PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।"

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

PROTECTION OF THE AFFLICTED

TO these creatures anxious to save their lives I ought to give protection. For the sole duty and purpose of one who is powerful consists in protecting those that are in affliction.

BY means of their own life which is but transient, the righteous, O Auspicious One, protect creatures and show mercy to them who are about to kill one another throngh enmity caused by delusion. (I shall devonr this poison that threatens all creatures; may they be happy throngh me!)

IT is natural for the righteous to feel afflicted at the distress of the world; their acts of mercy form the highest worship of the Supreme Person who pervades all.

BASED ON BHĀGAVATAM, VIII. vii. 38-40; 44.

Āsām prāṇaparīpsūnāṁ vidheyam-abhayaṁ hi me
Etāvān hi prabhor-artho yad-dīna-paripālanam. 38.
Prāṇaiḥ svaiḥ prāṇinaḥ pānti sādhavaḥ kṣaṇabhanguraiḥ
Baddha-vaireṣu bhūteṣu mohiteṣvātmamāyayā; 39.
Puṁsaḥ kṛpayato Bhadre! sarvātmā prīyate Hariḥ . . .
Tasmād-idaṁ garam bhunje, prajānāṃ svastir-astu me. 40.
Tapyante loka-tāpena sādhavaḥ prāyaśo janāḥ;
Param-ārādhanaṁ tad-hi Puruṣasyākhilātmanaḥ. 44.

7. When the non-dual knowledge dawns upon one, one goes beyond all sects and cults. The quarrel about the greatness of one's *guru* as distinguished from another's vanishes. Quarrels are there as long as one does not reach unity. When however non-duality is attained one sees that all *gurus,* yours and mine, are one—forms alone are different, the substance is the same.... It is for this reason that Janaka asked for his tuition fee even before instructing Śuka-deva, for instruction would immediately be followed by the ultimate illumination; who will then give the fee?

8. Everyone loves and accepts the good people. He alone is great who accepts sinners. Bravo to him!

9. The Vidyasagar, Keshav Sen, Vijay Goswami, Dr. Mahendra Sarkar—all of them highly venerated the Master. And none of them were fools. Everyone was wise and learned. Surely they noticed something extraordinary in the Master, which forced them to esteem him. Does anybody revere another for nothing? For a day or two men may be cheated but on the third day they are disillusioned. Then reverence yields place to hatred. Men avoid him afterwards.

10. Either be highly learned or be wholly illiterate. Mediocrity is no good. . . . Swamiji would say, 'If I could forget all that I have learned!' At first he used to argue a great deal with Master. Swamiji did not understand Master at first. At last he had to admit, whatever Master had said were all correct. But what was strange, Master was well pleased with all his doubts and arguments. He would explain a matter twenty times to Swamiji and would never be annoyed. This is the sign of a true *guru*.

11. True teachers love their students inwardly, but outwardly they are a bit severe.

12. One should serve one's master wholeheartedly, physically, mentally, and verbally, as they call it. If the master is pleased, nothing remains unattained through his grace. Abiding peace soon reigns in the heart. All doubts are resolved. Service is not a trifling thing. Even the Lord is pleased with it, what to speak of man?

13. Do you take me to be a marionette in your hand that I am to dance to your wire-pulling? That is absurd. Ah! people come to me to discuss divine topics, to hear about the Lord; do you expect me to ask them not to come? I to discourage them in this holy desire of theirs! You are anxious on account of my illness, I know. Would you succeed in keeping this body and soul together for ever? Today or tomorrow they are bound to part. And for the sake of this body am I to desist from talking of the Lord? Don't be sorry, it is impossible for me to accede to your request.

14. Śrī Caitanya was the Lord himself. O his renunciation! People worship him as an incarnation of God. He took *sannyāsa* from Śrī Keśava Bhāratī, and our Master (Sri Ramakrishna) from Śrī Totā Purī. So you see how important is it to have a *guru*. Even the divine incarnations stood in need of a *guru*! It is the injunction of the scriptures that one should get initiation from a *guru*. Everybody should obey the injunction. Look at the Master's devotion to his *guru,* his absolute obedience! How great was his reverence for him! He strictly followed the Vedic injunction that the deities should not be directly referred to by their names. Never did the name of Totā Purī escape his lips. He used to refer to him indirectly as 'the naked one'.

15. True renunciation comes, I suppose, after the enjoyment of royal pleasures for a couple of births. It is noticed, many *sādhus* are seized with the spirit of renunciation, they pray and meditate hard for some time; afterwards they start monasteries and become abbots and enjoy rank and position. Genuine dispassion is rare indeed. With the *guru's* grace, however, everything becomes easy of attainment.

SPIRITUAL ASCENT THROUGH ART AND WORSHIP

By The Editor

"There is an Infinite, Omniscient Spirit behind, that can do everything, break every bond, and that Spirit we are; and we get that power through love."[1]

"The *Bhakta* (follower of the path of devotion) wishes to realize the one generalized abstract Person, loving whom he loves the whole universe. 'Everything is His ond He is my Lover,' says the *Bhakta*. In this way everything becomes sacred to the *Bhakta*, because all things are His. All are His children, His body, His manifestation . . . With the love of God will come, as a sure effect, the love of everyone in the universe."[2]

The story of Rāma and Sītā has inspired Indian art in all its branches. Poets, particularly, have loved to dwell on different scenes showing Rāma's personal graces, his numerous virtues like truthfulness, and his strict observance of the duties of an ideal king. One imaginative poet composed a stanza in the form of a short dialogue to indicate Rāma's agony during his wanderings in search of his missing wife. Lakṣmaṇa, his faithful brother, was ever by his side, trying every possible means to rouse him into heroic effort. Rāma's all-consuming grief, however, had its own way of quickly jerking his attention back into itself whatever suggestions were made to divert his thoughts into new channels. His mind had come to a stage when burning sorrow appeared to him as intense physical heat in the surrounding atmosphere. So he said to his brother, "Let us move into the shade of yonder tree to save us from this noon-day sun." Lakṣmaṇa thought that this was a chance to alter Rāma's internal condition by a pointed reference to actual facts of the external world. So he said, "Brother, how does the question of the sun arise at this time of the night? It is the moon that is high up in the sky!" "How did you find this out, my dear one?" said Rāma, making a feeble attempt to get rid of the heavy load of pain that was oppressing him. "Because it bears the mark of the deer," answered Lakṣmaṇa, hoping probably, that this proof would be convincing, and that reason might now get a firm foothold in his distracted mind. But to his amazement the law of association took a turn totally different from what he expected. The mention of deer reminded Rāma of the similarity between the eyes of the deer and of his wife, and he fell headlong into the ocean of grief once again, exclaiming piteously, "Alas! Where art thou, my beloved, deer-eyed, moon-faced daughter of Janaka?"[3]

