PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LV — *JULY 1950* — No. 7

"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।"

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

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON : DECEMBER 1936

As the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Vijnanananda visited Rangoon in December 1936 and stayed at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama for a week. A large number of devotees and friends living in Rangoon and other parts of Burma came to meet the Swami and seek the benefit of his spiritual teachings and instructions. The Swami, as usual, was free with all like a child and spoke inspiring words to those who approached him with their spiritual problems.

Talking of renunciation, the Swami observed: 'God is indeed infinitely greater than all the things of this world held so dear by man. Attaining Him, nothing more remains to be attained. Rightly has it been said in the *Gita,* "That on gaining which one thinks there is no greater gain". Of course it is very difficult to attain Him. Renunciation of any kind is highly conducive to religious life. It increases strength of mind and dispassion for the world. Renunciation is indeed a very good thing.'

Referring to a young Brahmacharin of the Sevashrama, Swami Vijnanananda said, 'It is very good that these young boys have left their hearth and home for God. It is indeed an unfortunate thing if they cannot realize God by the unhelpful Samskaras of their past misdeeds. But it is an undeniable fact that they have renounced their home as well as their nearest and dearest ones for God. This alone has ennobled their lives. One has to struggle hard to renounce one's all. Renunciation purifies and spiritualizes life more than any austerity or work. It does not matter what things a person renounces, but praise be to him who possesses even a little of the grand spirit of renunciation. When a person has got the spirit of renunciation in him, he can renounce all whenever the time becomes ripe for it. There is no hope of achieving anything in religious life without

renunciation. They speak highly of King Janaka. The Master used to say, "Up till now we have heard of one King Janaka only". He must have undergone severe austerities in his previous incarnations. Everybody cannot expect to become like King Janaka overnight, without practising the austerities and the Sadhana he did. It was he alone who could say, "When my city (kingdom) of Mithila is on fire, nothing of mine is really burnt". He was steady in Self-knowledge. Renunciation is the first step to Self-knowledge. It is within the reach of all to renounce something or other.'

Swami Vijnanananda continued: 'One should do his duties properly and regularly in whichever station of life he might be placed. It is always uplifting to keep the mind occupied in some good pursuit. Go on doing your incumbent duties without an inordinate attachment to the results thereof. Truly is it said that the "idle brain is the devil's workshop". Now you are here listening to me. It is also a kind of work. You are not sitting idle but hearing a good talk. Even when one sits quiet, breathing goes on. Breathing, being a function of the lungs is a kind of work. But if one can repeat the name of God silently along with breathing, it is greater work.'

Swami Vijnanananda also spoke in glowing terms of the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, and related how Ratnakara, the robber, was transformed into Rishi Valmiki. In this connection the Swami described how the saint Tulsidas had visions of Sri Rama and of Hanuman as a result of his deep devotion, and how, later on, he composed the *Ramayana* (*Ramacharita Manasa*) in Hindi.

* * *

On another day, the Swami, in the course of conversation, said, 'Do you know where to meditate? The Master used to say, "One should meditate in a quiet corner in a solitary forest, or within the calm mind". What is the meaning of "forest" here?'

The Sadhus seated around replied, 'Here "forest" means a jungle'. The Swami said, 'It is not so. Here "forest" means the mind, which being infested by strong passions, is likened to a forest. This jungle of the mind has to be cleared of all passions and prejudices and made clean and pure and then engaged in meditation on God.'

A devotee asked, 'Why then are the mind and the forest separately mentioned by the Master?'

The Swami, in reply, said, 'There is a difference. The mind here signifies the heart. In meditation one has to concentrate on the effulgence of the adorable deity in the region of the heart. If the chosen deity is a god, then one should meditate on Him as if He is seated on the right side of the heart, and if the chosen deity is a goddess then one should meditate on Her as if She is seated on the left side. Call on Him day and night, remember Him constantly so that the mind may ever remain full of His thoughts. Particularly at the time of death, thoughts of God should overflow the mind. Otherwise, if one breathes his last thinking of elephants and horses, one is likely to be reborn as an elephant or a horse after death. Thinking of a deer at the time of death, Jadabharata was born as a deer in his next birth. Death is very painful. The vital Prana occupies this body from infancy up to the end. Hence, attachment to the body is very strong. For this reason it is extremely painful to give up the body. If we grow intimate with an ordinary object even for a couple of days, the mind gets attached to it, and does not like to part with it. And the life-force has inhabited this mortal frame of flesh and bones from birth. So it is no wonder that one finds it difficult to give up the body at the time of death.'

Addressing a devotee Swami Vijnanananda said, 'All Prarabdha Karma cannot be exhausted without suffering at least a portion of it'.

Devotee: 'Many are seen to undergo no suffering at all.'

The Swami: 'Why do you look upon this gross body as the only form? Besides this there are subtle and causal bodies. How can you escape from sufferings that result from your own past misdeeds, my child? There is no way out of them either here or hereafter. Liberation is possible when all sufferings come to an end, i.e. when all past Karma is worked out.'

To a devotee who requested the Swami to give further talks on spiritual matters, he replied, 'It is no use hearing too many things about God at one time. Listen to a few salient things that satisfy your mind and then put them into practice'. On this occasion, he related the story of Vasishtha cursing his son for instructing a sinner to repeat the name of God thrice for the atonement of his sins while repeating it once would have been more than sufficient. Another devotee expressed genuine earnestness to hear of God from the Swami. To him the Swami said, with great emphasis, 'God is one, without a second. Realize this; nothing more is necessary.'

Swami Vijnanananda gave initiation to more than hundred persons while at Rangoon. One day, addressing the initiated disciples, the Swami said, 'Do you know what the true meaning of initiation is? It is to offer the initiated person at the feet of the Lord even as one offers flowers with sandal-paste. Pray to the Lord at least twice a day, preferably in the morning and evening. Pray to Him thus: "O Lord, I have taken refuge at Thy feet. I am your child. Hold my hand and lead me on along the path of life. O Father, do not ever forget this child of yours. On the last day of my life on earth, when darkness will prevail on all sides, come to me unasked and take me to the other side of life. Do not forsake me on that fateful day."' The Swami uttered these words so sweetly and softly that many were moved to tears.

SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND THE SPIRITUAL IDEAL

By the Editor

Adhyātmajñānanityatvam tatvajñānārthadarśanam
Etajjñānamiti proktamajñānam yadato'nyathā

'Constant application to spiritual knowledge (of the Self), and (deep) insight into the real meaning and object of the knowledge of Truth: this (indeed) is declared to be Knowledge, and all that is (other than and) contrary to it is ignorance.' (*Gita*, XIII. 11).

Experience has taught man that the world is a place where much is to be endured and little to be enjoyed. Whether by accident or design, man's life on earth is beset with a variety of hopes and fears, of achievements and disappointments. Though man is far removed from the amoeba, there is a prepotent desire common to all living beings under the sun, from the unicellular creature to *homo sapiens*, viz. the desire for happiness and the avoidance of its opposite. The process of living, from cradle to grave, is, in fact, a continuous movement towards the attainment of more and more happiness, both here and hereafter. The means employed for the achievement of happiness are more or less external, viz. the body, the senses, and the mind, in and through which everyone seeks satisfaction and fulfilment of one's desires. The natural tendency of man is to dwell on

external objects and look for happiness in the enjoyment of material pleasures. Accordingly all his knowledge and ingenuity are attuned to the lifetime object of amassing worldly riches and gaining powers for domineering over others. But there are some, few and far between, to whom the little joys and sorrows of the phenomenal world of names and forms are of no serious consequence though they are perfectly normal human beings and do not unreasonably deny or shun life's experiences. Through a discriminatory understanding of what is perennial and what ephemeral, they seek everlasting happiness by refusing to come under the sway of passions and prejudices that flesh is subject to. While scientific knowledge has fostered an inordinate craving for greater possession and enjoyment, renunciation and spirituality have bestowed on mankind what is infinitely good, beautiful, and true.

The biologist's explanation of the physical basis of life and the naturalist's theories of the origin and perpetuation of species, which were popular for a time, do not hold water any longer. Even the rank materialist has never felt quite satisfied with the scientific view of his body and mind. How can man, the 'mighty creature' who is the creator of science itself, be persuaded to find solace in the following chemical analysis of 'What a man is made of'? i.e. the chemical contents of a man weighing ten stones are,—fat enough for seven bars of soap, sulphur enough for a packet of sulphur tablets, iron to make a two-inch nail, carbon enough for 9,000 lead pencils, phosphorus enough for making 2,200 match-heads, lime sufficient to whitewash a chicken coop, magnesium for a dose of salts, and water enough to fill a ten-gallon barrel. (From *The Miracle of Life*). It is also said that the total cost of these ingredients that go to make up man will not be more than a few shillings. Such a matter-of-fact assessment of man's worth, though factually precise, cannot but have a depressing and disintegrating influence on human nature. Scientific knowledge which aims at understanding truth by investigating facts as they are and phenomena as they occur, scrupulously refraining from probing into the depths of reality underlying all existence, is confronted with obvious limitations. In their ceaseless struggle for gaining mastery over Nature and under the pretext of sticking to facts only, scientists, till some years ago, behaved no better than dogmatic priests of physical laws. They formulated numerous hypothetical theories, many of them short-lived—the earlier theories being exploded by later ones—, and ignored or ridiculed the essential values of life as 'unscientific' superstitions.

Despite the claim of exactitude and infallibility put forward by scientists for the laws of science, the exceptions to the rule displayed by natural phenomena are numerous. Failing to offer any satisfactory explanations to such 'transgressions' of natural law as the behaviour of water below 4°C. or the rise of sap in plants against gravity or the vagaries of the electron, science dodges round these challenges. Till very recently physicists continued to be dominated by the notion that that which could not be perceived by the physical senses could not exist, and that the test of reality lay in our being able to 'see and touch' the thing under consideration even as a hard piece of solid matter 'lying out there in space'. The so-called 'scientific' attitude of the nineteenth century, essentially materialistic and manifestly heterodox, was not a little responsible for the two devastating world wars within the last half a century. Those responsible for this have done a great disservice to humanity by laying the emphasis wrongly on the over-development of the intellect and inventive genius at the cost of the affective and conative parts of the human mind which were left undeveloped and undisciplined. Breadth of vision was sacrificed for depth of knowledge. By discouraging an abiding faith in the things of the spirit and disregarding the intuitional

approach to reality, this scientific materialism failed to lead humanity to the ultimate goal of science, viz. the development of knowledge for the benefit and enrichment of the life of man.

None can deny the need for scientific investigations or minimize the importance of inventions and discoveries. The contribution of science to the advancement of systematized knowledge of man and Nature and to the betterment of the material aspect of life is immense. The lifelong labours of many a scientist are at the back of most of the modern improvements and works of human civilization. The gifts of science have considerably reduced man's helplessness in the face of Nature's inexorable laws. Science has undoubtedly a great message for mankind provided it is recognized that science is something more than the mere discovery of facts and study of the forces of Nature. The real spirit of science is as noble as the spiritual ideal, and the lofty aims which motivate the pursuit of scientific knowledge are the attainment of freedom and the love of truth. Science, according to an eminent Indian scientist, is a form of specialized discipline. 'a method of controlled observations and experiments recorded with absolute honesty', without fear of punishment or hope of reward. 'It is a confidence that truth can be discovered. It is a faith that truth is worth discovering.' Though science itself is not to blame for the ills that our troubled age is heir to, one would wish the votaries of science had faithfully adhered to honesty of purpose and pursued knowledge for its own sake, or still better, for the joy of making discoveries conducive towards a better state of human affairs.

While theoretical science professes high ideals and raises hopes of leading man to the promised land, applied science has so far belied these expectations. Can it be gainsaid that the deplorable consequences of prostituting scientific knowledge to the nefarious purposes of dictators and militarists are largely responsible for the increasing complexity and insecurity of modern life and for the degradation into which the human spirit has been plunged? Do the scientists, following close on the heels of politicians, pause to think that each new invention of a war-weapon makes human existence more vulnerable, necessitating the invention of a more deterrent weapon, and that the vicious link is endless until the whole of humanity is destroyed? How very encouraging to some and discouraging to others to be told that scientists are making an intensive search for more powerful weapons of offence and defence, and have scored gains in the quest for techniques to neutralize the effectiveness of mass destruction weapons! Naturally one is tempted to ask 'Whither science?' and 'Wherefore this development of scientific research for unholy gains?'

Children, while learning their copy-book maxim 'Knowledge is power', can scarcely imagine that when they grow up they will be called upon to interpret this statement to mean 'the acquisition of scientific knowledge with a view to exercising coercive power over men'. Conditions of modern life are far from helping children acquire the routines of civilized life without experiencing a sense of overwhelming frustration. Modern knowledge, especially psychology and its successor psychoanalysis, has reinforced the possibilities of frustration and self-aggrandizement by failing to develop constructive ways of channelling man's emotional urges and aggressive tendencies. Modern education too has not succeeded in mitigating frustration owing to its woeful lack of purposiveness and human touch. 'No wonder, then, with his mind ravaged in this way, man invents wars and destruction as the only way of escape. from the intolerable sense of frustration and disappointment within.' Truth, beauty, and goodness, and above all spirituality are the essence of life. Self-fulfilment is achieved completely and directly through Self-knowledge and love of God or Divinity Itself. By

denying the soul of man its indispensable spiritual sustenance, the vast mass of secular knowledge, including the humanities, cannot rescue man from becoming a willing slave to the complexes of fear, sex, and hatred.

In India, knowledge (*vidyā*) in general was roughly bifurcated into spiritual (*parā* or *adhyātma*) and secular (*aparā* or *laukika*) branches, both of which were held sacred and harmoniously blended in the process of education. The watertight distinction between religious education and secular education, so common in the West, is unknown to India where there has never been a formal religion, or doctrinaire ethics, or any fear of an intolerant clergy. The Supreme Wisdom through which man attains to the realization of the Atman (*Brahma-vidyā*) is always considered the highest knowledge *pār excellence*. Through story, dialogue, and every other method of instruction, the Upanishads repeatedly impress upon us the inability of the impure and unsubdued finite senses to realize the Knowledge of the Infinite Brahman. And it is through the spiritual awareness of the inherent divinity of the soul and oneness of all existence that man reaches ultimate perfection. Realizing Brahman one verily becomes Brahman (*Brahma veda Brahmaiva bhavati*). Whereas scientific knowledge of finite material entities secures for man a sort of power over Nature, spiritual knowledge of the Infinite Self brings man face to face with Reality. And such a person gains supreme mastery over not only external nature but also internal nature and all the worlds, visible and invisible.

There is no doubt that the common man's interest in the physical sciences is primarily due to their technical applications in the field of everyday life. He is concerned more with the finished product of the factory than with the patient, devoted research work of the scientist, and is often unable to understand that mere love of truth and not personal gain or public approbation can be the motive of such scientific research. It is not the methods or conclusions of science that are at fault but the guiding spirit with which those conclusions are given practical shape under the sanction of scientific authority. The civilization of the West is a typical product of the age of science and technology. In a rapidly changing world, advancing at an ever increasing rate of evolution and application of scientific and technical knowledge, none but those who are obstinately blind to facts can fail to recognize the necessity and importance of science to human life. But instead of playing the humble role set for it even by its great pioneers and leaders, science, in modern times, is gradually occupying a dominating place in the general scheme of things human, crowding out the essential spiritual values. The study of scientific knowledge without the spiritual ideal will invariably engender a lop-sided psychical growth of the individual and a kind of mass neurosis.

