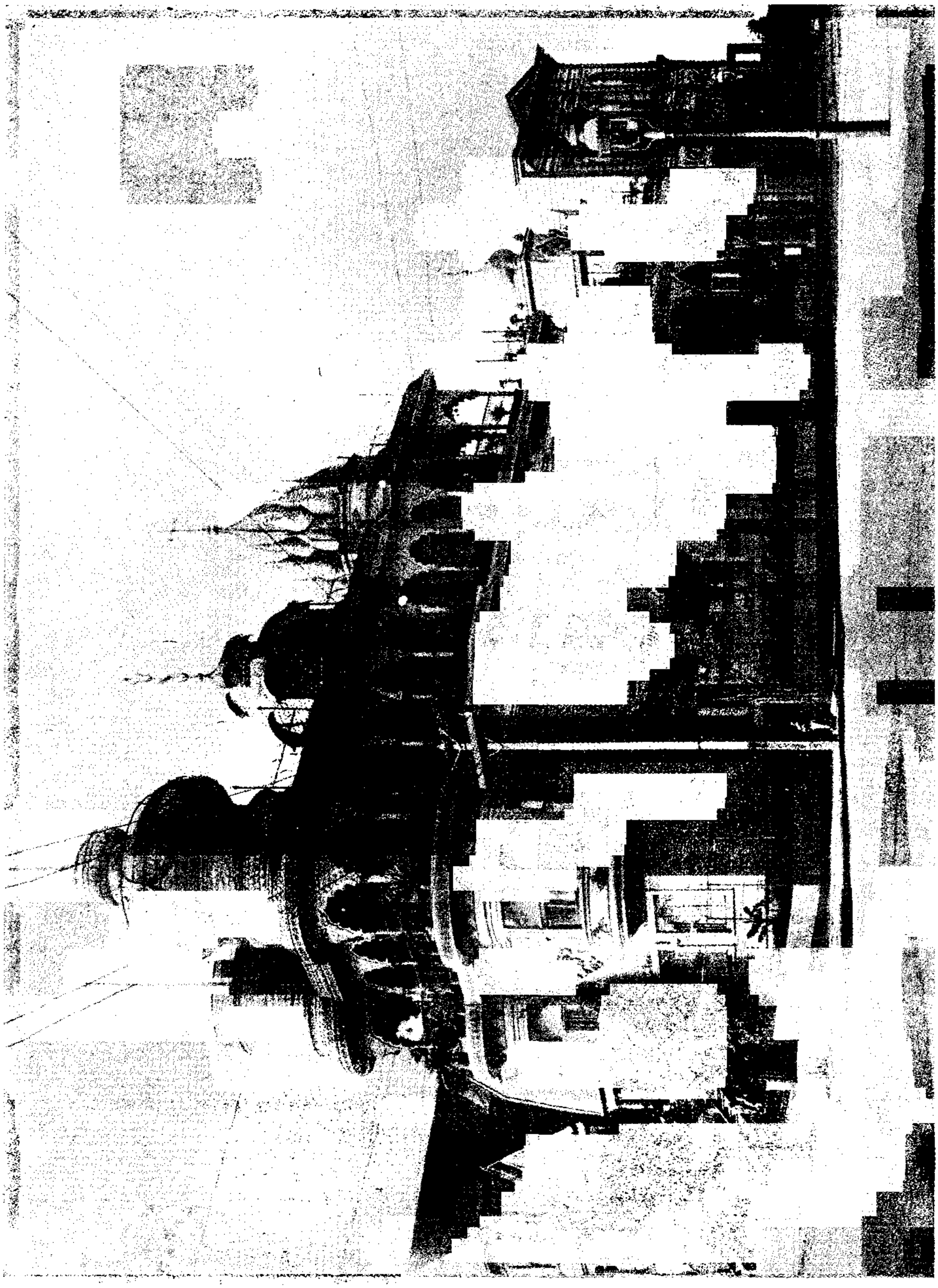
FOREIGN WORK

There are a good number of centres in North and South America, Europe, and the British colonies, all under the spiritual leadership of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order. These monks are sent to foreign lands at the invitation of the local students of Vedanta and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Through lectures, classes, and interviews, the Swamis preach the fundamentals and harmony of religions as taught by Sri Ramakrishna. They lay stress on the universal teachings of the Vedanta,—the divine nature of man, and the oneness of the universe. They do not attempt at converting people to the Hindu faith. There are altogether 16 centres in foreign lands, 10 in U.S.A. and one each in Argentine, England, France, Fiji, and Mauritius.

At the end of 1944 there were 67 Mission centres and 65 Math centres and 11 sub-centres conducting 459 permanent activities of various types, of which 334 belonged to the Mission proper.



RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION, MADRAS



THE VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO, U.S.A.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