Apart from being an example of a subtle poetic device, this stanza is valuable to us as it shows some of the forces normally operating in our own mind. Even when we are not seriously interested in directing the conrse of our thinking, our ideas do not flit haphazardly, as we might be tempted to assume. For a little observation will reveal that between every two thoughts there is some kind of similarity, if not a striking dissimilarity, which makes a jump from one to the other possible. It is not necessary that the notion connecting the two should correspond to objective facts or relationships, which people standing near at the time can also perceive. It is enough if the notion is in keeping with our temporary emotion, or our habitual outlook. Thus, if we were painters or hunters who overheard the

[1] *Compl. Wks. of Sw. Vivekananda*, Vol. IV. Address on Bhaktiyoga, p. 15.

[2] *Ibid*, III. pp. 81-82.

[3] Saumitre ! nanu sevyatām tarutalam chaṇḍāmsur-ujjṛmbhate,
Chaṇḍāmsor-nisi kā kathā Raghupate ! chandro'yam-unmīlati !
Vatsaitad-bhavatā katham nu viditam ? Dhatte kuraṅgam yataḥ;
Kvāsi preyasi hā ! Kuraṅga-nayane Chandrānane Jānaki !

dialogue, as presented by the poet, and had no acquaintance with the speakers, the mention of the moon and the deer would probably call up in our mind only ideas like that of painting a moon-lit landscape or of hunting wild animals! As our emotions and deeper convictions can be centred round various persons, objects, and satisfactions, the turns in our thought-patterns can be practically endless. We can see this for ourselves from the difficulties experienced in concentrating our mind on any chosen subject. By regrouping attention and the power of visualization we may leave off the farthest point of wandering and trace our way back to the starting place in the thought world,—only to find, to our chagrin, that often within a few seconds the law of association weaves an absolutely novel web and leads us astray to a considerable distance before we detect it! If this is the nature of the thought-stream in what we take to be its normal condition, what can we say about the trouble of controlling it when our entire outlook is dominated by grief, as in the case of Rāma, or by fear, anger, or greed? The mind would then act like an invisible whirlpool. In most original ways it would quickly and forcibly suck into itself, and alter, every thought that our friends, and we ourselves taking the cue from them, may put within its area to reduce its violence.

This very law of jumping, however, becomes a positive advantage when the ruling emotion happens to be one of sacredness or love of God. For, then, whatever may be the nature of the hindrances our body or the environment may thrust upon our notice from outside, the jumps would be regulated by the yearning within the heart, and made to take lines leading progressively to the heights of faith and spiritual awareness. Thought would then function at levels where creative energies operate freely without being distorted by the medium of baser emotions. Even an intellectual conviction of the possibility of this transformation can help us considerably in improvising easy mental exercises, irrespective of what our neighbours may be doing or experiencing at the time. When once this skill is acquired, all daily activities can be used as take-off grounds for spiritual flights, thereby eliminating the dependence on conventional 'runways' in the shape of a sacred place or religious-minded companions.

To illustrate this, a story is often narrated of an incident that took place at a big competition in scripture-chanting. It was the custom for thousands of able men to gather on such occasions. The most daring among them would by turns act as the challengers. That is to say, they would agree to chant any sacred hymn, rearranging its words in different well-known patterns, without minding all the disturbances the others might deliberately create to distract their attention. People were permitted to shout, make faces, crack jokes, or even suggest wrong word combinations in their ears; the only restriction was that none should touch the challengers' bodies! What must be the mental mastery involved in completing the chants with ease and grace, setting at naught the combined ingenuity of determined fun-makers! Once, without even casting a glance at all this struggle and noise,—which had nevertheless reverence for scripture behind it—a certain invitee sat busying himself with a pack of playing cards! He was naturally caught by some and produced before the king who was the organizer of the function. When he was asked to name his associates in this sacrilegious act, he said to their amazement that he knew how to play alone! By way of demonstration he kept an ace before him and said that it acted as a good springboard for his mind to begin an excellent meditation on "The One Lord, dwelling invisibly in the heart of all creatnres, pervading all and abiding as the inner Ruler of all."[4] He added that after having his full satisfaction of seeing himself filled with the love of the Lord, he would place before him the card with two marks and start an appropriate reflection based on the duality of the

[4] Eko Devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ Sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā etc.

Seer and the Seen. In this way, he said, he would go on varying the philosophic framework for his meditative climb according to the markings on the faces of the cards. All were highly benefited by the explanations given by this calm-minded scholar, who showed not merely the freedom of his memory from the control of external factors—which the challengers too were showing—but also the possibility for everyone to utilize any object, available in any context, as a basement for planting a reliable ladder to climb to spiritual heights. The gold chain that the king gave him as the scheduled reward for the best performance in the competition was but a poor token of the heart-felt gratitude of all for the free lesson he gave them on the art of using even most unpromising objects as symbols for mental control.

II

It is the artist who, more than anyone else, first sees, and then applies the right technique for manifesting, higher values in common objects. How often do we throw away a piece of wood or stone on the ground that it is too small or irregular to be of any service to us! The experienced eye of the artist sees its worth in no time. He quietly takes it home, eliminates the unwanted portions with the help of a few simple instruments and gives it back to us as a little figure,—a permanent reminder of the noble ideas welling up within him. In India there was a time when religious emotion expressed itself in an exuberance of art. The heights that it attained in the fields of architecture and sculpture can be seen from the magnificent temples that were erected in olden days. In some of them even nooks and corners contain carvings that elevate our thoughts. The beauty that filled the heart of the artist to overflowing found its way also to those few square inches of stone available there after adequate provision had been made for bigger images. And the result was the creation of a line of miniature lotus flowers or heads of sages, to symbolize meditation and spiritual perfection. People must have felt that in a place set apart for the worship of the Lord of creation and of beauty, it was not proper to leave even the least bit of stone unaltered but that a loving effort ought to be made to help it reflect celestial glory in howsoever small a measure. For that would be a standing object lesson to all thinking men. If even insentient matter contained within it such exquisite possibilities, waiting only for the delicate touch of an expert's hand for bringing them out, can any worshipper fail to see the extent of the power and the serenity that can come to him through systematic discipline? In the case of a sincere aspirant, whether he cares to know it or not, every devotional act, physical or mental, acts like a chisel stroke, detaching without pain all undesirable aspects of his personality, and filling in the needed virtuous aspects to make it a living temple of God.