Some protagonists of science who exhibit an anti-religious bias argue that science is ethically neutral and, as such, has nothing to say about what is right and what is wrong. Consequently, they hold that science cannot be made responsible for the destruction and devastation resulting from the doings of man who, at the dictate of his animal passion, is out to misapply science and the truths available to science. Furthermore, they assert that being a scientist implies being 'scientifically' honest, not because of any religious beliefs but because 'it is part and parcel of the scientific profession'. Quite so. Scientists who work at top speed in the name of advancement of science and succeed in producing on a large scale 'secret weapons' which cannot be used otherwise than for destruction of life and property, can well choose to remain 'neutral' and unconcerned regarding the ignoble use which those weapons are put to. They may escape being accused as war-mongers by putting the engines of destruction into the hands of others and leaving it to them to do the 'dirty job'.

But it does not absolve them from the obligation to ensure that their inventions and discoveries are not meant exclusively for destructive purposes only. Science, as every other branch of human knowledge, has a moral responsibility to better man materially, culturally, and spiritually. The advancement of science will defeat its purpose if it does not, simultaneously and progressively, carry forward man as a whole to the heights of civilization and reinforce his faith in a positive and purposeful conception of life.

The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* narrates the anecdote of Sanatkumara instructing Narada in the Supreme Knowledge of Brahman. Narada had studied the different branches of the sciences and arts, but with all that knowledge he knew that he could not overcome grief and delusion which bound men to an ephemeral existence subject to disease, decay, and death. He, therefore, requested Sanatkumara to teach him that knowledge which would permanently liberate him from the shackles of sorrow and suffering and carry him beyond the pale of relative existence. Sanatkumara told Narada that all the sciences and arts the latter had studied were only a name. He taught Narada about Brahman through such symbols as speech (*vāk*), mind (*manas*), desire (*sañkalpa*), mind-stuff (*chitta*), and meditation (*dhyāna*). Through these Narada was finally instructed in That which is Infinite (*Bhūmā*), beyond which there is nothing. According to the Vedanta, all knowledge is inherent in the Atman which is of the essence of existence-knowledge-bliss absolute, and the more we are able to manifest the divinity within the deeper will grow our understanding of man and Nature. True and lasting happiness lies in gaining that Knowledge of the Infinite by knowing which everything else can be known (*yo vai Bhūmā tat sukham, nālpe sukhamasti*).

India, the most advanced country at one time in the past, has undoubtedly been left far behind in the fields of modern science and technology by some of the countries of the West who have accumulated for themselves immense wealth, energy, and power through scientific skill. It is no secret that India's retardation in this respect is due to a variety of extraneous causes conspiring together against her, and we shall not go into these now. However, the myth that her sorry plight is the inevitable consequence of her age-long preoccupation with things spiritual rather than mundane has long been nailed to the counter. But we still come across stray cases of such monstrous ignorance on the part of Western authors.

India was at no time a victim of any world-negating and pessimistic philosophy of life. The Indian mind was always for robust optimism and virile life-affirmation, regulated by an undercurrent of spiritual equanimity. The attainment of Parabrahman-consciousness is the very antithesis of the view of world-worthlessness born out of frustrations and disappointments. All the great teachers of the world, most of all the seers of India, have emphasized that the Kingdom of God has to be sought first, on the achievement of which everything else of this world as well as of all the worlds will be found to have been already attained. In laying down his plan of work among the masses of India, Swami Vivekananda wanted that *anna-dāna* (material help) and secular *vidyā-dāna* (intellectual knowledge and technical education) should be given in a manner leading up to spiritual *jñāna-dāna* (Sādhanas to attain God-realization through renunciation and service). Established firmly in this Supreme Knowledge which forms the fundamental basis of all forms of knowledge, the Sthitaprajña (man of steady wisdom) 'becomes the lord of himself; his movements are unfettered in all the worlds' (*sa svarāṭ bhavati, tasya sarveṣu lokeṣu kāmacāro bhavati*) (*Chhandogya Up.*, VII. 25.2).

Do the wiseacres who swear by scientific dogmas and postulates not think it worth while to turn their sharp analytical minds to the discovery of the noble truths of the unseen

transcendental world? Do they not stop to probe into the meaning and purpose of the teachings of those who are the salt of the earth? 'For, what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Intense cultivation of science over a period of the last two centuries in the West has certainly advanced and strengthened the organizations of society and the State materially, while the individual has perceptibly withered away. Within this short period in the course of history, we find that the largest number of wars have been waged and numerous isms of every type from materialism to anarchy have appeared and disappeared, leaving man ethically and spiritually exhausted. It could not have been otherwise. Science has endowed man with remarkable inventive skill and the mysteries of Nature stand fully revealed to him. Every bit of new knowledge unlocks deeper vaults of further knowledge, and enables man to march on rapidly and gleefully to the conquest of new fields of knowledge. But, alas! he lacks the faith in his ability to utilize his knowledge to good account. The secular knowledge which has placed tremendous power at his disposal has not invested him with self-control or spiritual wisdom without which he is worse off than a child playing with fire. This scientific materialism, clinging to unverified inferences based on a partial and considerably narrow view of truth, has, with sedulous care, attempted to smother the still small voice that wells forth from the depths of man's essential being.

It is a happy augury that the latest conclusions of science go to confirm the findings of the Vedantic seers, viz. the oneness of existence and the Absolute Reality that is immanent and transcendent. The rift between physics and philosophy has considerably narrowed down, if not altogether disappeared. Matter and spirit, though to all appearances they seem to be two distinct things, are really two different forms of one substance, even as different forces in Nature are but the varying manifestations of the One Force. The spiritual value of scientific training has been expressed in unmistakable terms by leaders of science many of whom were deeply religious. In the West, many persons of light and leading have frankly expressed their conviction that mere knowledge of the secular sciences is not enough for the betterment of humankind, and that the individual should have great faith in himself and in God. Psychologists are of firm opinion that all the sciences, wealth, and power in the world cannot save man from a psychic catastrophe which may lead to lunacy or suicide.

Scientific learning bereft of the spiritual ideal is not worth its salt. Science has been struggling for years in its attempt to bring freedom to man, but in vain. No amount of knowledge of the external world has been able to solve the problem of life and death. But the scientist is unwilling to own defeat and seems prepared to wait for a few thousand years more, hoping to get at the ultimate principle which is beyond time, space, and causation, with the help of data conveyed by the finite mind and the senses. Meanwhile, under the shadow of modern scientific civilization, the dignity and individuality of man lies humbled in the dust, and the hopes of a golden age are yielding place to fears of a new dark age. As a result of worshipping the creature instead of the Creator, and propagating the doctrines of struggle for existence, sexual selection, and survival of the fittest, the scientifically advanced West today finds itself in a predicament as if it were seated on the crater of an active volcano.

The end and aim of the Vedanta philosophy is to awaken man to the spiritual awareness of the divinity ever present in him as in all other beings. Faith in God is always accompanied by an infinite faith in oneself. Such awareness and faith make man fearless and the master of his destiny, for even as the present is the result of his past deeds, he can shape the future in accordance with his

present actions. Swami Vivekananda has drawn the pointed attention of his countrymen to the need for combining knowledge and activity with love and renunciation in order to be able to strive for one's own liberation (*mokṣa*) and 'for the good of the many, for the welfare of the many' (*bahu jana hitāya, bahu jana sukhāya*). In the words of the Swami, 'What we want are Western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddhā and faith in one's own self'. The realization of spiritual oneness alone can inspire these qualities. And the regeneration of humanity is dependent upon the practical application and effective implementation of this spiritual oneness in the individual and collective life of man.

THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By Dr. S. C. Chatterjee

Sri Ramakrishna is one of those divine personages whom the world needs for the good of mankind. The history of mankind is a record of the rise and fall, the growth and decay of different cultures and civilizations in different countries of the world through different ages. Any particular age in human history presents certain general problems which bear on the world at large and certain special problems which touch the life of this or that nation and its particular culture and civilization. It does not lie in the powers of an ordinary man with his limited knowledge to throw much light on these problems and help his fellowmen to find their solutions. In the face of such universal and national problems men feel the need of guidance from certain supermen who by virtue of their godlike qualities lead them from darkness to light, from death to life, and from untruth to truth. They are the saviours of mankind, the prophets and incarnations of God on the earth. They come to the world as a new light and a new life, bring to man the message of God, and leave the same behind them for the deliverance of man from sin and suffering.

Sri Ramakrishna as one such divine man has left his message for the good of the world in general and that of India in particular. He was born in Bengal in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this century the world was faced with certain momentous problems and India had her special religious, social, and political problems. On the cultural side, we find a conflict between the materialistic and mechanistic civilizations of the West and the spiritualistic and humanistic civilizations of the East, especially of India. In the history of Western thought, the eighteenth century is regarded as an age of enlightenment. It was no doubt an enlightenment of the human intellect brought about by the development of rationalistic thought and the scientific study of Nature. But its effects on Western life were almost disastrous. For what was gained on the side of man's physical and intellectual life was lost on the moral and spiritual side of it. While there was a large supply of the material comforts and physical amenities of man's life, there was a marked impoverishment and deterioration of his moral and religious life. Faith made room for scepticism, theism for atheism, and morality for expediency. It seems that Western civilization as it stands at present, is a body without a soul.

The contact of the West with the East through the British rule in India had the effect of terribly shaking the foundations of

Indian culture. It is a culture with a moral and spiritual outlook. It looks upon the universe as the manifestation of an eternal and all-pervading spirit and as governed by an eternal moral law. The faith in an eternal moral order—a law that makes for regularity and righteousness and works in the gods, the heavenly bodies, and all living beings—pervades the entire history of India's ancient culture. It may be traced in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, and in almost all the Indian systems of philosophy and religion. Along with this faith we find the belief that the universe is a moral stage for the education of all individual souls in accordance with the moral law of Karma. The law of Karma brings it about that in the moral stage of the universe all living beings get the dress and the part that befit them, and that if they are to rise higher in life in future they must act well in the present. The ultimate end of this process of evolution is man's liberation through moral perfection and spiritual realization. Men are the sons of the Immortal God, and it is their divine destiny to realize God in this or some other life and thereby become absolutely free from all sin and suffering. These fundamental elements of Indian culture viz. faith in God, faith in the unity of gods, men and all other things and beings as manifestations of God, belief in the law of Karma and in man's divine destiny—were subjected to severe adverse criticism by many enlightened Western scholars, educationists, and Christian missionaries. The result was that the younger generation of the Indian people who were imbued with Western thought and culture through the medium of English education in this country lost all faith in their own religion and culture. They became either indifferent and apathetic towards them or discarded them with sneer and contempt. Many of them became converts to some other religion, while others found shelter in some refined and abstract form of Hinduism.

It was at this critical juncture in the history of Indian culture and civilization that Sri Ramakrishna appeared in India and chose as the centre of his religious activities and teachings the garden-temple of Dakshineshwar which was nearest to the then stronghold of English education and Western enlightenment. In his life we find the embodiment of India's eternal religion and culture. It is the eternal Hindu thought and religion (Sanatana Dharma) which became incarnate in him. It is a spiritualistic culture indeed. But it is true to the kindred points of heaven and earth and does not ignore either the material needs and comforts or the spiritual hankering and well-being of man's total life. It recognizes wealth, enjoyment, virtue, and liberation (*artha, kāma, dharma,* and *mokṣa*) as the four ultimate ends of human life and activity. It is a mistake to think that Indian thought and Hindu religion are other-worldly and world-negating. What it does is not to suppress and negate our natural life and its satisfaction, but to emphasize the importance of man's religious life and of spiritual values. What the consequences of an one-sided emphasis on man's animal life and nature are we can very well understand from modern history. If mankind is to be saved from an impending perdition and utter annihilation towards which it is being led by the feverish race for wealth and power among some races and nations, the world's attention should be turned to Indian culture and religion as embodied in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. In them we find a proper adjustment between material and spiritual values and a rational subordination of the lower ends of wealth and enjoyment to the higher ones of virtue and liberation. Kāmini and Kāncha̱na, i.e. sensual enjoyment and wealth, teaches Sri Ramakrishna, are objects which are not to be sought for but shunned by the spiritual aspirant, although an ordinary man of the world should give them a subordinate place in the scheme of his worldly life.

Turning next to the religious history of the world, we find how the human race has been faced with serious problems from time to time. The problems arise out of the conflict of different religions followed by different nations and countries of the world. The conflict of religions is a perpetual source of distrust, hatred, persecution, and oppression among the different races and nations of the world. This is especially the case when religion is made the handmaid of politics, and political leaders use it as a handy tool in their diplomatic game. If any illustration of this truth is wanted one has only to turn his attention to the horrible tales of the most irreligious, nay inhuman, acts of crime committed by the followers of one religion on those of another. And all this is committed in the name of religion in order to serve political ends. It is high time that all men and women in the world should know the truth about Religion and religions. While religions are many, Religion is one. There are many religions in the world because the religious needs of different people are different and require different ways of satisfying them. So long as men are what they are, i.e. different in their taste, talent, and temperament, there must be different religions in the world. But this fact does not in any way contradict the essential unity of different religions. The essence of religion lies in a man's personal experience of God, his recognition of all men as sons of God, the spirit of service to suffering humanity, and the love of God Almighty. These constitute the essence of religion, and in regard to them all religions must agree; otherwise they will not be religion at all. These are two of the many truths inculcated by the Sanatana Dharma or eternal religion of the Hindus. These, again, are the truths which Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated through his intense life of Sadhana and his spiritual realizations, and left as his message to the world torn by conflicting religions and warring creeds. In them lies the remedy for religious malady and fanatical fury. If these truths are learnt and practised in life by the followers of the major faiths in the world, the world may be saved; if not, it is doomed. Let the world's attention be turned to the message of Sri Ramakrishna that the essence of religion lies primarily in man's realization of God and that so many religions are so many paths that lead to the same goal, i.e. God.

Let us now consider what light we get on some social problems from the teachings of Ramakrishna. One of the urgent social problems of Indian life at present is that of the reconstruction of Hindu society in consonance with the ancient tradition on the one hand and the modern conditions of life on the other. That 'the old order changeth to give place to the new' is proverbially true in respect of the social life of man. The same social structure cannot stand when the conditions of life undergo change. This is perhaps the main reason why the social system of the ancient Hindus has now broken down and left us in a virtually chaotic state of social life. There was a time when the social system had a religious basis and sanction. In the Vedic and the Puranic period of Indian history there were only four classes in Hindu society which were arranged in an hierarchy mainly based on the virtues and duties of the members belonging to each class. In course of time, however, these classes hardened into castes determined by birth and were split into innumerable sub-castes. The presence of so many castes and sub-castes in Hindu society has become meaningless to-day and threatens the social solidarity of the Hindus. At present the members of the higher castes are not infrequently found to be wanting in the special qualities and virtues that determine their castes, while the members of any caste can indiscriminately own the duties and responsibilities of any other caste. In view of the actual facts and circumstances of our present-day life, the proper course of social reconstruction would be to re-emphasize the spiritual basis of society wherein the

classes are determined by moral and spiritual gifts and capacities, and where no castes are determined by birth alone, and no disabilities are suffered on the ground of caste and no inhuman treatment of one caste by another is countenanced. In the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, a discerning student may find the basis of a new social system on just lines. All men who approached him for spiritual help and guidance would receive the same kindly treatment and loving care, irrespective of their birth, social status, and earthly possessions. In the light of his knowledge of Brahman, he saw in all men the manifestation of God in different forms and degrees, and in all women the presence of the Divine Mother. All women in the world were to him the living embodiments of the Supreme Deity and, therefore, the fit objects of religious adoration and reverent worship. There were among his direct disciples men belonging to different castes and having different social positions. But he made no distinction among them merely on these grounds. Even men who were outwardly fallen and sinful would receive his affectionate attention, provided they were sincere seekers of truth and devoted sons of God. Just as the sun's rays make no distinction between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, so would his universal love make no difference between man and man simply on the ground of caste, creed, or nationality. The Ramakrishna Order has kept up this tradition of the equality and fraternity of men both inside it and in its relations with the world outside.