SISTER CHRISTINE was a prominent disciple of Swami Vivekananda—'almost the very first to understand and live the message he preached in America.' She passed away in 1930. *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* was found amongst her papers.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA is the general secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission. He was for a time president of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.

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A WORD OF APOLOGY

This is a war-time production. We were handicapped with various restrictions, and had to struggle against many difficulties—expected and unexpected. As a result, we very much regret, we could not fully carry out our plan with regard to this Golden Jubilee Number. But it will serve as a memento of the world-wide conflagration. And we have this much satisfaction that the *Prabuddha Bharata* did not fail to voice forth the ideal of humanity, even when the whole world seemed to be breaking to pieces.

For want of sufficient space we had to cut down the articles of many writers, and to crowd out those of others. To all of them we offer our sincere apology. In this connection we offer our grateful thanks to all who have helped us with ready assistance in bringing out this volume.—*Ed. P. B.*

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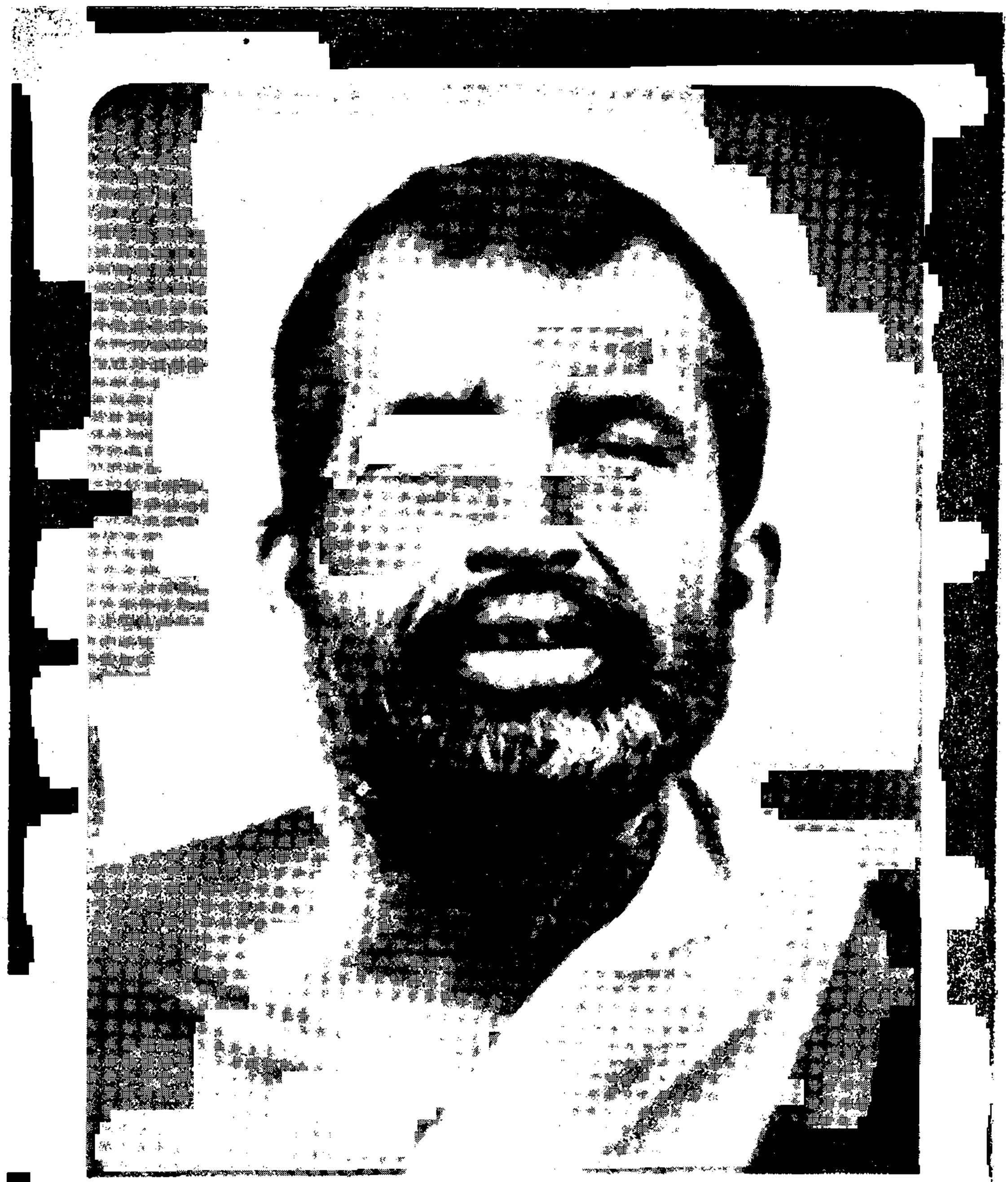