Painting gives the same stimulus to mental embellishment. The canvas or wall on which the work is done has no doubt to content itself with one dimension less than what sculpture gets. But the loss can more than be balanced by the use of a well planned perspective and from the wide range of shades got through a skilful mixing of colours. If a painter is unable to rise above the level of sensual beauty, his productions will be restricted to an exact representation of muscular limbs or the smoothness of skin and silken dress. But there are artists who seek heavenly guidance and thankfully receive the light granted by the Most High. Theirs becomes a steady hand and with a few touches of their brush they produce the maximum effect. In fact they make those who look at their pictures feel that earthly life, under proper care, fulfils its important function as the preparatory stage for the human soul to develop the wings of virtue required for its divine flight. To him, however, who can regard the Indwelling Lord Himself as the Supreme Painter, there comes the unique experience that transforms his very personal existence and fills it with the highest spiritual art.

While sculpture and painting are characterized by some kind of fixity, music has the

merit of being able to give a 'running' thrill, without losing the capacity, which they have, of leaving a lasting impression. Here too, in composition and in execution, it is possible to aim at a mere reinforcement of the ordinary craving for sense pleasures. But the greatest outpourings in music have come from the human heart, either in its passionate longing to get the Lord's grace, or after being blessed with the vision revealing life and thought to be sportive movements in His infinite being.

In India, from ancient days, the value of devotional music has been fully recognized. It is worth observing what happens even in remote villages at the present day. Even people of the labouring classes gather together in a convenient place at nightfall and spend an hour or two of their hard-earned rest in singing familiar pieces to the accompaniment of simple instruments. If they have kept up this tradition in spite of difficulties and discouragements, what will they not do if they are given suitable accommodation, better instruments, and systematic training? Available songs fall into different categories. Some the women sing even while rocking the cradle. They are so nicely composed that they apply to the baby that may be sinking into, or waking from, peaceful slumber, and can also be used as an appeal to the Divine Power lying dormant in everyone to wake up and manifest Its glory. What philosophy calls Liberation, devotion looks upon as the Music of the Soul.

We may, in this connection, take a useful hint from Shakespeare's description of how Hamlet dealt with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who tried to ascertain his intentions. Hamlet handed a pipe to Guildenstern and asked him to play upon it. He repeatedly declined, saying he knew 'no touch of it'. Hamlet then showed him the stops and said: "Govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music." "I have not the skill," the friend once again pleaded. "Why, look you now," retorted the prince, "how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know the stops. You would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from the lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?" By 'music' in that context, Hamlet meant his secrets, which spies like Guildenstern had little chance of detecting. It needs no special effort to see that this music reaches its highest significance only when it is applied to the spiritual field. It is fully expressed when, as a result of suitable discipline, our thoughts are regulated, emotions purified, intellect made steady, and harmony established with the Cosmic Will. To treat our personality as a musical instrument, the practice of virtue as the process of tuning it, and prayer itself as a fervent request to the Lord to take it in His hands and to play on it to His heart's delight,—what more ennobling thought can we entertain! If our personality is a flute, let Kṛṣṇa play on it, if it is a *Vīṇa,* let the Goddess of Art and Learning move Her delicate fingers across its strings!

III

This brings us, naturally, to the vast field of mythology and religious traditions. Every cultural group has had them. Taking Greek stories, by way of example, we find one of their underlying ideas to be that gods gladly come down to the earth and take active interest in the affairs of men. Many of the Greek heroes are literally the children of the gods, and they carry out their exploits because of the divine power infused into them. Ancients, whether in (what we in a narrow sense now call) the West or the East, did not like to retain any thought barriers between the worlds of men and of gods.

From the Indian standpoint the main moral of the stories is clear. If even in matters like the satisfaction of daily needs, protection from enemies and the achievement of martial greatness, man's efforts are not

only aided but also in many cases prompted by the celestials, is it not reasonable to expect the full grace of the Almighty to descend on anyone who sincerely struggles to get it? The Lord in His mercy is ever ready to make us sharers in His immortality, it is our childishness that prevents us from seeing this. What a pity we remain preoccupied with earthly trifles, and think of approaching Him only to get some of them 'released' to answer our fancied needs! This idea is often repeated. The *Bhāgavata* puts it very forcibly when it accounts for Dhruva's dejection. There was good justification, in one sense, for being specially delighted; for by a discipline lasting only about six months he was able to get a vision of the Lord, for which great sages had meditated for years in vain. But in another sense he had committed a folly. He had failed to eliminate from his mind the initial bitterness which made him run to the Lord for redress. What he, therefore, got in the shape of boons were merely power and pleasures of the ordinary type, enormously prolonged and extended through divine will! Having contacted the very Source of self-mastery and undying bliss, he had in effect—so he felt—begged for and accepted the cause of greater pride and bondage. In this he had acted as foolishly as a pauper asking for mere chaff—*phalīkārān-ivādhanaḥ*—when granted an interview by an all-powerful king![5]

Looked at in this way, mythological stories contain lessons useful for spiritual practice. In the first place, they stress the importance of ceaseless exertion. Not one of the heroes mentioned in them was at any time passive or lazy. Many of them certainly decided not to retaliate or strike the striker. It was because they saw the wisdom and the glory of grouping all their energies on the superior plane, which we loosely call 'moral', but which the hero or the heroine realized as the plane of the creative principle operating behind man and nature. Non-resistance to evil, in their case, meant not merely a refusal to hit back on the material level, but a total employment of the powers of protection and goodwill in an enveloping movement in which conceptual differences of attacker, defender, and the Almighty Saviour became fused into a single sublime experience. Its worth was convincing, unquestionable. All other values faded before it. That was their God. He was not in their eyes an extra-cosmic being. They saw Him rather as the Inner Ruler of all, having His eyes, ears, and limbs everywhere. They also saw that by serving Him, by dedicating all their activities to Him, all that could or need be done for the welfare of 'others' would be accomplished as surely and naturally as nourishment for the branches and leaves of a tree would be supplied by depositing the manure round its roots. Thus, in a sense, although without realizing it, the same path of dedication is taken by all those who gladly risk their precious lives for the sake of others, as for example, the young nurse who smilingly works in an area of serious epidemics, or the sole earning member of a family who rushes into the field of battle to save his country from foreign aggression. The nurse, the soldier and, indeed, every other worker can carry out their respective tasks with efficiency even with the ordinary idea of serving man as man. But there is a more ennobling way of doing them. That involves the introduction of spiritual values, the widening of their outlook and the undertaking of the same activities as a form of worship of the Lord abiding in man, or appearing *as* man. There is not the least danger of efficiency going down by the change in attitude. On the contrary there is sure to be the added gain of seeing devotion and thankfulness rising steadily in the heart.