The importance of social service for any scheme of social reconstruction cannot be overemphasized. Society is not merely the collective body of all the individuals who are its members. It is an organic whole of which the different sections are the constituent limbs and individual members are the cells. The good of the whole depends on the good of the parts, and *vice versa*. If any of the parts be weakened or diseased, it will adversely affect the whole and throw it out of order. Similarly, any disturbance of the social order as a whole will react unfavourably on the parts and throw them out of joint. Hence in a healthy social organization, the parts must contribute to the good of the whole, and the whole must take care of the parts and conduce to their well-being. Social service is a general name for the various ways in which the members of a society may contribute to the social welfare either individually or collectively. These ways include such things as charity to the poor, relief to the distressed, medical help to the sick, and education to the illiterate.

Social service may be limited in its scope to a particular society or it may be as wide as humanity itself. So also, it may be based on the idea of man's natural equality as in the modern creed of communism. Or it may also be based on the idea of man's divinity as in Hinduism in general and Vedantism in particular. It may be noted here that the idea of man's natural equality is unworkable as a basis of social philosophy. It is not true that all men and women are endowed by nature with the same gifts and capacities, and that they are entitled to the same position in society. All that we are justified in saying is that they have in them the same potentiality and the same urge for development and perfection and that they should be given equal opportunities for self-realization. This follows from the fact that they come from the same source i.e. God. Men and women have in them an irrepressible urge towards unlimited power, knowledge, and happiness, because they are the sons and daughters of God who is infinite existence-consciousness-bliss itself. If this be so, it behoves a person to serve his fellow-beings in all possible ways, not so much because they have a natural right or claim upon him as that it is his sacred duty to serve his God in them. This is the spiritual basis of social service according to the Sanatana Dharma of the Hindus. It is the same idea that once inspired the stirring message of Sri Rama-

krishna to his devoted disciple, Swami Vivekananda. 'Not kindness but service', says he, 'should be the motto of our life in doing good to the poor, for they are the living manifestations of God in the world'. Hinduism has not failed to mould the life and conduct of many a follower of this faith by its inspiring ideal of social service. It has led some of them to accept as 'the highest ideal of man's life neither kingdom, nor heaven, nor liberation but the relief of suffering humanity'.

Natvaham Kāmaye rājyam na svargam nāpunarbhavam,
Kāmaye duḥkhataptānām prāṇināmarttināśanam.

The message of Sri Ramakrishna on social service had a similar effect on the life of Swami Vivekananda, who in one of his inspiring and epoch-making utterances, said: 'May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls—and above all my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship'. It is high time that the message of Sri Ramakrishna was preached and propagated throughout the world, torn by religious and cultural conflicts and besmirched by communal jealousies and fanatical jehads, so that it may bring peace and happiness to war-weary and unhappy mankind.

VEDANTA, THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY

By Swami Sambuddhananda

Vedanta literally means the end or the final peak of knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of the Self. The noblest end of human life is Self-realization. All living beings are constantly in search of it, either consciously or unconsciously. The achievement of this end is identical with the attainment of the acme of all knowledge and bliss.

The true Self is birthless and deathless, immortal, immutable, infinite, and eternal. The paths leading to the realization of the Self are many, nay, infinite in number: they are like innumerable radii leading from the circumference of existence to its centre. But the paths are beset with the thorns of ignorance and inertia and are as difficult to traverse as the razor's edge.

Different people have different conceptions of the Self. Some identify it with the body, some with the vital force, the mind, or the intellect, and some with the primordial insentience, or a mixture of sentience and insentience, or even as a void or a state through or in which all experiences are negated. The Vedantists declare all such persons to be under illusion. According to them, the Self is a supreme state of pure consciousness which underlies but is altogether unlike our bodily, mental, and intellectual experiences, and which is the ultimate, guarantee of the identity of the Self and Brahman, the Supreme Spirit.

The different conceptions of the Self mentioned above are based on the schools of philosophy current at different times in the history of Indian philosophical thought.

The vast mass of untutored men and women (they can hardly be designated a school) equate the Self with the material existence of themselves, their families, and possessions, feeling (rather than thinking) any loss or diminution in that respect as a loss or reduction of what they stand for, i.e. their Self.

The Charvakas or materialists identify the Self with the body, for one's body is even dearer than one's son. The Self so conceived is naturally subject to birth, growth, decay, and death.

A section of the materialists identify the Self with the sense organs, as the body without the activity of the senses would be no better than inert matter, and when one says 'I am blind', the reference is to such sense activity.

A more advanced section of the materialists rise to the conception of Prana or the vital force, and hold that that is the real Self, for sense organs cease to function when bereft of the vital force.

Another school regard the mind as the Self. According to it the functioning of the vital force is always backed by the mind as the directing agent.

A certain school of Buddhists regard Buddhi or the intellect as the Self; they regard all experience as grounded on a stream of ideas which are thus the fundamental or essential entity.

Schools such as the Prabhakaras and the Tarkikas hold that the Self is to be equated with the profound insentience that prevails in the soundest sleep; this state, according to them, is the ultimate seed-bed for the germination or emergence of all experience.

The Bhattas maintain that as the state of dreamless sleep consists partly of 'unconsciousness' and partly of 'consciousness', the Self is compounded of a mixture of the two.

Another school among the Buddhists are nihilists, believing the true nature of the Self to be Shunya or the ultimate void which is free from content as dreamless sleep.

The Vedantists declare all these schools to be mistaken. According to them, these schools have missed the fact that all experience is lit up or illumined by pure consciousness which gives the man of realization the quintessential intuition that he is Brahman; for even the person who says that the Self is void must need consciousness to realize it. The very consciousness, the Vedantists maintain, by which the Self is negated, is Atman. The Vedantists also rely on scriptural passages wherein 'It' is characterized as consciousness or pure intelligence bereft of eyes, ears, or nose, of the vital force, the mind, and the intellect. The Self, according to them, has three positive facets or aspects—existence, knowledge and bliss absolute. It is the pure illumination which lights up all experience and objects of experience which, divorced from it, become mere shadowy unsubstantial things.

In all states of normal experience the Self is covered or encased in five different sheaths which have been named Annamaya Kosha (the gross physical sheath), Pranamaya Kosha (the sheath of the vital force), Manomaya Kosha (the sheath of the mind), Vijnanamaya Kosha (the sheath of the intelligence), and Anandamaya Kosha (the sheath of bliss). Each of these is subtler and finer than the one preceding it, and the finer always pervades the grosser sheath. The Self or the Atman, however, is finer than the finest of all the sheaths and is altogether different in its nature from all of them. Its illumination manifests and shines forth more brightly and intensely through the finer sheaths than through the grosser ones. The true nature of the Atman is revealed only when one overcomes the ignorance which makes a person identify himself with one or more of the sheaths (Koshas). Of these Koshas, the Sthula Sharira, the gross or physical body, comprises the Annamaya Kosha or the sheath that is the product of food; the Sukshma Sharira, the subtle body, comprises the three Koshas, Pranamaya, Manomaya, and Vijnanamaya; while the Kārana Sharira, the causal body, comprises the Anandamaya Kosha or the blissful sheath.

This ignorance (Avidya or Maya) is by nature very persistent. It persists as long as creation lasts through the different stages called Srishti (projection), Sthiti (preservation), and Pralaya (dissolution). It has

two powers—that of veiling (Āvarana Shakti) and projection (Vikshepa Shakti). The veiling aspect of ignorance is negative while the projecting aspect is positive and active. For instance, a rope lying on the road is mistaken for a snake. Ignorance is essentially an illusion or unsubstantial thing though it covers up and conceals Sachchidananda (existence, knowledge and bliss) even as a cloud covers up the sun which is many million times bigger and more powerful than the cloud. But however veiled or concealed by Maya, the true nature of the Self ever remains the same, as effulgent as before.

Three steps have been prescribed by the Vedanta for the realization of the Supreme Knowledge, viz. Shravana or listening to the instructions of the qualified teacher, Manana or reflection on such instructions and attaining true conviction as to the reality of the Self; and Nidhidhyasana or realization of the true nature of the Self by patient, constant and persistent practice. It is only unremitting practice of these methods that can bring to man the bliss of Samadhi or ultimate absorption in Brahman. As a very necessary and important aid to such practice, renunciation has been enjoined by all spiritual teachers. The greatest renunciation is the sacrifice of one's ego, for the true nature of the Self can never be revealed so long as the ego and the consciousness of it persist.

THE KUMBHA-MELA AT HARDWAR

By A Sannyasin

It was the 13th of April, the day of the third and last *snān* (bath) of the Purna Kumbha Fair at Hardwar. The day was just breaking in the eastern sky with beautiful colours when I found myself at the brink of Brahmakund, almost lost in a religious crowd of thousands. Hardwar in the mornings seemed to seethe in the lap of hills, caressed by natural scenery and the Ganga which wound her blue beautiful ribbon round Hardwar. Everything about Hardwar was refreshing, even spiritual, and near Brahmakund where the Ganga is considered the holiest one could feel the surge of a spiritual current in the air. At the spot known as Brahmakund, the Ganga is made to flow to suit man's tastes. The water is just hip-deep and the current is not strong. Well-laid out granite steps on both sides make descent into the waters easy and give the Ganga the appearance of an improvised lake. Jutting out into midstream is a small, beautiful temple devoted to Mother Ganga to which is attached a chain of temples of other gods and goddesses. Brahmakund is thus a veritable spot of beauty and holiness. A dip in the waters at Brahmakund on occasions like the Purna Kumbha Fair, the Hindus believe, bestows on them high religious merit, even immortality.

Tradition has it that King Bhagiratha of the Ikshvāku line, the royal house which Sri Rama belongs to, brought down the Ganga from the *jata* (matted locks) of Shiva and it was at Brahmakund that the Ganga first touched the earth. The story goes that more than a million ancestors of King Bhagiratha were reduced to ashes by a Rishi's curse in the nether world, and it was only the waters of the Ganga that could bring them back to life. King Bhagiratha, by the severest austerity for years, propitiated Lord Shiva, and the Ganga who came down to earth at last to bless the dead

princes with life as also to bestow sacredness on coming generations. Here again, according to tradition, fell a few drops from the Amrita-Kumbha (the Vessel of Ambrosia) when Jayanta, the representative of the gods, carried it off from the Asuras after the churning of the ocean by the Devas and Asuras. It was at Brahmakund that King Shveta did severe Tapas to propitiate Brahma, the first progenitor who blessed him saying, 'This place will be known after me; and here the trinity Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva reside for ever and here Ganga gives to humanity the benefit of all the holy waters in India'. Not simply for these were those lakhs gathered there at the Brahmakund that morning. It was to participate in that special sacredness that springs to life at Hardwar once in twelve years on the occasion of the Kumbha-Mela. The Hindu astrologers say that when Brihaspati comes into *Kumbha* (Aquarius) and the sun into *Mesha,* (Aries), the occasion is invested with special auspiciousness and such an occasion coming once in twelve years is celebrated at Hardwar as Purna Kumbha-Mela. Thousands of Sadhus of all persuasions and denominations, as also hundreds of thousands of devotees assemble from all parts of India to take their bath and to share in the sacredness. Reliable sources gave out that nineteen lakhs came to witness the Mela.

Purna Kumbha-Melas are also held once in twelve years at three other holy places of India, namely, Prayag (Allahabad), Ujjain, and Nasik on the following occasions: at Prayag when Brihaspati comes into *Vrishaba* (Taurus) and sun into *Makara* (Capricornus); at Ujjain when Brihaspati comes into *Simha* (Leo) and sun into *Mesha* (Aries); and at Nasik when both Brihaspati and sun are in *Karkātaka* (Cancer). The Kumbha-Melas at the four places take place in order at intervals of three years.

That morning, the last day of the Kumbha Fair, I felt myself mentally different from the crowd that enveloped me. When the crowd was attuned to the significance of the Kumbha, what came before my mind's eye was the scene of the Ganga-Avatar (the descent of the Ganges) as pictured by that immortal artist, Ravi Varma. The Lord Hara is standing in his peculiar Yogic pose, his shaggy hair dishevelled, legs wide apart and arms locked behind, rhombussed on a cane, his face turned upward and his eyes fixed. Bhagiratha, on whose request Lord Shiva is bringing down the Ganga, is standing by in a prayerful pose. Parvati, Shiva's consort, is also there, reclining on the Nandi (Shiva's pet-bull and vehicle), with a suspicious smile playing on her lips, not knowing what her husband is up to. And down from the sky glides Ganga, not in torrents, but in a charming feminine form, her head slanting in coy submission to Shiva's command, but her face a bit embarrassed to make her first appearance before her rival, Parvati. It was here at Brahmakund that the Ganga descended and I was so much preoccupied with this picture that I felt alone in the crowd. No wonder, the Ganges at Brahmakund is not addressed by the people as Ganga, but as 'Har-ki-Pyārī', the sweetheart of Hara! India's divinities are at heart sweetly human: Shiva is the all-renouncing ascetic among the gods, the Divine Destroyer. But then he is also the most human and ideal husband of Parvati. Parvati, desirous of getting Shiva as her husband, performed long penance in the Himalayas. When she failed to get him, she came down to the earth and fixed herself to a spot with the determination to die there if she was not blessed with the heart and hand of Shiva. Then we find the great ascetic's heart melts; Shiva makes his appearance and accepts her as his wife. That spot where Parvati did her Tapas and was blessed by Shiva is here at Hardwar, two miles away from Brahmakund, and is known as Bilwakeshwar. Hardwar is studded with holy associations of Shiva and other gods. Two miles down the Ganga from Brahmakund is Dakshaghat, the spot where

Sati (Parvati) unable to bear the insult which her father Daksha meted out to her husband Shiva dropped down dead. What exemplar of chastity Sati is! Her heart stopped to see her husband's insult. And at that spot again, Shiva punished Daksha for his misdemeanour with a final punishment. This Dakshaghat is specially sacred and inspiring to Hindu women, who gathered in their thousands on a Monday morning in the Kumbha season to recapture and relive the chaste life of Sati and to enrich themselves by that spiritual experience. A few miles to the west of Brahmakund is a hill where tradition says Hanuman was born. Then again is the famous Rishikesh, the seat of many Sadhus, nearly twenty-two miles up the Ganga in the Himalayas. Round Rishikesh repose many a spot that declare divine associations with the life of Sri Rama and Lakshmana and the other brothers, as also the Pandava brothers.