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI VIRAJANANDA

President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission

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The first three Presidents were also editors of *Prabuddha Bharata.*

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(1906-1913)

SWAMI PRAJNANANDA
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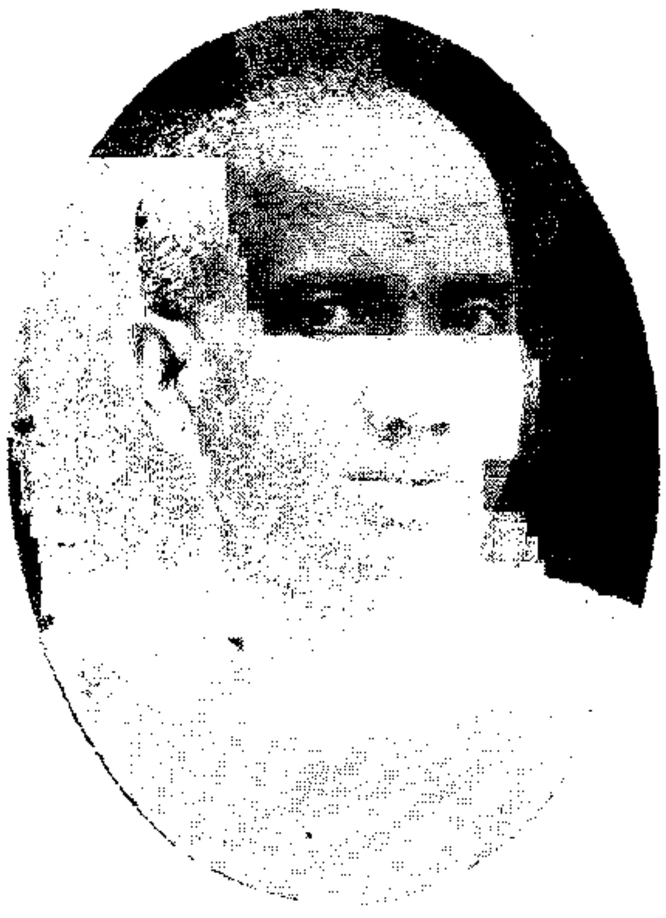

SWAMI VIPULANANDA
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SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA
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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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Abanindranath Tagore

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