Printing and other facilities, like that of translating books from one language into others, have now made almost all mythologies and written religious traditions available to us.

[5] Naicchan-muktipater-muktim tasmāt-tāpam-upeyivān . . . Bhavacchidaḥ pādamūlam gatvāyāce yad-antavat . . . Bhavacchidam-ayāce'ham bhavam bhāgya-vivarjitaḥ . . . Svārājyam yacchato maudhyān-māno me bhikṣito bata . . . Īśvarāt kṣīṇa-puṇyena phalīkārān-ivādhanaḥ. Bhāg. IV. ix. 29-35.

They contain the world's inspired thoughts, clothed in attractive literary form. The fact that they abound in stories and anecdotes makes even children enjoy them and imbibe their spirit without formal teaching. The narrow sectarian grooves in which our minds ordinarily run, are sure to be broken down by a reverent study of these records. Far from diluting our loyalty to our particular creed, it strengthens our conviction that the voice of God has spoken to men of one-pointed devotion in all countries and in all ages. It also shows us that every revelation has led to the laying out of fresh paths along which people of varying tastes and capacities could easily make their pilgrimage to the highest Truth. This very discovery puts us into close mental contact with the hopes and joys of the great ones who climbed up earlier. It helps us to evolve invisible feelers to discern their course and to make suitable adjustments in our own approach to the goal.

IV

Stories thus become a reliable foundation for self-improvement. The effort we make to enter emotionally into the higher levels of awareness experienced by saints and sages helps our creative imagination to become habituated to effect similar movements within ourselves. This gradually opens np our power of finer perception and gives us access to a store-house of suggestions about the technique of keeping our thoughts and feelings properly tuned. Well has it been said that the more the mind is cleansed by listening to and reciting sacred tales the more it sees the subtle Reality, like eyes through the application of medicinal pastes.[6]

Every system that has provision for God in His Personal aspect lays down rules for adoration or worship of some kind. The underlying idea is that worship is the direct means for strengthening virtues and preparing the devotee's mind for the descent of divine grace. In India worship takes many forms. While the ultimate aim is to realize the Lord as all-pervading, the first practical step is taken with the object of making the mind steady on some symbol, and learning to attain a harmony of the maximum discrimination, consecration, and certainty through it. Once this mastery is achieved, attention could be swung over to other symbols arranged on the philosophic framework that the aspirant considers to be most satisfactory. After mentioning a few objects suitable for securing this basic stability, Patañjali states the guiding principle in such matters by saying, "Or by meditating according to one's predilection." Vyāsa explains that by becoming steady in that one instance, the devotee's mind reaches the position of steadiness in other matters also.[7] The *Bhāgavata* refers to this freedom of choice, as applied to worship, by saying that offerings can be made "with sincerity and love, by means of various presents, to an image, or in the sacrificial ground, or fire, or the sun, or water, or one's own heart."[8] Of course the procedure varies in accordance with the symbol used. For example, one is to meditate that the various deities are present in the sacrificial ground; place oblations mixed with melted butter in the fire; address prayers to the power behind the sun; or take water in both palms and pour it back into the tank or river after chanting appropriate hymns with faith.

The most widely prevalent form of worship, however, is that done in temples, where quite often there are two images, one fixed on a pedestal, and another small enough to be carried about in processions. It is not uncommon for cultured people to set apart a room in their own house as a chapel, and after completing their prayers in a public temple, enter into it and conduct a service along with the members of the family. Wherever an image is used, the ritual proceeds more or less on the same lines. The thought of God is the only purifying agent, and it is applied in various artistic ways, first to purify

[6] *Bhāg.* XI. xiv. 26.

[7] *Yoga Sūtra,* I.39. Tatra labdha-sthitikam-anyatrāpi sthitipadam labhate (Vyāsa).

8 Cf. Bhāg. XI. xxvii. 9 also 16-17.

the worshipper and the articles used in the worship. Identifying himself with the form of his chosen Deity, he imagines it as pervading his own body. He then mentally worships it; and being one with that, he invokes it into the image.[9] If funds permit, he may bathe the image with scented water, dress it in silk clothes, decorate it with garlands and ornaments, place before it various dishes, and wave incense and lighted lamps before it,—all the while meditating on the Lord's spiritual presence in and around him. The intelligent worshipper learns within a short time to keep the flow of his devotion steady and coordinated to the movements of his body. If funds do not permit, and even materials like flowers are lacking, the entire procedure is gone through mentally, the vital gain being the deepening of the feeling of intimate relation with the Lord, neutralizing automatically the common notions of His being remote and of man being separate from Him. In the course of worship, the devotee may in his overflowing love remain rapt for some time in singing to and praising the Lord. Or he may listen to or himself narrate His exploits, enact His deeds, or dance in ecstasy.[10] Here is a total blending of art and worship, leading smoothly to the transformation of the whole personality and to perfect spiritual awareness.

[9] *Ibid.* 24; also 30-35.

[10] *Ibid.* 44.

MEMORIES

By Sri Mohini Mohan Mukherji

Really blessed moments are few and far between. But if and when they come, they leave an imperishable impress on one's mind. Recollection of a few such moments that came to me more than forty-five years ago is given below.

I

I had the good luck of coming in close contact with Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) on several occasions at the Belur Math. One such contact came about 1908 or 1909. I, with one or two friends—all school-going boys living in a village about twelve miles from Belur, had come to the Math and spent the night in the Visitors' Room. Next morning, we had bathed in the Ganges and were sitting on the floor near the mango tree on the western courtyard. Maharaj had come down and was sitting on an arm chair and smoking. It was winter. He had a pair of socks and a warm *kurta* and a soft shawl on. Two or three senior monks were also around Maharaj on benches and a few others on the floor—everyone looking at the serene countenance of Maharaj and eager to hear him talk. No one dared to move or make the slightest noise. Though there was nothing on Maharaj's face to compel silence, everyone sat still. It seemed to us that although he was looking before him, his mind was completely indrawn.