The bath in the Brahmakund over, the next great event of the day was the procession of the Sadhus from their respective Akharas to the Brahmakund for the auspicious Kumbha bath. There are nearly ten Akharas in Hardwar and all of them take out processions with all their paraphernalia and splendour. Akharas are Maths belonging to the various orders of Hindu monks, both ancient and modern. There are, for instance, the Niranjani and Nirvani Akharas, which belong to the Puri order of monks. Sri Shankaracharya created the ten orders of monks, the Dashnāmī-Sampradāya of which the Puri is one. The Puris belong to the Joshi Math established by Shankaracharya near Badri in the Himalayas. Then again there are the Udāsi Akharas which belong to the Nanak persuasion. The other Akharas which took out processions on that day where the Juna, which had hundreds of women Sanyasinis, the Barā-Udāsi, the Chhota-Udāsi, the Nirmali, and so on. The Vairagis who are Vaishnavites also took out their procession.

Each Akhara was given specific timings to take out its procession and to return. I was one in the Nirvani procession and we started at 2 p.m. Excepting the guards and the other paraphernalia attached to the Akhara, only monks were allowed in the procession. A strict priority of place for the various units that comprised the procession was kept up and the procession marched in a phalanx of two. First came the mounted guards on horseback, in khaki uniform. Then came elephants carrying on their backs in decorated thrones some important members of the Akhara. The band came next and then the Mandaleeshwars, who are the chief monks of the Akhara. The Mandaleeshwars were moving in cars. Our procession had four of them—Swami Krishnananda Puri, Swami Bhagavatananda Puri, Swami Maheshwarananda Puri, Swami Paramananda Puri. They looked so serene and majestic. Behind the Mandaleeshwars came the 'office-bearers' of the Akhara, young men dressed in spotless yellow, carrying on their shoulders the special colourful insignia of the Akhara, which consisted in long wooden poles with silken tassels at the end, silver-embroidered staffs and some other emblems with the swastika. Next in order came the Nagas, the naked Sadhus, nearly five hundred of them, and behind the Nagas marched other Sanyasins belonging to other orders, say the Ramakrishna Mission. It was a colourful and elevating scene: a three-furlong-long procession moving slowly in august steps along a route of four miles, with thousands of men and women sitting packed on both sides of the route. These people were there for hours, exposed to the hot sun, not knowing hunger or thirst, waiting to have a Darshan of the Sadhus. Often from a thousand throats went up the cry, *'Om namah Parvati pataye Hara Hara' 'Gangā Māyī ki Jai', 'Sanātan Dharma ki Jai', 'Sādhu Sajjanom ki Jai'.*

What had brought these devotees from long distances and what were they asking for? A hunger which food and drink can

never appease was blazing in them and this hunger had brought them to the Mela from great distances, through hardships of travel and through poverty. India's great 'hunger' blazed in them and had impelled them, the hunger for Religion !

It was nearly four-thirty when the procession reached the Brahmakund. The Brahmakund which was a sheet of human heads that morning lay peacefully in lonely grandeur then. It was kept vacant and waiting for the Sadhus and at that time none except the Sadhus of that procession were allowed to take bath. There were thousands of devotees waiting on both the banks of the Ganga to take their dip soon after the Sadhus' touch and the auspiciousness of the hour made the Ganga doubly sacred.

The processionists had a very refreshing plunge in the Brahmakund and were soon on their homeward march by a slightly different route. There again on both sides of the route were assembled large masses of devoted humanity eagerly waiting for the Darshan of the Sadhus after the holy bath. On the road we found coins offered to the Sadhus by the devotees mingling with the dust as though to bring home to the Sadhus the great realization of Sri Ramakrishna that to the Sadhu mud and money are the same.

The third great event of the day was the offering of Ārati to Ganga at the Brahmakund. As the day approaches dusk nearly half of Hardwar gathers on the edge of the Brahmakund to offer and to witness the Ārati to the Ganga. In improvised leaf-saucers flowers are arranged in concentric circles and in the centre is placed a lighted wick. Over the flowing Ganga this is waved a number of times and then it is allowed to float down the river. What an artistic way of offering Ārati to a flowing river-goddess ! And then in a moment the heaving bosom of Ganga is covered with hundreds of such moving lights.

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The Mela moves on and the variegated religious humanity that is Hardwar continues to be gay in the thought of Hara, the God of gods. When the heart and mind of India were wrenched by the communal tragedy and its after-effects, it was a great relief to see a couple of millions gathered together and attuned to one holy thought. Here was proof, if proof is required, that India's heart and soul are in religion, that India can forget all her troubles and think of God. The worst affected provinces after partition are the Punjab and Bengal, and in the crowd at Hardwar I found that the most represented provinces were these two. Are they trying to forget their miseries in the thought of God ? But then, how many can do that ? India has some nerve-centres where from time to time the blood of her religion and spirituality collects in abundance to get transfused through the whole body. Hardwar is such a nerve-centre of India's spirituality and the Kumbha-Mela is an occasion for the transfusion of fresh spiritual blood.

Imagine the coldest of nights in North India and the cruel cold blast blowing. On the eastern side of the Ganga, in the Vairagi colony, were assembled nearly ten thousand Vairagis with no roof over their heads and with no more clothing on their bodies than the sacred ashes and their Kaupins, all attuned to the one thought of Lord Krishna. How easy to say that all these have blinked life's problems, without knowing what a remarkable record of renunciation lies at the back of their lives ! I had occasion to meet a Vairagi and in the course of our talk I found that he was English-educated. Later on, I gathered from a reliable source that that particular Vairagi had been a flight-lieutenant in India's Air Force and had fought in important campaigns. The call of God came to him all of a sudden and he threw everything to the winds and took up the cross of renunciation. How many such stories of steep renunciation lay behind the lives of those Vairagis ? Who knows ?

I was at Hardwar between the second and the third *snāns* of the Kumbha-Mela and

the month was packed with 'varieties of religious experience'. Hardwar appeared an extensive flower-garden where the fragrance of human lives opened by the touch of religion, drawing in hundreds the devotee-bees. Sometimes I visited the Vairagi camps where in every tent the day began very early with worship, prayer, and Bhajans. Then followed exposition of scriptures by a Babaji over a loud-speaker and often the voice of one loudspeaker jammed against that of a second and a third. In the evening the day was rounded off by a sumptuous feast of sweets to all the assembled devotees.

In the Mela grounds on the Rori island to the east of the Ganga, it was a picture slightly different. Something like an exhibition was on, affording all sorts of diversions to the pilgrims. But large spaces were occupied by the numerous religious and socio-religious organizations in India, the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Bharat Sevashram Sangha, the Gaudiya Math, and so on. In all their tents Bhajans and religious lectures drew audiences. There was no end to religious enthusiasm.

Another very interesting and profitable feature of the Mela was the many Bhandaras (feasts) the local Akharas arranged for the Sadhus and pilgrims. Sometimes it was exclusively for the Sadhus and at other times both for Sadhus and devotees, and the number ranged between 2,500 and 3,000. There was no end to the sweets in the feasts. And often when the Bhandara was coming to a close it was a grand sight to see a Sadhu bursting out in musical enthusiasm and entertaining the assembly by a rendering of a stanza from Bhartrihari's *Vairāgya Shataka* (a centum on renunciation) where the vanity of human wishes is dwelt upon.

* * *

This picture of the Kumbha-Mela cannot be complete without a mention of how the Ramakrishna Mission canalized the devotion of a part of the Mela crowd into a correct understanding and appreciation of modern India's spiritual luminaries, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The Mission branch at Kankhal availed of the opportunity to celebrate the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and a good number was drawn to the functions. The most pronounced and refreshing feature of the celebrations was the presence of all the Mandaleeshwars, the top-ranking monks of the Akharas. There was a time when the ocean-crossing and other 'modern' habits of Swami Vivekananda were looked upon as incorrigible heterodoxy by the orthodox Mandaleeshwars. But today in their eyes all those so-called un-Hindu habits found meaning as the aggressive Hinduism of Swami Vivekananda that took America by storm. The Mandaleeshwars, one after another, paid glowing tributes to the 'foreign work' of Swami Vivekananda and his services to Hindu Sanatana Dharma in the West. Some of them even went to the extent of calling him a new Avatara of Hinduism, one who felt the need of irrigating foreign fields with the waters of Hindu thought. Sri Ramakrishna, of course, was to all of them a modern Hindu Rishi.

* * *

The Mela over, I was on a very crowded train that was taking the Mela pilgrims homeward. When the train came to a point from where a last glimpse of Hardwar and Ganga could be had, the women in my compartment were visibly moved: The pangs of separation were wrenching their hearts and many put their heads out of the window to get a last lingering look of Ganga Māyī and Hardwar. And when the train steamed off there was a void in their faces. But opposite me sat two young friends discussing a difficult point. One of them could not reconcile himself to such manifestations of religion on a mass scale, as a herd-instinct. To him such expressions of devotion as the nakedness of the Nagas, the austerity of the Vairagis as also the Tapas of those men who lay on spikes and stood on one leg or on the head

seemed either atrocious or at best wasted. To these doubts the answers of the other friend seemed convincing.

He said: 'Don't you see that more than half of the crowd belong to the lower middle class? And they have come spending their precious earnings of months to seek a solace which they cannot have for years and years, a solace which will not wear away with time. And don't you see from their faces how enriched they go home? I wish you could look at it from their angle; these thousands go home with their religious hunger appeased, having successfully attempted to recapture and relive the ancient sacredness of India in their own humble way. And then about those weird expressions of devotion. All expressions are bound to be imperfect. Let us try to look at it in a way that will do justice to those practising aspirants and good to ourselves. Are they not stretching out their hands in their own way to get at the Infinite? Through these expressions, imperfect perhaps, India's spirituality peeps out.'

My mind immediately flew to that scene on the procession route: thousands of women sitting for hours bathed in sunshine and dust, just to have a Darshan of the Sadhus. They have come to feed a hunger that no food and drink can appease, the ancient great hunger of India for Religion. And they return home with their hearts and souls full. The question naturally posed before me: Today many things are changing; India is changing. But will India's eternal hunger and the food that appeases that hunger change? No, came the answer from within. Fundamental instincts *cannot* change. The hunger of the ancients blazes in us even today and it is only the same food that can appease it. The more things change, the more are they the same.

MEANING OF CHITTA IN PATANJALI'S YOGA

By Anil Kumar Banerjee

A careful study of the *Yoga Sutras* reveals that the whole system of Patañjali rests on the fundamental concept of Chitta. Chitta is said to have various modifications; and Yoga itself is defined as the cessation of them all (Chittavrittinirodha). With the Sāñkhya metaphysics, Patañjali maintains that the root cause of the world and suffering is a false identification of Chitta with Purusha; and liberation comes when they are realized as separate. The whole system of Patañjali is in this way a treatise to demonstrate that Chitta and the Purusha are in no way identical; and that this knowledge can be achieved through a practice of certain disciplines of body and mind. So, in order to have a proper understanding of the system, it seems necessary for us to have first a clear idea of what Patañjali exactly means by Chitta. It is interesting to note that the term is scarcely given any definition either by Patañjali himself or by his commentators. Vachaspati[1] and Nagesha,[2] however, have given a definition, but that in a casual way and in one sentence only, after which they never take up the question anywhere else. We therefore cannot expect to get a ready-made and clear-cut idea of its meaning. Throughout the whole system, the term Chitta is used in the majority of cases as part of a compound word. What we have to do then is to analyse the compound words and link up the common elements in them. Our method thus will be

[1] *Yoga Sutra*, I. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, IV. 10.

deductive. The two main compound words and, in a sense, the two conceptions over and above that of Chitta on which the Yoga philosophy rests, are Chitta-Vritti and Chitta-Bhūmi. We shall begin with these two words.

Chitta-Vritti means the modifications that the Chitta undergoes when an object is presented before it. Chitta is said to assume the shape and form of that object. As there are innumerable objects, so also the Vrittis can be innumerable. But for the sake of convenience they are classified under five heads, on the basis of their common characteristics. They are:[3] (1) Pramāna which includes (a) Pratyaksha, (b) Anumāna, (c) Āgama; (2) Viparyaya; (3) Vikalpa; (4) Nidrā; (5) Smriti. When the Chitta is affected by some external object, through the sense-organs. we have a Pratyaksha Jñāna or perception. This Pratyaksha again has its own stages of development of gradual transformation from an indeterminate to a determinate state of awareness. At the first stage of its contact with an object, the Chitta perceives without understanding its nature or its relation to other objects, that is, the particular features of the object are not noticed. It is the awareness only of an externality—the 'that' without the 'what' as Bradley would have us say. At the second stage, through the exercise of mental analysis (Vikalpa) and synthesis (Sankalpa), the object is perceived as possessing a definite nature,[4] and the Chitta has a determinate perception. In the third stage, the Chitta has developed not only a sense of externality but that of an internality, or a sense of 'I'—the experiencing ego as against the external object.

In the case of Anumāna, the modification takes place in a different way. Here the main mediator between the object and the Chitta is not the senses but intellect, and the process of modification is based on the law of concomitance. Getting an idea of effect from the perception of cause, as from cloud to rain, or *vice versa,* is an instance of Anumāna. But when the object is not in the field of direct perception, and since an experience of it depends on inference, either from cause to effect or from effect to cause, it is natural that its knowledge cannot be of its particular details, but of a generalized notion alone. Chitta, therefore, is modified in Anumāna with reference to a concept of an object.[5] Āgama or testimony implies the meaning of an object as denoted by the utterances of some reliable authority. The fact of 'meaning' is important here. Something is suggested by the Veda for instance, and we at once believe in its truth without hesitation. If we analyse the phenomenon of this ready acceptance of the suggestion as true, it will be seen that even such an acceptance is not of the utterances as such, but of the meaning in the form of certain ideas, views, images, or awareness of certain facts signified by the suggestive utterances. The main point is that even these ideas and views generate certain experiences in the mind.

Viparyaya is an erroneous idea which is not true to the nature of the object. It is said to be due to some defect in the Chitta.[6] Whatever may be the cause of this defect, and whatever may be the nature of the knowledge that it gives rise to, valid or non-valid, the point is that after all it produces some sort of experience. There is a stimulus, there is an excitement in the organism as a whole through its various faculties such as sense-organs, Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkara, etc., and there is a unified experience. Vikalpa arises out of such a combination of words that has no positive fact corresponding to it. For example, each of the words Shasha (hare) and Vishāna (horn) has a distinct meaning and a corresponding object of its own. But when we combine them together and say Shasha-Vishāna, it becomes meaningless

[3] *Ibid.,* I. 6.
[4] Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy,* Vol. 2, Page 298.
[5] *Vyasa-Bhāshya,* I. 7 and *Bhāsvatī* to it.
[6] *Bhāsvatī,* I. 8.

having no object corresponding to it. It is maintained here that sound has an ineffable charm by which it produces a certain idea, which it conveys to the Chitta. Chitta grasps the idea and modifies itself according to that, however unreal the idea may be. Mimāmsākāras also hold the same view: *atyantamapyasatyarthe shabdo jñānám károti hi.* In Nidrā we have neither sense-perception nor a dream. Consequently in this state the Chitta has no object before it. Due to a preponderance of Tamas, all the objects of waking state and that of the dream are obstructed from the Chitta, when consequently inertia (Tamas) serves as the only object of experience.[7] Thus Nidrā also is a special kind of experience (*anubhūti-visheshah*).[8] It is an awareness which is not manifested (*asphutajnānam*) in the forefront of our consciousness.[9] The fifth and the last kind of modification is known as Smriti, or the revival of past experiences. It is the peculiar nature of Chitta that it can retain percepts in the form of impressions. When a particular Vritti or experience passes away, it is not altogether lost but is preserved in a latent form as a Samskāra, which manifests itself under favourable circumstances into an actual state. This manifestation is Smriti. It is not a new experience, but the occurrence of a past experience in the future. For this reason it is said that while all the sources of valid knowledge and other modifications give access, either by the generic or by the special form, to a hitherto inaccessible object, memory does not go beyond the limits of previous experience.[10]

Our analysis of the Vrittis thus reveals the following important facts: (1) that each of the Vrittis is a special form of experience; (2) that all our knowledge comes through such experiences; (3) that they are experiences of a subject limited within a definite spatio-temporal existence. All our knowledge then can be said to begin with experiences. Whatever knowledge we may have must come, according to Yoga, through either one or all of these Vrittis or, as we have seen, the forms of experiences.