I was thinking if I could render any little service to Maharaj. After about a quarter of an hour during which Baburam Maharaj spoke to him several times, he called me by his side by moving his fingers and asked me to take off his socks. As I was eager to render any little service to him though a dozen attendants would run to him at his mere wish, I felt greatly elated. I was very happy and passed both my palms over his well-shaped legs and feet soft as down several times very slowly and with great care before I took off the socks. He asked me to keep them in his room on a rack.

After *pūjā* and *bhog* (offerings in the

shrine), Maharaj was taking his noon-day meal in his room upstairs. He was then occupying the north-western room on the first floor of the main premises. I was then about eleven years of age. While strolling hither and thither, I found myself in front of Maharaj's room, the door of which was ajar. He was taking his meal sitting on the floor. An attendant was standing by his side. Maharaj looked at me but I was nonplussed and was slowly tracing back my footsteps. He asked me to come in and sit down. I did so. He finished his meal and was kind enough to ask me to pour water, over his palm. I did as ordered. I then gave him a towel. The attendant was clearing away his plate etc. Maharaj asked me, "Would you like to take something, my boy?" I nodded assent; in fact, I was wondering if I could have some *prasād* from his plate. The attendant gave me some. I took it and washed my hands. Maharaj then sat on his cot and a little later reclined on his bed and asked me to gently rub his feet. I was going to squat on the floor but he said, "No, no; sit on the bed." It was indeed a rare privilege and I was very very glad.

While lying on his bed, he asked me various questions about our school, our studies, our health. Of course, he knew me from some time before. About half an hour passed in this way. As the dinner bell was sounded, Maharaj asked me to go downstairs to take *prasād* with others. Before I left, he drew my head towards him and passing his right palm over it, gave me his blessing. I touched his feet and came down.

Maharaj had a very soft corner in his mind for young boys. He would never be serious when amongst them. His countenance—especially his eyes—was simply bewitching. As I was very young, he told me to cultivate the habit of 'service' and never to falter in helping anyone in distress. He said "You have your Anāth Āshram (Home for the destitute) at your village. Try to be of help to poor people through this Āshram. But do not normally neglect your studies or be unmindful towards your health. Look, even at this age, how strong I am (and he passed the fingers of his right hand through mine as if to try my strength). Also come here as often as you can." He was a fountain of love.

II

On the occasion of the Swamiji's (Vivekananda's) birth anniversary about 1910 or 1911, I had come to the Math the previous evening. Early next morning, Swami Nirbhayananda (Kanai Maharaj) asked me if I could help him in cleaning Swamiji's room. I was very glad and went upstairs with him. Kanai Maharaj took out various articles, dresses etc. of Swamiji. I placed the dresses on hangers for airing and took down to the Ganges various articles for cleaning and washing. I had the rare privilege on that occasion to touch the dresses etc. that had been used by Swamiji years ago. I was thus occupied till about 10 o'clock and Kanai Maharaj was pleased with my work.

At about noon, Maharaj, Sarat Maharaj, Baburam Maharaj and others took their seats in the Visitors' Room. Someone was singing. A well-dressed gentleman came and sat down after touching the feet of the elder Sādhus, including Maharaj. If my memory serves correctly, I heard his name then as Pulin Babu and it seemed he was well known in the Math. Maharaj asked him to sing. He agreed but with folded hands requested Maharaj to take the *tablā*. Maharaj said smilingly, "Well, it is a long time that I have not touched it. However, let me see." He did very well, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the sight—the beautiful well-shaped hands moving but the face shewing complete unconcern and detachment, the eyes giving a far distant look. Then Sarat Maharaj sang a song to the accompaniment of *pākhwāj* as he said it was the birthday of Swamiji, his teacher.

It was indeed a rare sight and I had no chance of witnessing it again as long as Maharaj was in his mortal frame. He was quite at ease with the instrument. Before starting for

home towards evening, I prostrated before Maharaj who blessed me by touching my head with his right palm. He said, "Come on such occasions and you will meet many of us." I told him, "Maharaj, today I saw you playing on the *tablā*. It was really fascinating." He said, "Yes, we had learnt all these years ago and today it is Swamiji's birthday. Better start for home right now as you will have to walk a long distance." Even in the midst of such a busy day, he did not forget that I had to walk a long distance to reach home. Even for an insignificant boy like me, he had such profound love and attention.

HINDU VIEW OF IMMORTALITY

By Swami Aseshananda

The question of soul and its destiny is a metaphysical question, which has provoked hard thinking from the earliest dawn of civilization. Philosophers in the East as well as in the West are not unanimous on this mooted question and have sometimes expressed views which are diametrically opposite from one another. In this paper, I will not attempt to take the position of an evalnator and say categorically, "This view is right and all other views are wrong." On the other hand, I will say, "Truth has many faces like the facets of a diamond." Each view represents one aspect of the Reality. All taken together will give us a composite pictnre of Reality. As different radii converge to the same center, likewise different views will ultimately meet at a common point of unity. To attain that unity, opinions are to be transformed into experiences. Philosophy should no longer remain as a concept but a reality. Religion must speak not of dogma or creed, but of direct awareness of the ground of existence. Revelation is to be interpreted not as an historic event but an awakening to consciousness where the experiencer and the experienced, the knower and the known are one. In the Vedas, the earliest scripture of the Hindus, it is called *Turīya,* the fourth state. The three states of consciousness which are normal to every man are waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The fourth state of consciousness is an experience of eternal now, by gaining which a philosopher becomes a mystic, and a lover of God a Saint. By transcending the limitations of the senses and the intellect man probes into the heart of the Eternal. This has been beautifully pnt by one of the greatest monistic philosophers of India, Śaṅkarācārya, in these pregnant words—

'There is a continuous consciousness of the unity of sonl and Brahman, the Absolnte. There is no longer any identification of the soul with its coverings. All sense of duality is obliterated. There is pure unified consciousness. The man who is well established in this consciousness is said to be Illumined.' 'Even though his mind is dissolved in Brahman he is fully awake, free from the ignorance of waking life. He is fully conscious but free from any craving. Such a man is said to be a *Jīvanmukta,* free while living in a body.'

The fundamental principle of Vedānta Philosophy,—by the study of which the German philosopher, Schopenhauer, was inclined to remark, 'It has been the solace in my life and will be the solace in my death,'—is unity. Here science will shake hands with philosophy. The goal of science and the goal of philosophy are the same. Modern science is far from being materialistic. Some of the topmost scientists of today are of the opinion that consciousness is always present everywhere in the universe, even though its pre-

sence cannot always be detected by scientific methods. Erwin Schrödinger in his admirable book 'What Is Life?' says:

"Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular. How does that idea of plurality (so emphatically opposed by the Upaniṣad writers) arise at all? Consciousness finds itself intimately connected with and dependent on the physical state of a limited region of matter, the body. Now there is a great plurality of similar bodies. Hence the pluralization of consciousness or minds seems a very suggestive hypothesis. Practically all simple ingenious people, as well as the great majority of Western philosophers have accepted it. . . The only possible alternative is simply to keep the immediate experience that consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown; that there is only one thing and that what seems to be a plurality, is merely a series of the different aspects of this one thing produced by a deception (the Indian Māyā); the same illusion is produced in a gallery of mirrors, and in the same way Gaurišaṅkar and Mt. Everest turned out to be the same peak seen from different valleys. . . . Yet each of us has the undisputable impression that the sum total of his experience and memory forms a unit quite distinct from that of any other person. He refers to it as 'I'. What is 'I'?"

In answer to the question "What Am I?", Vedānta accepts an affirmative view of man and posits that his essential nature is spiritual and immortal. It does not agree with materialistic thinkers who preach man as a conglomeration of atoms, an epiphenomenon of no consequence whatsoever in the scheme of the universe. They say man counts for nothing in nature, which is governed by inexorable law. Man appears on the scene, lives his momentary life of exaltation or defeat and then disappears, willingly or unwillingly, while the universe moves on, cold, unconcerned. This has been the theme of one of our relentless, thought-provoking thinkers of our times, Bertrand Russell, who writes in his book, *A Freeman's Worship*: "Mankind is like a group of shipwrecked sailors on a raft in a vast sea at night. There is darkness all around. One by one they fall off the raft into the waters and disappear. When the last man has fallen off, the sea will roll on and the holes made in the waters by their bodies will be covered over. Nature cares not for man."

No doubt it is true that man lives his brief span of life, dies, and is forgotten. He is reduced to dust and ashes. But there is something in man which survives death and endures. There is life after death. If death means extinction it is an impossible idea. Even matter according to scientists is indestructible. How can the soul of man, the source of his thoughts, his visions, his dreams, his ideals be destroyed? Rightly does Śaṅkarācārya say that even to think of non-existence, there must be an experiencer. One can deny everything, but one cannot deny the existence of the denier. Man is the most relentless rebellious child of nature. Nature wants to write finis to the drama of life, by bringing in her messenger of death. But man refuses to recognize death as total annihilation and accepts intuitively that he is going to live everlastingly because he knows that his true nature is undecaying and immortal.

Among the believers in immortality there are two schools of thought. One school believes in the theory of one birth and another school in the theory of many births, which is technically termed as the Doctrine of Reincarnation. According to medieval Christian thinkers, a soul is created by God at the time of birth and thereafter it continues to live for ever. How the soul is created is a mystery. Nevertheless the life of the soul may be either blessed or unhappy after death of the body. This is determined by the way the individual has lived this earthly existence. If during his mortal life he has won the favour of God, he is granted redemption and blessedness. If, on the contrary, he is out of the orbit of Grace, he is condemned to eternal suffering. A student of Vedānta finds it hard to accept this view of life for the following reasons: When we think rationally we subscribe to the

view that whatever has a beginning must have an end. As Schopenhauer has pointed out, 'To say that we are immortal and at the same time to maintain we have a beginning is just like thinking of an infinite stick with one end in view.' Secondly, if this is our only life on earth, the inequalities of existence cannot be explained. Passion and malice have to be attributed to the Creator. Man will ask this question, 'Why, under the rule of a kind Providence, is one born crippled, blind, deformed, with constant misery hanging on?' To conceive that a compassionate God should create souls foredoomed to suffering is unthinkable. Furthermore, there seems to be an utter lack of proportion between cause and effect—a finite cause producing an infinite result. Man's life on earth is temporary and short. During his brief career he rises and falls. Sometimes he yields to temptations in spite of himself. Many things over which he has no control, conspire to prompt him to follow a tortuous path. And for a mistake committed willingly or unwillingly his soul must be punished for eternity! Should not a kind God give him a second chance for rectification? It is inconceivable to think of a God as our Merciful Father and at the same time picture Him as a punisher of his disqualified children with eternal doom of suffering.

According to Vedānta each soul is potentially divine. The purpose of life is to unfold that innate divinity. Perfection is inherent in the soul. Through spiritual discipline, the cloud of ignorance is to be removed and then the glorious sun of divine perfection will manifest itself automatically in its fullest glory.

All souls will ultimately attain the goal of enlightenment. Those that are slow and have not achieved it in this life will be given innumerable chances for self-improvement in their onward march towards the goal of divine destiny. Death is not a punishment inflicted on the soul. It is a welcome release from the physical body, which has become unfit and unusable. As the *Bhagavad-gītā* puts it: "Just as the dweller in the body passes through childhood, youth and old age, so at death he merely passes into another kind of body. Worn out garments are shed by the body: worn out bodies are shed by the dweller within the body. New bodies are donned by the dweller like garments." All souls, good or bad, will don new bodies. No soul will be lost.

What decides the future destiny of man? *Karma*. The law of *Karma* means the law of causation as applied to the moral and spiritual world. 'As you sow, so you reap.' There is no chance or accident in spiritual life. Everything is determined by one's own previous action. Karma operates in two ways. In the first place every action produces a result in the form of pleasure or pain. Secondly, every thought and deed creates an impression in the sub-conscious mind and the sum total of these impressions forms the character of the individual. Therefore, the happiness or misery that we experience is caused by ourselves. Buddha rightly says:

> Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,
> None other holds you that ye live and die,
> And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss
> Its spokes of agony,
> Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.

Sometimes *Karma* is misinterpreted as fatalism. A fatalist is chicken-hearted and slovenly in his effort. What does it matter whether he endeavours or not? What must happen will happen anyway! But the *Karma Yogi*, the man of action, takes all responsibility on himself, blames neither God nor his neighbours and says to himself, 'I will undo what I have done.' He ceaselessly struggles and pushes forward in spite of failures.