The conception of Chitta-Bhūmi is of utmost importance in the Yoga system. It is the conception of Chitta-Bhūmi that has induced the Yoga philosophy to suggest a practical means to attain liberation. While the Yoga admits the Sāñkhya theory of liberation through discrimination, it puts the main emphasis on other means of achieving freedom, namely, the cessation of mental modifications. It is maintained that all are not fit for Yoga. Fitness depends very much on the state of Chitta that one possesses. The incipient psychological attitudes and dispositions that constitute the basis for the manifested psychical life of man are not equally organized in all. Each one has a peculiar organization of psychical life of one's own. In the language of modern psychology we can say that with reference to the organization of the psychical life or the make up of the personality, the individual is a variable quantity. The same individual varies from time to time as much as one individual from another. But however greatly the individuals may differ from one another, the Yoga, in the spirit of modern science, takes up the common characters of them all, and divides them into classes on the basis of these common characters. The organization of the incipient psychological attitudes and dispositions thus have been classified under five heads. They are known as the Chitta-Bhūmis: Kshipta, Mūdha, Vikshipta, Ekāgra, and Niruddha. All these Bhūmis are said to be the Sahaja Avastha of the Chitta, meaning the type of organization in which the inherent tendencies and inclinations of the individual are generally seen to exist.[11] Vijnana Bhikshu explains the term Bhūmi in almost the same sense: as

[7] *Vyasa-Bhāshya*, I. 10 and the *Maniprabhā* to it.
[8] *Bhāsvati*, I. 10.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Tattva-Vaishāradī*, I. 11.
[11] *Bhāsvatī*, I. 1.

liquidity is the essential nature of water, similarly, Bhūmis are essential states of the Chitta.[12] It follows from this explanation that Chitta and Bhūmis are inseparable. The Bhūmis then are seen to be nothing but different organizations of the experience-contents. An analysis of the Bhūmis themselves will make the point more clear.

Kshipta-Bhūmi represents an organization where Rajas reigns supreme. As a result, it is characterized as wandering, and the mind is not able to concentrate its energy on any one object. In the terminology of modern psychology it is known as the oscillation of attention. A particular Vritti arises in the Chitta and passes away within a moment. No Vritti or experience can be said to exist for more than a moment of time in the focus of attention. The focus of attention is in a process of continuous change. When the Chitta is overpowered by Tamas and is possessed by sleep it is called Mūdha. It is further characterized by idleness and an indifference to any rational judgment; and the personality, consequently, is dull. In the state of Vikshipta, the Chitta is occasionally steady. Inasmuch as it is predominated by Rajas it differs very little from Kshipta. But while the Kshipta is never steady even for a while, the Vikshipta, on the other hand, can concentrate the Chitta on one point at certain times. In the Ekāgra state the Chitta is free from the influence of Rajas and Tamas. So, just like the steady flame of a lamp, the Chitta is said to exist in this state with an uninterrupted flow towards, or awareness or experience of, one fact alone. It corresponds with a state of attention where all but some particnlar idea has dropped off from the focus of consciousness. Lastly, when the personality or the psychic life is made up in such a way that it is free even from the Sattva influence, the Chitta has reached the state of Niruddha. The Chitta here has no Vritti whatsoever, and no experience of the world at all, having only the latent impressions as its object or Alambana.[13]

Thus we see that all the Bhūmis have a reference to some form of experience. The different personality-types that distinguish individuals from one another are ultimately related with the pattern of experiences of the individuals concerned. The significant point that expresses itself in the Bhūmis is that the essential and fundamental psycho-physiological facts that are seen to underlie the different Bhūmis are the same as what we have already seen manifested in the Vrittis as well. They are the psycho-physiological possibilities of experience in general, prior to their differentiation in manifested particularity. Hence we come to the conclusion that both the conceptions of Chitta-Vritti and Chitta-Bhūmi are based on actual experiences. The Vrittis are the possible modes or ways through which the experiences, or more correctly, the inherent possibilities of experiences manifest themselves; and the Bhūmis are the possible patterns or organizations of them according to the personality-type they represent. Thus the phenomenon of experience seems to be the point on which the whole theory of the Yoga is based. Whatever the things may be, they are things of experience, an objective correlate of consciousness. Experience alone prescribes their meaning; and it is only through experience that the Purusha is associated with the Prakriti. But if these were all, i.e. if the experiences were all self-sufficient having no fundamental basis for their existence and no relation with each other, then a systematic knowledge of the world, as we have, would not have been possible at all.[14] Therefore the manifested and actual form of experiences and their relation with each other would be incomprehensible. This self-transcending character of the Vrittis or experiences thus lead them to pass outside themselves towards a psychological possibility before its appearance in actuality. The word Chitta

[12] Vijnana-Bhikṣhu I. 1.

[13] *Yoga Sutra*, I. 18.

[14] *Vyasa-Bhāshya*, I. 32.

is used to signify that possibility. Chitta thus includes all experiences and has no separate existence apart from the evolutes of Prakriti viz. Manas, Buddhi, Ahamkāra, etc. 'The organs (Indriyas) together with the mind (Manas), the determinative faculty (Buddhi), and egoism (Ahamkāra) form the group called the Antahkarana (the internal instrument). They are but various processes in the mind-stuff, called Chitta.'[15] Nagesha says : Chitta is not a separate fact, but is the essence that stands for the eleven senses and the ego and the five Praṇas.[16] But it does not mean that when all the senses and the ego etc. are united together they give rise to Chitta. It means, on the contrary, that all experiences that are possible only through these psychical faculties presuppose an embryonic substratum whence they originate and develop into distinctive forms. Chitta, therefore, though not something absolutely separate from the Vrittis, indeed has in itself a being of its own devoid of the spatio-temporally limited particularity of the Vrittis. It, therefore, remains over as a 'psychological residuum'. This point is brought out more clearly by Swami Vivekananda when he compares the Chitta to a lake and the Vrittis to the waves in the lake : 'The lake is the Chitta, and the waves the Vrittis'.[17] Vachaspati Mishra equates the term Chitta with experiential knowledge.[18] They establish the being of Chitta in the essential nature of the pattern-groups of experiences. It is a non-personal sphere of potential experiences, i.e. a possibility of experience in which the empirical units, Manas, Buddhi, etc. do not take shape, in which all these empirical concepts and, therefore, also of experience in the psychological sense, have nothing to support them, and, at any rate, have no validity. All empirical units of experiences are indicators of absolute possibility of experience—the Chitta.

Following what we have said it is evident that Chitta is not only a non-personal sphere of experience, but is invariably present in all the empirical experiences as well. Chitta, accordingly, has been said to be a continuous stream running through various phases of experience.[19] But it is a well-known fact, as has been analytically shown by James, that every experience is a part of a personal consciousness. That is to say, that experience as a psychological phenomenon implies a subject who has and possesses that experience. However completely the distinctive impressions and sensations be unified together, they cannot be regarded as experience unless they are appropriated by an 'I'. Whatever meaning and significance an experience has is determined solely by an 'I'. Chitta is said to be characterized by an 'I'-sense.[20] For, whatever is evolved in actuality must potentially be involved in the possibility.

Closely connected with the foregoing considerations is the Yoga conception of Nirmāṇa-Chitta. It is made out of Asmitā or the ego, the 'I'.[21] When the Yogi has already regressed back from the manifold of the Vrittis to the unity of the Chitta, where he has no other consciousness than an objectless subject, the pure 'I', even then he can direct his detached and isolated subject 'I' at his will, again to the level of object-experience. When all the Vrittis are stopped, the residuum is only the Chitta-dispositions and tendencies that lie dormant in the Asmitā. Chitta is a general type or plan, the Vrittis the specific modes in which it is actualized or developed. It is the scheme as it were of the total psychical life of a man which is worked out in fuller details through the various psycho-physiological faculties in him. It follows essentially from this that the Chitta cannot be something occupying space. As a psychological residuum it has forfeited its specific attachment to material reality, and its relation in space. So

15 Vivekananda : *Raja Yoga*, I. 2.
16 Nagesha, IV. 10.
17 Vivekananda, *Raja Yoga*, I. 2.
18 *Tattva-Vaishāradī*, IV. 15 and *Bhāsvatī* to the same.
19 *Vyasa-Bhāshya*, I. 32 and *Bhāsvatī* to it.
20 *Bhāsvatī*, I. 32.
21 *Yoga Sutra*, IV. 4.

it is declared to be Shūnya.[22] Shūnya, however, should not be taken to mean 'nothingness'. What is meant by it is that as the essential possibility of all the actual experiences, Chitta cannot be credited with any space-attribute; for, it is manifested as Vrittis only in points of time.[23] This time-attribute of the Chitta reveals another important fact regarding its nature. The significant fact which this temporality expresses in relation to the Vrittis, indicates not only something that belongs to every single Vritti but a necessary form binding Vrittis with Vrittis, modes of experience with other modes of experience. Every experience or Vritti is necessarily one that endures; and with this duration it takes its place within an endless continuity of duration, before and after, stretching away endlessly on all sides. It is this time-attribute that characterizes the Vrittis and the Chitta as a stream. It is only in this sense that the Chitta is one related with many objects.[24] And since it is one, and not in space, a Shūnya, Chitta is Vibhu.[25] According to Yogāchāra, Vibhu means Sarvagata which is possible only through the absence of any space-attribute. Unlike the Akāsha which is the outer expression of spatiality (bāhya-desha), Chitta is the potentiality of knowledge or experience and is devoid of space-quality. It is Vibhu, because it can come into relation with infinite number of objects of experience. Vibhu means an unlimited possibility of knowledge.[26] In a human being, knowledge is not unlimited, but is confined within the limits of a definite degree. So human knowledge is relative. But whatever is relative cannot exist without something of its own kind beyond itself.[27] 'Relative' thus logically implicates an 'absolute'. Where the unlimited possibility of knowledge is manifested upto its highest degree in actuality we have the absolute knowledge, God.[28] God's is the Chitta which is free from all the factors that stand in the way of its highest manifestation.[29]

When, through constant effort, the Yogi has been able to restrain all the modifications of the Chitta, the Chitta still retains the unmanifested impressions (Samskāra). Due to the presence of Samskāras in the Chitta, even in a latent form, the Samādhi attained at this stage is called Sabīja Samādhi, for the latent tendencies and impressions can give rise again to object-experience. By the restraint even of these comes the stage of Nirbīja Samādhi where the last support (Alambana) of the Chitta, the Samskāras, is lost; and consequently having no means to express itself, the Chitta ultimately returns to its primordial origin, the Prakriti.[30]

[22] Nagoji Bhatta, IV. 10, and Vijnana-Bhikshu.
[23] *Bhāsvatī*, IV. 10.
[24] *Vyasa-Bhāshya*, I. 32 and *Bhāsvatī* to it.
[25] Vijnana-Bhikshu, IV. 10.
[26] Swami Hariharananda Aranya on *Vyasa-Bhāshya*, IV. 10.
[27] *Vyasa-Bhāshya*, I. 25 and the *Maniprabhā* to it.
[28] *Yoga Sutra*, I. 25.
[29] *Ibid.*, I 24.
[30] *Ibid.*, I. and *Vyasa-Bhāshya* to it.

... Get rid of the fundamental superstition that we are obliged to act through the body. We are not. Go into your own room and get the Upanishads out of your own self. You are the greatest book that ever was or ever will be, the infinite depository of all that is. Until the inner teacher opens, all outside teaching is in vain. ...'

—*Swami Vivekananda*

EVOLUTION AND ETHICS—THE SOCIAL DESTINY OF MAN (III)

By Dr. Radhakamal Mukherji

(*Continued from the June issue*)

Genetic and Social Basis of Personality Types

If the Freudian contribution helps us to relate the urges to love, goodness, and wholeness to the trend of man's mental and social evolution, it is also fundamental in the analysis of the psycho-genetic factors contributing to the growth of various personality types and contrasted roles, attitudes, and values. Various types of personality are met with: aggressive and submissive, egoistic and altruistic, apathetic-isolated and sympathetic-social. These are also described as extrovert and introvert, schizoid and cyclothymic. Each of these types represents distinct behavioural tendencies rooted in the individual's unique genetic and sexual history that are 'processed' into patterns of habits and roles by the social milieu.[1] Each type is given a label or epithet. Speech, symbols, traditions, and tools we have seen are *sine qua non* of culture, reshaping man and his dispositions, habits, and behaviour. And epithet, sign, or appellation arouses 'social expectancy' in respect of what the aggressive-persistent or submissive-helpless child is and does, and this determines his role and status as the leader (perhaps) of his gang, or the quite good boy of his school form respectively. Pugnacity and egoism, mildness, or altruism that are primarily organically derived are fashioned into different types of socially and culturally recognized behaviour by the expectations of the gang, the neighbourhood, and the school, and win self-esteem as well as social approbation by securing status or position for the individual. No doubt the anger and pugnacity of early man, necessary in a world full of woods, carnivorous beasts, and hostile tribes have become misfits in civilization. But civilization fits the hunter and the fighter into the roles of the wicked boy of the town, the aggressive labour leader, and the bullying politician that express the needs of the hereditary dispositions and behaviour patterns, and at the same time subserve some socially approved or recognized interests and values in keeping with the particular status and the total social situation. Even so, such behaviour patterns and roles are sources of weakness to society that has set to itself the task of taming and socializing the aggressive-persistent type of individuals in obedience to the needs of the changing social and economic order. Such transformation of human nature is not impossible in the long run, for has not man succeeded by selection and training to produce the mild and tender domestic cat from its fierce ancestor?

Recent psychological investigations have shown that the traditional dichotomies of human dispositions between egoism and altruism, aggressive and sympathetic behaviour, and competition and co-operation have to be given up in favour of the view that in the process of socialization seemingly antagonistic tendencies develop together. Thus the most competitive children are also found to be the most co-operative. Further, it is the cultural background and pressure with the stress of both competition and co-operation that condition the development of either aggressive or sympathetic attitudes and type of behaviour. It appears that the pressures exercised by children of the same age or level are stronger in moulding behaviour than those exerted by older individuals such as nurses and teachers. In

[1] 'A Synthetic View of the Social Individual', *American Sociological Review*, October 1943; also Flugel: *Man, Morals, and Society*, Chapter VI.

Soviet Russia the conditioning process, through which such values as collective responsibility and co-operativeness supersede the virtues of the capitalist-industrial society viz. assertiveness, acquisitiveness, thrift, and exclusive devotion to family and dependants, begins early in infancy and is carried systematically through in creches, kindergartens, schools, and children's and boys' and girls' clubs and in initiations into collective life, labour, and recreations. No doubt one of the insuperable obstacles in the way of ushering in a new social order with a stronger sense of human equality and social solidarity is that in family upbringing and education individuals today are subjected to processing the ethical standards and attitudes of the class-ridden industrial society. Ethics cannot be divorced from social life and action. Revaluation and remaking of society go together. There are as many ethical systems as there are possibilities of the social order. Revaluation can best be brought about through the conditioning process by which every human being in his formative years internally and unconsciously acquires social and moral attitudes and feelings. The new social values that now struggle to become dominant will have to be not only implemented in the system of education and leisure-time pursuits from the early years of habit formation, but also reinforced in the scheme of status so that these might supersede the old set of values and symbols that obtained social approbation in the past.[2]

Status and Personality

The assignment of a certain generic status, laying down the basis for habit patterns and specific goals within the restrictions and freedoms of the limited environment that regulate man's lives, continues the same 'processing' and 'conditioning' of the individual. Status-seeking and recognition are of the essence of personality adjustment and development. Man's roles and statuses respond to appropriate and meaningful social experiences that have come to represent social values. Conceptual thought that is man's monopoly presents a constellation of satisfactions and attitudes as abstract ethical 'values' that are focalized or narrowed down as specific 'goals' that are deliberately sought within the framework of normative conditions and freedoms and inhibitions of society. The division of labour in animal societies evolves into the differentiation of roles and functions and scheme of status in human social evolution. Status is begotten by ecology and nurtured by culture at the human level, and converts an individual into a person, his position or role into a wished-for pattern of social behaviour, and his endeavour to live up to the social expectancy of his position into an ethical striving. Status-position provides each individual with incentives as well as 'tools' and opportunities to rise in the social scale in order that he may attain security, recognition, privilege, and self-competence, and expresses at the same time an integral system of social attitudes and values and the ethical scale of the community. Man's innate dispositions and temperaments cannot be classified into a set of pigeon-holes, nor can all the links in the process of mutual interaction between the innate factors and the total environmental situation be traced. But the above analysis clearly illustrates that the endless divergence of human dispositions, behaviour, and values in society is rooted in psycho-genetic endowments of man, moulded and reshaped as these are by society from the very dawn of his development from the apes. These express themselves in society in socially approved or conventional forms, although the repressions and frustrations of the personality and the formation of groups and associations with anti-social goals equally illustrate the chronic conflict between man's milieu and his hereditary equipment. Finally, there are persons

[2] See Gardner Murphy: *Personality*, Chapters XI and XII; also *Readings in Social Psychology*, Chapter III.

in every society who are more suggestible or submissive and whose powers of deliberate choice of values are limited, and who participate in many segments of a fractionized culture without an adequate integration of values or code of behaviour. They are 'all things to all men', an attitude that may serve them best to secure specific goals as well as 'mere social goodwill'.

The Good Personality—the End-product of Evolution

Society is as full of inhibitions and repressions of the human personality as of its fulfilments and expressions. Through the status-position scheme in each society, through the privileges and opportunities society provides individuals and groups to use 'tools', property, and freedoms for their specific 'goals', and through the 'traditions' and 'symbols' that create appropriate patterns of behaviour for their different roles, society provides the stimulating fields for the appropriation of values by individuals of various temperaments and capacities and the myriad manifestations of the human personality. The human personality, then, is the end-product of evolution. Ethics appear among psychoanalytic phenomena as the effort of human personality to achieve mental (and spiritual) poise, sanity, and freedom that are identical with 'good', and eliminate neurosis and psychosis that are identical with 'evil'. The latter thwart the evolutionary process that has already led up to human personalities as its most important products.

Psychoanalytically speaking, the 'good' personality exhibits relatively integrated, free, and reality-adapted behaviour; the 'bad' personality reverts to infantilism, automatism, and megalomania unadapted to reality. In most individuals the ego, the super-ego and the *id* are not integrated into a single entity; but the super-ego, which is largely irrational and represents the taboos, prohibitions, and repressions in early childhood that are 'internalized', becomes tyrannical and divides or disintegrates the self. Thus there are great loss of mental energy due to conflict and repression of the libidinal tendencies and emotional insecurity, and with these responses to fellowmen are characterized by fear, intolerance, and rage. The 'good' personality does not suffer from undue frustration of the libido but rather reduces the number of 'complexes' and repressions of childhood. It utilizes the unconscious libidinal and aggressive tendencies in sublimated satisfactions, whose range and variety enable many such tendencies that cannot bear the light of consciousness and adult social experience to be adequately satisfied. By reason, thought, and imagination, the blind and irrational regulation by the super-ego system gives place so far as possible to conscious and rational self-regulation by the ego that becomes less dependent upon the super-ego, enlarges its field of perception and becomes now creative and fruitful, liberating love, kindliness, and generosity. The arbitrariness and blindness of the super-ego, derived from various rational or irrational compulsions in the child's family circle, largely disappear, on the one hand, and on the other the unconscious prohibitions and phantasies of the early formative years include within their range various forms of conduct now deemed unethical or irrational, according to experience in later years, from the larger point of view of man's social and evolutionary advance. Adaptation here, again, is the test of maturation of the personality that meets in a more conscious manner the wider demands of society and evolutionary progress, or incorporates these latter into the features of the super-ego from the parents and nurses in childhood. Thus the ethical and social experience of adult life may be communicated and deeply assimilated into the infantile unconscious.

Such adaptation is, however, rendered peculiarly difficult, of course, by a family and social milieu full of insecurity, distortion, and frustration. In an unjust and insecure society with its frustrated parents, the undesirable

repressions and distortions of one generation are transmitted to the next, and thus the vicious circle of a cramped and pathological emotional structure expands and perpetuates itself. A hard and ugly industrial milieu with its sharp social cleavage and its fear, anxiety, and insecurity of the mass of the population, in fact, so distorts the emotional development of the children that there is little possibility of an increase in love, tenderness, sympathy, and compassion in place of self-assertion, cunning, and fierceness. On the other hand, it may be possible that in a society, with far greater social equality, justice, and solidarity than at present achieved, human egoism, cunning, chicanery, sadism, war, or lust may be so discouraged that the child may develop the same abhorrence of these in his super-ego or conscience as he has developed against lying, incest, adultery, or murder, and carry it on in his unconscious into adult life. No doubt the social progress of mankind brings with it a profound change in the emotional and intellectual content of the super-ego or conscience.[3]

Good Personality and Good Society

Recent writers on psycho-pathology stress that maladjusted personalities can be restored to their normal organization and development through the encouragement of self-expression in wholesome creative activity, restoration of status, and friendly social contacts. Howard observes, 'As a psychological term, adjustment usually refers to the quality of a person's behaviour in terms of social effectiveness. True adjustment includes more than orientation in the externals of human contacts. Hence the inner aspect of adjustment is essentially a process of integration. From the point of view of mental hygiene, wholesome and effective growth in personality is achieved by striving to know oneself *and* o*thers* by accepting and being oneself, and intelligently working towards self-improvement.' Self-esteem is rooted in personal integration, and self-esteem comes from group expectancy and appreciation that disclose new opportunities and ambitions in life. But the group itself may be antisocial, as for instance, a gang which provides a mental climate that becomes the source of antisocial habits and ways of living. Here reform rests on giving the gang new socially useful tasks. In the treatment of juvenile offenders a re-definition of the social role of the group has been found exceedingly valuable in building up a new life-organization for them. Thus the enlightenment and adjustment of the group with its stimulative and regulative pressures are utilized in several social experiments for the reform of waywards and delinquents.[4]

Personality maladjustments and conflicts are largely, then, the products of social and institutional misfits and unbalances. Thus a 'bad' personality with its frustrations, tensions, and conflicts is often the product of the bad society. Mental adjustment and reality-adapted behaviour consist in one's knowledge of his own nature and of the character of fellowmen as a preliminary to successful social behaviour. A schizoid, self-centred, melancholic personality suffering from faulty perception, especially in respect of social interactions and relations, and a cycloid personality, falling an easy victim to the process of mass suggestion and propaganda, are both failures in adaptation. Neither can develop towards an 'occupation' or 'status' personality, associated with success in economic and social adjustment, whence they can select their life-goals and relate them to the social milieu. It is the occupation and status personality which leads up to the integration and development of man's spiritual personality. The latter rests on the cultivation of the ideal values of truth, power, and goodness. 'The way to the real is through the ideal.' 'The development of

[3] See L. K. Frank: *Society as the Patient.*

[4] 'Social Therapy' is now a recognized trend in the work of social scientists. See the *Journal of Sociometry.*

insight of knowledge is the only cure of 'wrong perception' and failure to comprehend all the relevant features of the situation is characteristic of the neurotic. Occupation therapy has been adopted in every mental hospital as a programme of restoring the psychotic to normalcy. Interest and success in productive enterprise in one's job, occupation, or profession in close association with fellowmen are safeguards against any menace to mental poise and sanity; for such work elicits the appreciation, support, and co-operation of others and assures the individual his role, status, and prestige. Man's intelligent and imaginative sympathy and the development of human kindliness are, finally, the best proofs against overweening pride, self-delusion, or suspiciousness that are so common, marring normal friendly social intercourse and impeding social adjustment everywhere. Many people are found to be micro-paranoiacs, more or less maladjusted personalities. We thus see that the key to combating mental stress and disorder and developing the integrated 'good personality' lies in the cultivation of those values of truth, power, and goodness on which ethics always insists for the development of personal character. As Gillespie, a distinguished psychiatrist, observes: 'Psycho-pathology, social science, and moral philosophy agree in asserting that the harmony of human relationships is the highest good'. So far as the evolution of the good personality is concerned, it consists, then, in rescuing the mind from all kinds of faulty perception, delusion, anxiety, or hate, and in harnessing the unconscious by appropriate mental dynamisms. On the positive side, the good personality is one that is fully integrated within and deliberately works towards such integration in inner life and in relationships with fellowmen that become the vehicles of the highest values, understandings, and creative endeavours. Much depends upon the proper external milieu. A wholesome social environment giving opportunities for saner, freer, and more socialized living can alone stimulate the progressive harmony and development of personal life. Thus can man reach higher and more complex integrations of self that may become the sources of new insights, loves, and sacrifices. It is in the world of social actions, relations, and values that man achieves the full enrichment of his personal life, at the same time contributing towards the enhancement of the life of society.

(*Concluded*)

THE NATURE OF EXPERIENCE

By P. S. Sastri

Perception, according to Kant, can become knowledge only if it is related in some way to the object it determines. Knowledge is always knowledge of reality or of real objects. This involves cognition, the object of cognition, and the cognizing individual. Knowledge as such is our objective, and the perceptual knowledge is the knowledge of the ontological object.

But what do we perceive? Is it the object as such in its entirety; or something which enables us to infer that it is an object? Is it, on the contrary, only an aspect of the object? Unless these questions are satisfactorily answered we cannot proceed in our quest of knowledge.

Dr. Moore argues that in perception we have the objects as they are, and no further proof or analysis is required. This is the sane and healthy common sense and need

not disconcert any. We perceive objects, and we have no doubts regarding their nature. Even if we have no experience of them, they will be what they were and are. The object in itself does not undergo any change. Thus when we speak of 'a blue flower', the quality 'blue' is an integral part of the object 'flower'. Neither the one nor the other, nor both, do depend upon consciousness for their ontological status. Our awareness and the object are not the determinants of one another. There is no possible relation here.

There are four possible relations between objects: (i) Substance and Quality; (ii) Whole and Part; (iii) Content and Form; (iv) Original and Copy. Our experience involving ourselves and the object cannot drag in any one of these relations. The blue flower is not a quality of our experience, nor is our awareness an attribute of the flower. Content and form are imbedded in the object itself as much as they are, in another manner, in consciousness. The object, like our own consciousness, is only a part of the experience. One is not the copy of another even. Our sensation or feeling is not the objective factor; nor is the blue flower a subjective one. Our experience only reveals the significance or meaning or nature of the object to us. But to argue that we are only aware of the sense-data and not of the object, is to run contrary to common experience and to admit the much abused Kantian 'Thing-in-itself' by the backdoor. We experience the sense-data and the object as a single unit.

This has been due to an intriguing factor ignored by these critical theorists and other dialecticians. It is a subtle distinction that we have to remember. The knowledge of an object is said to be the same as the experience of the same object. But how? I can enjoy a fine fragrance, a sweet melody, or a noble tragedy. My experience is a single unit comprehending and harmonizing all the details. This experience has a certain character, a certain unity. This character cannot be said to be shared by the various parts. A person like Woodrow Wilson, who is a perfect product of his times, can be said to participate in the historic process and be determined by the latter's character. But a creative artist like Cleopatra or Bismarck can change the nature of this process itself, much in the same way in which Marx has done. Likewise a straight line, 'A————B' has got X-number of properties. The same straight line put in a hexagon 'ABCDEF', does not breathe the nature or the character of the hexagon, but only acquires one or more additional properties. Thus our experience of an object has a certain character; hut the various constituents of this whole do not and cannot have the nature of this experience. At best they can only have additional properties or qualities. Hence it is that we can experience an object like the tragedy of 'King Lear' profoundly, but this experience is far wider and richer than our knowledge of the play. To this source should be traced all our failures in interpretation or explanation. I have a clear knowledge of my friend's toothache, and I know the type of pain he must be having. But my experience of my own toothache is richer, intenser, and more profound. There is some inexplicable feeling which is highly suggestive. So too in all great Art, which is an expression of experience, we find an atmosphere of infinite suggestion

The work of Art seems to suggest so many ideas and feelings that for a time we forget what we are. The very artistic expression seems to have this power. In other words, the very act of composing or creating a work of Art implies the very inability of the creative artist to give a complete and perfect expression to his experience. And Shelley spoke the truth when he said that the mind in the act of expression or execution is like a burning coal. This is to be explained in terms of the nature of Experience which is a wider and more comprehensive one than Thought aud even Knowledge. It contains

knowledge in itself, or better, it is knowledge itself ; but it is knowledge having a new connotation. It is a fact, therefore, that experience precedes knowledge, and also succeeds knowledge. This holds true of our perceptual knowledge too.