There is one objection which can be raised against the theory of reincarnation on the ground of the soul's utter forgetfulness of past lives. Critics will say: 'If the soul has lived before, why does it not remember its previous incarnations?' To this, a Vedāntist will answer that memory is not the criterion of existence. Do we remember everything that

happened when we were mere crawling babies, falling many a time, during our movements? However, memory can be revived by certain yogic practices. Patañjali, the compiler of Yoga Aphorisms, mentions it. That book explains Hindu Psychology. But I am not sure whether it can be done through hypnosis. In yogic meditation the subject is quite alert. He does not enter into a passive morbid state of mind to become a tool in the hand of others as is noticed in an hypnotic spell. On the contrary, by developing the power of concentration through self-consciousness and self-regulated effort he enters into a plane where the previous chapters of life that he has gone through are exposed and revealed to his inner eye and he knows how many times he has come to this earth and how many times he has made his victorious or defeated exit, and learning every time something from his achievements and mistakes, from his rise and fall. It is mentioned in the life of Buddha that at a certain stage of his spiritual development, as an outcome of his meditation he remembered all his past incarnations. Those of us who do not remember the past must not feel sorry. It is a sheer waste of time to spend so much effort and energy on such a paltry thing. Memory of past lives is a burden. A spiritual aspirant cannot make any progress if he broods over his past and remains clogged in the whirlpool of old recollections. It is perhaps for this reason, mother-nature makes us forget them so that we can advance by controlling the emotions which arise from impressions lying buried in the deep layers of the sub-conscious mind. Emotions have hypnotized us. A sober and sane philosophy will de-hypnotize us. Therefore, we must struggle not to be hypnotized by anything in this world. In this matter Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the Vedānta Movement in America says: 'Therefore beware how you allow yourselves to be acted upon by others. Beware how you unknowingly bring another to ruin. True, some succeed in doing good to many for a time by giving a new trend to their propensities, but at the same time they bring ruin to millions by the unconscious suggestions they throw around, rousing in men and women that morbid, passive hypnotic condition which makes them almost soulless at last.'

Critics will ask: Is there any scientific proof of the theory of reincarnation? The answer according to Vedānta is yes and no. As we cannot prove the existence of the soul in the laboratory, likewise we cannot demonstrate by the objective method of science that the soul retains the impressions of the past lives and comes into this world with the blue print of its previous incarnations. Shakespeare rightly says, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio." Every child is born not with a *tabula rasa,* an unwritten slate, but with tendencies very peculiar to its self and quite distinct from those of others. Evolutionists will explain this inborn tendency of the child with the traditional theory of heredity and environment. But heredity does not explain everything. Why, of the same parents having the same benefit of education and environmental facilities, does one child grow to be a veritable scholar while another child remains underdeveloped? Vedānta accepts the theory of evolution but does not agree on a mechanistic interpretation of life, which stifles all aspirations for morality and religion. The logicians of India say: Our experiences cannot be annihilated. Our actions, though apparently disappearing, remain unperceived and reappear in their effect as tendencies. Even little babies come with certain tendencies,—fear of death, for example.

Here we find a common meeting ground between the scientific evolutionists and reincarnationists on the point of explaining the tendencies of present life by past conscious efforts. But they part company when they explain the origin and source of that tendency. Reincarnationists explain that all experiences are stored up as tendencies in the subject of those experiences, the individual soul; and are transmitted by reincarnation of that unbroken individuality. The evolutionists, on the other hand, hold that the brain is the sub-

ject of all actions and interpret an inborn tendency of the child by the theory of transmission through cells. It is left to the individual to choose between the two. As Swami Vivekananda says: "Thus the doctrine of reincarnation assumes an infinite importance to our mind; for the fight between reincarnation and mere cellular transmission is in reality the fight between spirituality and materialism. If cellular transmission is the all-sufficient explanation, materialism is inevitable and there is no necessity for the theory of a soul. If it is not a sufficient explanation, the theory of an individual soul bringing into this life the experiences of the past is absolutely true. There is no escape from the alternative, reincarnation or materialism. Which shall we accept?"

As mentioned before, materialism does not satisfy all the longings of the mind and can never bring complete satisfaction to man. Materialism may bring happiness when everything goes well but when dangers and difficulties come, when death stares us in the face, even a thorough-going materialist will be compelled to say on account of the darkness beyond, "Oh God, if there is a God, save my soul, if I have a soul."

We must bear in mind, that reincarnation is only a consolation prize. It is not the merit prize. Reincarnation is not to be confused with immortality. It is the apparent self that reincarnates. The real self which is eternal and universal does not undergo any change of birth, death, and rebirth. All changes are within time. The Ātman, the real self, is timeless. Reincarnation is the process of evolution which the apparent self experiences from the study of many lives in order to be detached and be free. That freedom cannot be achieved by continuous existence in time nor by going to heaven. Even the longest life in heaven has an end. Whatever is within space, time, and relativity must pass away and cannot be eternal. Anything that an individual acquires as the result of his *Karma* he loses again when the momentum is exhausted. Immortality is to be gained here and now by cutting the knot of the heart, which is rooted in ego-sense and which is the cause of 'separation' between his true self and his spurious individuality. As Sri Ramakrishna, an outstanding prophet of modern India, pithily puts it, "When ego dies, all troubles cease." With the destruction of the ego the dreamer wakes up from his dream and rediscovers his lost glory and eternal heritage. Blessed is the man who has realized it and passed the torch of knowledge to other hands with utter humility and deep gratitude. Thus goes on the story of life and the achievements of man in the realm of the perennial philosophy which can enlarge the vision and bind all mankind together.

To conclude, let me repeat what Swami Vivekananda has said: "Nature's task is done, this unselfish task which our sweet nurse, nature, had imposed upon herself. She gently took the self-forgetting soul by the hand, as it were, and showed him all the experiences in the universe, all manifestations, bringing him higher and higher through various bodies, till his lost glory came back, and he remembered his own nature. Then the kind mother went back the same way she came, for others who have also lost their way in the trackless desert of life. And thus is she working, without beginning and without end. And thus, through pleasure and pain, through good and evil, the infinite river of souls is flowing into the ocean of perfection, of self-realization."

Glory unto those who have realized their own nature! May their blessings be on us all!

* Paper read by the Swami at the North-West Philosophical Conference (U.S.A.), with Dr. Moore in the chair.