When we perceive an object, are we aware of it in its entirety ? The complete surface of the object never enters the field of perception at one and the same moment or place. To have a complete perception we have to piece together various shreds of experience. Again the perceptual act is concerned with the present, and the present is an infinitesimal part of the history of the object. The physical object perceived is generally the appearance of the object as conditioned by the percipient's attitude at the moment of the perception. Such an appearance can hardly be the real nature of the object. Nor can the act of perception be a cognition of some of the features of the object ; for a selection of the features is not the total object cognized. And a selection cannot exist by itself apart from the single unitary object. That is, the content of an object has no existence apart from the act of perceiving. If the content itself were to be an existent, it remains unrelated to the perceiving mind and the object as well. Moreover, the content cannot be physical, for we perceive neither activity nor energy in the given. It is not even mental. It is true that our faculties of retention and revival help us a good deal in this perceptual act. The power of recollection aided by our habitual adaptation makes our knowledge a form of inward possession. And yet no two perceptions of the same object by the same individual are identical with each other. A third or fourth reading of the same play determines our knowledge of the same to such an extent that it may be even totally different from the first one. We begin paying greater and wider attention to the details that we have been ignoring so far. Thus the perceptual act involves discrimination, comparison, and relating. Perception evolves gradually. It employs thought. Between the rudimentary act of perception and the highest, there is a difference. Perception, therefore, is a psychophysical process or event. The object as such is cognized as related to other objects or qualities. This interrelation of the objects determines their ontological status. Hence it is that we perceive not merely objects, not simply relations, but objects-in-relation. Relation can, therefore, not be a logical absurdity, but a fact that makes our experience rich and significant. This interrelation pervades the universe as a whole. This universe is so rich, so varied, and so complex, that it cannot be comprehended in a single perceptual act. And consequently, the ontological nature of the object fails our comprehension.

This ontological nature of the object is yet experienced by us. We may, and do, generally fail to represent or explain it in our so-called categories. Still it is the same as the significance or meaning it has for the perceiving mind. Our knowledge of the object, as we have said, is based on our prior perceptions and experiences which somehow enter into the present ; as a result, our knowledge of it awakened by our present perception is, to a great extent, the articulation and systematization of our past and present experiences. The significance it holds for us, or the meaning it conveys to us, has a factor which is beyond the power of our knowledge to reveal. This unknown factor becomes, therefore, the irrational or unanalysable entity. It is this *surd* that makes the object valuable to us. A friend whom I have comprehended fully and whose mental workings and behaviour are predictable or imaginable by me, does not and cannot win my admiration and awe. On the other hand, one whose heart and mind I have not comprehended fully because of a certain elusiveness in him, evokes in me the feelings of awe and admiration. There is felt to be something incommunicable, some inexpressible charm, some mysterious attraction, which

tells me of a certain nearness, if not of an absolute identity, of purpose in existence. Likewise, a play I have understood thoroughly makes a new reading dull. But a brilliant masterpiece that I am able to reconstruct imaginatively, to live through, gives me a newer and intenser pleasure every time I approach it. 'A thing of Beauty', said John Keats, 'is a Joy *for ever*'.

In any given act of perception, therefore, we are face to face with the real object in a relational setting. This given object comes into contact with our sensory organs and sets the mind active. The senses find an aspect of the appearance of the given object. The so-called secondary and tertiary qualities apprehended by the mind really constitute the significance or the meaning of the object to a given individual. Perception, therefore involves the unity, the organic unity, of the individual and his object. In other words, the individual and the object taken separately are mere fictions and have no separate existence. The unity of both constitutes our perception or experience. And this experience is the real fact, and it includes the whole universe. For in the universe we have feeling, thought, volition, and knowing along with the objects to which these are directed. All these presuppose experience as their mainstay and ground. On the one hand, feeling, willing, and thought are the activities directed towards knowing, thereby becoming the activities of knowing. On the other, knowing itself is experiencing, which in its turn puts an end to the dualism of the subject and object, as also to the pluralism of the objects, by presenting a relational universe. And all the while experience is a single unit, transcending all relations, for, when we experience we may have a plurality of objects, but we are conscious always of their mysterious unity which so transforms them as to constitute a single fact. Knowledge-in-itself is identical with this experience. But our knowledge is only a partial expression of this experience. As a result, all our epistemological theories can give only an incomplete picture of the universe from a variety of angles.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

To Our Readers

Dr. S. C. Chatterjee of the Calcutta University, a well-known author of standard philosophical works, is not new to our readers, though they may feel his valued contribution on *The Message of Sri Ramakrishna,* appearing this month, comes to them after a long interval. ...

Swami Sambuddhananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay, gives the readers, in a nutshell, the essence of *Vedanta, the Perennial Philosophy*. ...

The Kumbha-Mela at Hardwar by a Sannyasin is an illuminating and intimate portraiture of the biggest religious fair in the world, held in April last. ...

According to Patanjali, Yoga is the restraining of the Chitta (mind-stuff) from taking various Vrittis (modifications), both painful and not painful, and such control is achieved by continuous practice and intense non-attachment. Prof. Anil Kumar Banerjee presents his scientific and well-reasoned views on the true *Meaning of Chitta in Patanjali's Yoga*. ...

Prof. P. S. Sastri of Saugor University makes a brief but highly thoughtful study of *The Nature of Experience* mainly from the

Vedantic standpoint, comparing it with those of other systems. ...

'Hinduism or Buddhism ?'

The entire Hindu community, forming the great majority of the country's population, has received, once again, a sharp reminder from our Law Minister, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, whose unfortunate observations concerning Hinduism are neither unfamiliar nor surprising, though, for some time past, he had chosen the path of 'golden silence' in this respect. Recently the learned Doctor has suddenly returned to his old charge, and this time somewhat more vehemently, it seems. For, it is reported that he is seriously contemplating renouncing his own religion (which we believe is Hinduism) and embracing Buddhism. Moreover, he is reported to have asked his followers, or rather, all Harijans throughout India to turn Buddhist. That is not all. Dr. Ambedkar advocates the conversion of the whole of the Hindu community into Buddhism, for Hinduism, according to him 'is utterly unsuitable in the present set up'.

None would have taken any serious notice of Dr. Ambedkar's sapient advice to the Hindus or his ardent desire to change his own religion to a new one, but for his recent speeches and writings grossly vilifying Hinduism, more especially the social structure of Hindu polity. In the past he would miss no opportunity of having a dig at the Hindus and their religion, though his trite and baseless charges have been repeatedly refuted. But it appears he is unwilling to be convinced and is pleased to heap indignities upon the devoted head of the gentle and tolerant Hindu. The Constitution, in framing which he himself played an important role, allows him freely to profess, practise, and propagate any form of religion he pleases, though in explaining the word 'Hindu', it lays down that 'the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina, or Buddhist religion'. At a time when the need for the re-establishment of harmonious relations between different religions is most imperative, even the followers of Buddhism could not have very much appreciated the jarring note struck by Dr. Ambedkar on the sacred occasion of the last birth anniversary of Lord Buddha, by holding up to public ridicule the most ancient religion of the motherland, professed by millions of his countrymen.

Dr. Ambedkar demands that the touchstone of the genuine worth of a religion should be whether it treated all people on an equal footing or was sectarian and discriminated between man and man. Such a demand is quite legitimate. And it is also true that any religion worth the name cannot but stand for perfect spiritual equality among all men. Christianity, Islam, and even Buddhism (if we may be permitted to differ from the eminent Scheduled Caste leader), though not recognizing the caste system in the same form as prevalent in Hindu society, are undoubtedly more 'sectarian' and less tolerant than Vedanta, the bedrock of Hindu thought. Each of the major religions of the world barring Hinduism, originating from personalities rather than eternal principles, is known to vouchsafe redemption only to those who are its faithful followers, and is generally animated by a passionate zeal for securing converts. Hinduism—by which is always meant the eternal religion of the Vedas—was never a conquering religion and has won victories which defeat none. No other religion allows so much freedom of faith and worship as does Hinduism, and no other religion is so patient and tolerant of adverse criticism from within and without.

The Hindus have not the least objection to Dr. Ambedkar embracing Buddhism, or, for that matter, anybody taking to any religion he prefers, provided it is motivated by considerations of a sincere spiritual conviction. But on that score, it is neither justified nor called for to condemn Hinduism by

levelling imaginary charges which do not bear a moment's scrutiny. The Hindus have their faults, even as others have theirs, and they are not trying to hide or justify them. These drawbacks of the Hindu community were clearly and boldly pointed out by Swami Vivekananda who, at the same time, opened the eyes of the Hindus to the wonderful glories of their own religion and culture.

There is nothing so diabolical or utterly unsuitable in the caste-system which was and, but for stray cases of perversion, still is one of the best institutions that the Hindu genius has given rise to. Today many people do not make, and many more do not care to make a close and dispassionate study of the particular requirements of the society and the age which brought into being this excellent scheme of social adjustment intended to smoothly reconcile the natural diversity of human temperaments and tendencies. That caste distinctions (*not* privileges) were no wicked imposition invented by the Brahmins to 'perpetuate vested interests' is clear from the *Gita* where Sri Krishna declares, 'The four castes were created by Me according to the division of Gunas and Karmas'. Caste has proved its inherent worth as a useful social institution by its survival against severe onslaughts for ages.

It is deplorable that an Indian of deep learning and occupying an important position should make invidious distinctions between Hinduism and Buddhism and conclude that the latter is 'far superior' to the former. Every Hindu will join wholeheartedly with Dr. Ambedkar in paying a tribute to the grand religion preached by Buddha whom the Hindus worship as one of their divine incarnations. Hinduism and Buddhism have profoundly infuenced each other, and even today Hindu India is proud of her great Shakya Muni. Unlike Dr. Ambedkar, the question with the Hindus (which certainly includes the Harijans) today is not 'Hinduism *or* Buddhism?' but 'Hinduism *and* Buddhism'. For the one cannot live without the other. The glory of India lies in a harmonious integration of the grand philosophy of the Vedanta with the great heart of the Buddha. Buddhism is a product of the Indian mind; any attempt to regard it in other ways is bound to be a falsification.

The Hindu idea of the one eternal Truth manifesting itself in various religions all of which lead to the same ultimate goal, is not a 'new argument' as Dr. Ambedkar would have it. It is as old as Hinduism itself and is reiterated in all its grandeur throughout Hindu religious thought and literature beginning from the *Rig Veda* which declares, *Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*—'Truth is One, sages call it variously'. While Buddhism emphasized the impermanence of the phenomenal world and widely preached the monastic ideals, Hinduism placed before man the highest ideal of gaining Nihshreyasa without, however, failing to recognize his secular needs (Purushārthas). Hindu society built up the best social organization in the world through the Varna and Ashrama Dharmas, based on the Sanatana Dharma as well as the Yuga Dharma.

We do not know how far Dr. Ambedkar will succeed in fulfilling his desire to see that not only the Scheduled Castes but also the entire Hindu community are converted into Buddhism. But the Hindus need have no anxiety on that score. Discounting fears of Scheduled Castes embracing Buddhism *en masse*, Sri Girdhari Lal, Minister of Excise and Jails, U. P., is reported to have said, in an interview, that 'any attempt to remove the Scheduled Castes from their ancient moorings would be detrimental to the entire life of the community. ... The Scheduled Caste's problem was mainly economic. ... Their woes could be effectively dealt with if they were properly organized, and the spurious cries of religion and culture would not solve their problem.'

Sanskrit in Free India

It is a matter for gratification that the indifference to and prejudice against Sanskrit is gradually disappearing, not a little due to the laudable efforts on the part of the lovers of Sanskrit learning. And before long, Sanskrit is sure to occupy its well-merited place in our national life, as it is the source and sustenance of the major Indian languages. Now that the country has achieved full independence, Sanskrit will soon come to its own, and efforts to revive and propagate Sanskrit learning on a large scale are being witnessed all over the country. Attempts are being made in some of the States to establish Sanskrit universities, and in many more quarters the need for such universities is increasingly being felt. All Sanskrit-lovers will welcome the initiative taken by the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in encouraging spread of Sanskrit knowledge. Active interest is also evinced both by Governmental and private organizations, in the matter of the collection, preservation, and publication of old and valuable Sanskrit manuscripts.

From a recent report of the excellent work that is being carried on in West Bengal where the Government and the people are well aware of the importance of Sanskrit and the debt that Bengali owes to it, it is seen that praiseworthy steps for the promotion of Sanskrit learning have been and are being taken. The West Bengal Government set up a Sanskrit Education Committee, in 1948, to devise ways and means for the improvement of Sanskrit education in West Bengal. This Committee unanimously recommended that within five years a Sanskrit University should be established there. In the light of the other recommendations of the Committee and in furtherance of their object of encouraging the spread of Sanskrit learning, the State Government have also created posts of Lecturers in the Sanskrit College, and extended liberal financial assistance to Sanskrit Pandits and to Tols.

The recently established Government-sponsored 'Vangīya Sañskrita Shikshā Parishat', with Dr. Jatindra Bimal Chaudhuri, the distinguished Sanskrit scholar, as its Secretary, has been doing commendable work in the cause of the propagation of Sanskrit knowledge—by establishing Tols, drafting the services of refugee Pandits from East Bengal for the preparation of Sanskrit *MSS.* for publication, and encouraging advanced research work in Sanskrit. From humble beginnings, the Parishat, under the able leadership of the learned Doctor, has steadily grown into a valuable and well-established institution, thus becoming the nucleus of the future Sanskrit University. The Parishat has made known to the public its immediate needs, and has appealed for generous help and co-operation from all classes of people in order to enable it to expand its activities and better serve the cause of Sanskrit learning in a way worthy of the task entrusted to it.

We hope similar steps will be taken in other parts of the country, where they have not already been taken, for the promotion of Sanskrit learning which plays such an important role in the cultural life of the country. Efforts should be made to harmoniously combine the depth of ancient scholarship with the breadth of modern learning. The Sanskrit curriculum should embrace all types of subjects taught in the modern universities, and steps towards the development of a commonly suitable scientific terminology should be taken up without delay.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SHASTRIYA PARIBHASHA KOSHA (THE ENGLISH-INDIAN DICTIONARY OF SCIENTIFIC TERMINOLOGY). EDITED BY Y. R. DATE AND C. G. KARVE. *Published by the Maharashtra Kosha Mandal Ltd., 3 Budhwarpet, Poona 2. Pages 650. Price Rs. 40.*

Here is a very useful volume which goes far in filling a great need in the matter of teaching and popularizing modern scientific knowledge through the medium of the Indian languages. Here a task has been undertaken, the value and necessity of which have been debated for quite a lengthy span of time in the circles that count. Whether at all any Indianization of scientific terminology should be attempted, is an issue that largely depends on view-points. Some candid reflection, however, will make it clear to any one that though there are some weighty arguments for the adoption *in toto* of the Western (international) terminology into modern Indian languages, there are certain deciding factors which make the Indianization of technical terms inevitable. Firstly, the vast number of technical terms in the different branches of knowledge are growing so fast that if we merely adopt the Western terms, our languages cannot but uudergo a change of colour beyond recognition; secondly, to coin new terms, if and when necessary, a knowledge of the Western classical languages becomes inevitable; the third and the most important factor is that in case Indianization of scientific terminology, however difficult, is not achieved, the popularizing of even the essentials of a general knowledge of science among the average-educated masses will remain a far cry.

Even though one may feel the necessity of Indianization, there may still exist some apprehension as to its feasibility and the capacity of any Indian language or languages to represent advanced technical terms in the various branches of knowledge. A perusal of this work, we feel, will set at rest all such apprehensions. The distinguished editors of this compilation have achieved the task set before them in a remarkable manner. This 'Shastriya Paribhasha Kosha' contains far more than its title implies. From the title of the book one would expect that the contents covered only such fields as belong to 'science' in the strict sense of the word. Here we are heing pleasantly surprised. It covers such widely diverging fields as astronomy and astrology, economics and politics, philosophy and religion, law, mathematics, philology, history and geography,—all these in addition to the main subjects that come under 'science' proper, viz. medicine, psychology, biology, mechanics, physics, chemistry, engineering, etc. The contents of this volume are by no means exhaustive, and the compilers are modest enough not to claim any perfection or completeness as such for their work, though theirs is undoubtedly a commendable achievement and no efforts have been spared to make it as useful and up-to-date as possible.

As it is mentioned in the Introduction, 'The plan of this Dictionary is very simple. All terms are given alphabetically and under each English term Sanskrit synonyms or equivalents are arranged according to different branches of science, ... These synonyms are all Sanskrit or of Sanskrit origin, as Sanskrit is the basic or mother language. More than one synonym or Indian word for an English term are purposely given in order to keep the choice open to those who refer to this Dictionary.' Until a definite terminology, accepted by all, is decided upon, such choice to different authors, working in different fields, should be given. Names of the chemical elements as well as the terms for 'ide' as in oxide, 'ate' as in phosphate, etc. have been evolved generally from and as closely related as possible to their original international forms, except where familiar Indian terms are available for common elements. For example. Cadmium is given as equivalent to *kādma* or *kada*, Gadolinium as *gādolina*, and Ether as *ithar* or *ithra*; 'Para' as *para*, 'Meta' as *mita*, 'Ous' as *asa*, 'Ite' as *āyita*, 'Ile' as *āyila*, and so on. Thus Nitrous is *natrasa*, Sulphite is *gandhāyita*, and Ethyl is *ithyla*. A comparative table showing the terms for elements used by various authors is included in the volume. The special utility of this work lies in that it forms a convenient basis for a revised and more comprehensive lexicon on an all-India basis.

In compiling this Dictionary, the editors have profitably consulted many valuable works on similar lines by earlier authors. The present work is the outcome of determined and untiring efforts on the part of the editors, extending over a decade, and in the face of heavy odds. Though a number of persons, proficient in their branches of learning, gladly offered sympathetic encouragement and active co-operation to this work, yet the compilers are constrained to make mention of the difficulties they had to surmount regarding the publication of the volume. This labour of love in the interests of the country's languages and their rapid development, in keeping with the trend of modern knowledge,—probably the first of its kind to be undertaken—augurs well for the changeover from English to Indian languages, especially at the university level.

The Sanskrit origin of the equivalents and terms contained in this Dictionary makes it useful for people all over India. The fact that the source of the whole of this terminology is the Sanskrit language, has aroused some criticisin in certain quarters. We fail to appreciate this criticism. Such criticism arises out of an insufficient knowledge of the position Sanskrit occupies in the literary and linguistic fields in India as well as its

richness and unlimited adaptability. There is no other language on the basis of which a terminology common to all the Indian languages can be built up. Sanskrit is the common 'mother' (or 'foster-mother') of all the Indian languages and has been nourishing them for hundreds of years. It is this important fact that has weighed with our Constitution makers in declaring that the national language should be developed by drawing, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit. It having been decided that English will be substituted, more or less completely, in course of time, by Hindi as the national language, it is most welcome indeed that initial and authentic attempts such as the one under review are made to build up an Indianized scientific tongue that will later on be acceptable to all.

Indifference towards and unhelpful criticism of any pioneering and original endeavour will not help anybody, least of all the country as a whole. Such ventures as the present Kosha cannot but find encouragement and support from the Government and the public. We heartily commend this comprehensive and reliable all-India Dictionary of scientific terms to all who are interested in such scholarly and unique works of national importance. Moreover, to supplement this English-Indian Dictionary, the necessity will soon arise for an Indian-English Dictionary on the same lines, as the new words find their place in literature in large numbers.

INTROSPECT. By N. Porbandar. *Published by Sadbhakti Publications, 12 Homji Street, Fort, Bombay. Pages 210. Price Rs. 5.*

The name of the author is a pseudonym. The Publisher announces that under the guise of this name, His Highness Sir Natawar Singh, the Maharaja of Porbandar, has written this excellent book. The Publisher says that the Maharaja is not ready to take any credit for the book, because, according to the Maharaja, 'God was the sender of all thoughts', and it was because of this idea that he did not like to put his name as author, and only at the persistent request of the Publisher he disclosed his identity.

The Maharaja assumed the rulership of a first-class Indian State when he was only eighteen years of age. And after 28 years of successful rulership, he voluantarily gave up his princely suzerainty in 1948 and became a common man. He was a gifted ruler with great parts and many interests. As such he lived an unusually busy life—having hardly any time for quiet thinking. After his retirement, the thoughts enclosed in the book began to come to him automatically till 'one day they stopped all of a sudden'. But many readers will be grateful to the Maharaja for bringing them out in book form. For these are uplifting thoughts and are likely to serve as helpful guidance to many in their daily lives. This book is written in a novel method. Some friends informally discuss diverse problems of life, and the discussions are put in the form of short conversations numbering 116. The problems discussed are sometimes very high and philosophical, sometimes they are quite ordinary, though very important relating as they do to situations vital for one's peace and happiness. But because of the form in which the discussions are couched, the book is highly interesting from beginning to end.

And how penetrating sometimes these thoughts are! They indicate the power of very keen observation and a greatly philosophical outlook on the part of the author. It is because of this that the conclusions arrived at after the discussions are startlingly invigorating to the readers, who feel grateful for the new angle of vision given therein. We have heard of the philosopher-king Marcus Aurelius. The present publication reminds one of his famous book—*Meditations*. Below are given a few samples of what one will find in the course of reading these pages:

'And fortunate is he also, who, at a happy occurrence, can run to God with a heart full of gratitude just as those who run to Him for shelter and protection in adversity' (p. 14).

'V: Could you not train yourself not to be unhappy at losing anything?

'O: Presuming I could, it would conversely also mean that I would not be happy at receiving anything.

'V: What harm?

'O: It would then amount to my being in a state of nothingness, so to say.

'V: That would be peace. That is the difference between peace and happiness. Peace, in itself, is original; and unlike happiness, it does not come as a result of the absence of unhappiness. Hence it is the true thing, and it is a joy which reigns beyond the domains of the ordinary mundane pleasures and happiness derived from the functioning of the five senses' (pp. 27-28).

'It is little to think that we are great, but great to think that we are little' (p. 33).

'If our devotion is truly deep and real, there would be no need to keep a picture (of Christ), for it would then be constantly in our heart and soul' (p. 39).

'J: Would you, in any way, be inclined to help those who are well dressed and physically fit?

'Q: No.

'J: But you should.

'Q: Why?

'J: ... for a number of our fellow-beings may be suffering from other forms of poverty—poverty of several virtues—outward manifestations of which would be in other forms, just as rags, leanness, and hunger are in the case of that monetary' (p. 53).

'If only we could constantly bear in mind that we are all His, and that everything that seemingly belongs to us is therefore also His, how happy the World would be' (p. 75).

The last discussion as to how to achieve Universal Love is superb:

'To achieve universal love, we should therefore have,

perfectly clear in our minds and constantly before us, the indisputable fact that God is the Creator of everything animate and inanimate. With this vision as the background, we should be able to train ourselves to see God in everything, for: He is the man, He is the woman. ... He is the rich, He is the poor. ... He is the kind, He is the cruel. ... He is the giver, and He is the receiver. ... He is the saint, He is also Satan. ... So think of God, and so look upon Him, and endeavour to discern Him in all these His multifarious forms, and you will gradually begin to feel that there is nothing but God everywhere. ... There could then be no room for any bitterness, hatred, jealousy or vanity for there ends the individual existence and the thoughts of "I" and "mine", "you" and "yours", and "he" and "his", substituted by the thought of Universal Oneness—One Soul—One Spirit— the giver of Eternal Joy, Peace, and Happiness. That is Universal Love.' (p. 179 et seq.).

It may be seen that these thoughts are by no means entirely new and original. But the way in which they have been put makes them telling, effective, and inspiring. If one ponders over them from day to day, one will find one's life transformed unconsciously.

S. P.

BAPU'S LETTERS TO MIRA. LETTERS OF MAHATMA GANDHI. *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pages 387. Price Rs. 4.*

Mira, as many may be aware, is the name given by Mahatma Gandhi to Miss Madeleine Slade, an English lady of great idealism, who joined him in the year 1925 as a disciple and adopted daughter. In her young days she would derive much spiritual inspiration from the music of Beethoven. Her love for Beethoven brought her into contact with Romain Rolland and it was from Rolland that she heard 'Bapu'. She was so fascinated by the ideal preached and lived by Gandhiji that she came to India and dedicated her life to his cause. But to be a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi was not an easy joke. For he could equally be stern as a stone and soft as a flower. So from the time she met Gandhi commenced her hard training. These letters, numbering 386, reveal a unique trait of Gandhiji: What meticulous care he could take for the training of his adopted daughter, though he was all the while engaged in the big fight for the cause of India's freedom. Incidentally we get a glimpse of the severe hardships and heroic struggles the disciple had to pass through in order to be faithful to the Path she had chosen. She herself pictures them in the following lines:

'With boundless joy and energy I started on the pilgrimage. Numberless times have I slipped and stumbled. Many have been the bruises and cuts. Bitter have been the tears with which I have watered the path, and once or twice the clouds have come down on the mountain and I have all but lost my way. But Bapu's love has at last led me out upon the upper pastures where God's peace fills the sweet mountain air.' (p. 7).

These letters contain many things which are at best of ephemeral importance. But throughout the book lie interspersed words of snpreme wisdom which indicate from what a great spiritual height Mahatmaji would look at all problems of life and which will give to the book an abiding interest. Below are given a few specimen illustrations:

'There is something radically wrong in your carrying this load of anxiety on your shoulders. It is incompatible with a living faith in a living God.' (p. 268).

'As days pass I feel this Living Presence in every fibre of my veins. Without that feeling I should be demented. There are so many things that are calculated to disturb my peace of mind. So many events happen that would, without the realization of that Presence, shake me to the very foundation. But they pass me by leaving me practically untouched. I want you to share that reality with me.' (p. 268).

'Both birth and death are great mysteries. If death is not a prelude to another life, the intermediate period is a cruel mockery. We must learn the art of never grieving over death, no matter when and to whom it comes. I suppose that we shall do when we have really learnt to be utterly indifferent to our own, and the indifference will come when we are every moment conscious of having done the task to which we are called.' (p. 301).

'If I succeed in emptying myself utterly, God will possess me. Then I know that everything will come true, but it is a serious question when I shall have reduced myself to zero. Think of 'I' and 'O' in juxtaposition and you have the whole problem of life in two signs.' (p. 376).

S.P.

KALYANA KALPATARU—MANASA NUMBER I. *Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Pages 291. Price Rs. 2-8.*

Among the works of Tulsidas, the great Hindi poet-saint, his *Ramacharita Mānasa* has justly become renowned and popular, not only among the classes but also among the masses, especially in North India. Even those whose mother-tongue is not Hindi are familiar with it, to some extent, through translations. The 'Ramayana' of Tulsidas, or *Ramacharita Mānasa*, which is also referred to, in short, as *Mānasa*, is composed in exquisite poetry, replete with apt similes and metaphors, rich in expression, lofty in thought, sweet with devotion, and enchanting in narration.

The Gita Press has done well in making this special Number of its monthly English magazine *Kalyana Kalpataru*, the 'Mānasa Number—I' containing the first and longest section of the *Mānasa* viz. the *Bālakānda* in full, with original text in Devanagari type followed by a running, lucid, and faithful English translation. The rest of the *Mānasa* will be published in the next two

special annual Numbers of the *Kalyana Kalpataru* which will come out in due course. The coloured illustrations, of which there are many, and the printing and get up admirably maintain the excellent traditions of the Gita Press special Numbers.

HINDI

KALYAN—JANUARY 1950: HINDU SAMSKRITI ANK. EDITED BY HANUMAN PRASAD PODDAR AND CHIMANLAL GOSWAMI. *Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U.P. Pages 904, Price Rs. 6-8.*

As usual the Gita Press has brought out the annual number of the Hindi monthly *Kalyan*, with its characteristic thoroughness and comprehensiveness. The selection of the subject 'Hindu Samskriti' for this special number is very timely in that it will stimulate cultural renovation on proper lines after our independence, when energies are set free to work for it, by placing before the public the central ideas as well as the various aspects of Hindu culture. Here the term Hindu includes Buddhists and Jains as well.

This bumper number contains excellent articles by well-known writers from all over India. There are a good number of poetical contributions also. The subject-matter is treated beginning from the Vedic times, embracing the Vedas, the Upanishads, the epics, the Puranas, and the philosophies (Darshana). It deals with the religio-cultural ideals and ideas of the Hindus and their achievements in the fields of art and architecture, and sciences and crafts. There are also to be found brief descriptions of the Hindu pantheon, of the many Rishis, noble kings, saintly devotees of God, philosophers, Acharyas, and religious leaders of Hinduism. The arrangement of the articles is well-planned. The volume abounds in illustrations, many of them in beautiful colours.

MALAYALAM

SRIMAD VIVEKANANDASWAMIGAL. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Travancore-Cochin Union. Pages 144. Price As. 14.*

The life of Swami Vivekananda is a perpetual inspiration to all people, young and old, to rise to the greatest spiritual heights they are capable of. This short life of the great patriot-saint of modern India and world-teacher fulfils a great need in Malayalam literature. The language is chaste and lucid and the subject matter has been treated brilliantly in a short compass. The book is eminently suitable to be put into the hands of young boys and girls of the Malayalam-speaking people, and ought to find a place in every home and school library. The price is moderate and the get-up and printing good. S. Y.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BOMBAY

REPORT FOR 1947 AND 1948

A Centre of the Ramakrishna Mission in Bombay was started in 1923 and it has been serving the public through religious, educational, and medical activities. The following is a brief report of these activities for the years 1947 and 1948.

The Swamis of the Mission conducted public religious classes—242 in 1947 and 277 in 1948—on the *Bhagavad Gita*, Vedanta Philosophy, Upanishads, etc., both in the Mission premises and outside. The Swami-in-charge delivered a number of public lectures at various places, in and out of Bombay Presidency. Public celebrations were held on the birthday anniversaries of Sri Krishna, Buddha, Lord Jesus, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and other great prophets and saints, with discourses on their lives and teachings.

The Free Reading Room and Library of the Mission contained 3902 books and received 25 periodicals during 1947 and had 3968 books and received 29 periodicals during 1948. During the period under review, a total number of 3341 books was issued to the public.

The Students' Home conducted by the Mission admitted 19 and 21 students respectively during 1947 and 1948. Out of these, one student passed B.Sc. (Tech.) 1st Year Examination in First Class, securing first rank; and another passed B.Sc. (Hons.) with distinction, securing second rank in the University; several others passed B.Sc., B. Com., and M.A. examinations creditably.

The Charitable Dispensary run by the Mission was started in 1923. It has both the Homoeopathic and Allopathic systems of treatment. It is utilized by people belonging to different suburbs of Bombay besides Khar where it is situated. The dispensary treated a total number of 1,03,092 patients in 1947 of which 36,522 were new cases and 66,570 were repeated cases. In 1948 the total number of patients treated was 1,23,808 of which 40,757 were new cases and 83,051 were repeated cases.

The Mission rendered relief to those who suffered when the ill-fated ship *S. S. Ramdas* was wrecked in July 1947, taking a toll of 500 lives out of 700 on board. Besides other services rendered, the Mission distributed help in cash and clothes. The Mission has also been conducting Punjab Relief Work since 1947, the particulars of which will be given in the next report.

Contributions to any of the activities of the Mission may be sent to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Khar, Bombay 21.