SPINOZA'S RATIONAL PANTHEISM

(A BRIEF STUDY)

By Sri S. Subash Chandra

In the wave of Philosophical inquiry which swept over Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century and is regarded as the harbinger of the new age, the scientific age of the world, there were two controlling but divergent trends, namely those represented by Bacon and Descartes, the first the propounder of the empirical and the latter idealistic or dogmatic method of philosophizing. From the former we may delineate a continuous influence through Locke, Berkeley, Hume down to Mill, Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and T. H. Huxley: from the latter the development of the modern idealism represented by Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Lotze, and Hartmann. A potent factor in the latter development was the philosophy of Spinoza which had its roots in both Bacon, his immediate predecessor, and Descartes, his contemporary, and leaving its immediate impress on Leibniz, his successor, is traceable even today in schools of thought of universal influence. Spinoza is justifiably claimed as one of the greatest metaphysicians of the entire world. Goethe, the illustrious German poet, speaks of Spinoza in the most flattering terms. He says: "The serene level of Spinoza stood out against my striving endeavour in all directions; his mathematical method was the complement of my poetical way of observation and description; and his formal treatment which some could not think appropriate to moral subjects, was just what made me learn from him with eagerness and admire him without reserve". Fichte, the eminent continuer of the work of Kant, was deeply influenced by Spinoza, while Kant himself was more appreciative of it at the last. Schelling was an avowed Spinozist. Hegel not only enunciated but followed the dictum that to become a philosopher one must soak oneself first in Spinoza's thought. Schopenhauer eulogizes Spinoza as "the most effective means of stilling the storm of the passions." Ernest Haeckel, the distinguished nineteenth century scientist in his book, *The Riddle of the Universe,* acclaims Spinoza's philosophy as "the loftiest, profoundest, and truest thought of all ages" and further characterizes it as "the world system of the modern scientist". Spinoza's influence on Einstein is too well known to be adduced here. To Coleridge, Shelley, and Wordsworth Spinoza communicated an almost mystical sense of the ideal unity of nature. Tennyson's poetry is replete with Spinoza's ideas. Anatole France is reported to have said: "If Napoleon had been as intelligent as Spinoza he would have lived in a garret and written four books."

Spinoza is reported to have told Leibniz: "The received Philosophy begins from created things, Descartes began from the mind; I begin from God." Hence, in this brief study of Spinoza, let us also begin from God. There are three pivotal terms in Spinoza's system: *Substance, Attribute,* and *Mode*. Substance is defined by Spinoza as "that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself; in other words that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception." In part I, Proposition XI of the *Ethics* we find Spinoza identifying Substance with God. In definition VI of the same part of the *Ethics* Spinoza defines God (and therefore Substance, since Substance and God are identical) as "a being absolutely infinite, that is, a Substance consisting in infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality." To make it simple, Substance is necessarily

infinite; because a finite Substance can be conceived through another Substance and this is erroneous, because the definition of Substance is, as quoted above, "that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself." And, if Substance is infinite, it is necessarily one and only one. To assume anything beside Substance is to deprive Substance of its infiniteness. Hence, Spinoza rightly observes : "Besides God no Substance can be granted or conceived." But Spinoza's God is not an object outside the world, which, coalesced with the world, completes the universe. He is himself the universe within which the distinctions and differences constituting the world obtain. In the words of Spinoza himself: "God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things' ' (See the *Ethics,* Part I, Prop: XVIII). All things are in God, and all things which come to pass, come to pass entirely through the laws of the infinite nature of God. God is the cause not only of things coming into existence, but also of their continuing in existence. "God is the efficient cause not only of the existence of things but also of their essence" (See the *Ethics,* Part I, Prop : XXV). Absolutely infinite Substance is not divisible. Substance does not change as a whole and is not affected by passions or moved by emotions. In other words, Substance is immutable. God acts and exists solely by the necessity of his own nature. He is not constrained by anything but obeys the laws of His being. God, as already pointed out, has infinite attributes. Thought and Extension are, however, the most fundamental attributes. In fact, Spinoza is of the opinion that Thought and Extension are the only attributes which human knowledge can comprehend. Attributes are not *our* ways of apprehending the Substance, but ingredients of the Substance itself. But this does not mean, Substance can be dissected or disintegrated. For in the event of such a division of Substance, the parts will either retain the nature of Substance or they will be depleted of it. If former, then there will be as many infinite Substances as there are parts, which is fantastically illogical and absurd; since we have shown that there cannot be more than one Substance. If we prefer the second alternative—namely, that the parts will not retain the nature of Substance—then it will lead us to the inconsistent and preposterous conclusion of there being something besides Substance which is a fatal error, firstly, because it oppugns the infiniteness of Substance, and secondly, it is not in conformity with Spinoza's already adduced prop: that all things are in God and God is the immanent cause of everything. (See the *Ethics,* Part I, Prop: XV) One thing must be added here. It should be understood that Spinoza does not imply that in no sense can we say there are parts of Substance; what he means is that it cannot be said that Substance is divisible as, for example, a loaf of bread is divisible. The parts of Substance are not the kind of parts which can be conceived, but are to be distinguished by differences in the way in which the Substance behaves. This point is very well discussed in a recent book, *Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge* by Dr. Parkinson. These two attributes along with other infinite attributes constitute the essence of Substance. Consequently, Substance thinking and Substance extended are one and the same Substance, comprehended now through one attribute, now through the other. So, also, a mode of Extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, though expressed and understood in two ways. Thought and Extension are not two divergent and discrepant entities but two aspects of one Supreme Reality. It is at this point, that we find Spinoza playing the significant, but arduous and austere role of a synthesizer and mediator. Rightly has Prof. Leon Roth observed : ' 'Materialism and Idealism, Rationalism and Mysticism, Humanism and Naturalism, Egoism and Altruism—all these and many other issues find their reconciliation in the full roundness of Spinoza's philosophy." (See *Spinoza* by Leon Roth p. 237) Here Spinoza dismisses the age-old and still raging clash between

Idealism and Materialism as unwarranted and baseless.

To proceed on with our study of the attributes of Thought and Extension, or to render it more familiar, mind and body are not causally interrelated. They do not mutually influence each other. To let Spinoza speak for himself: "Body cannot determine mind to think, neither can mind determine body to motion or rest or any state different from these, if such there be." (See the *Ethics*, Part III Prop: II) Spinoza explains this passage by pointing out that all modes of thinking have for their cause God only as a thinking thing and all modes of the attribute of Extension have for their cause God only as an extended thing. Hence, mind is incapable of impelling body to motion or rest; and body cannot stimulate mind to cogitate. However, since body and mind are one and the same thing, conceived sometimes under the attribute of Thought and at other times under the attribute of Extension, the order or nexus of things is simultaneous. In other words, the process of states of activity and passivity in our body synchronizes with the chain of states of activity and passivity in the mind. Here I take the opportunity of indulging in a little amount of interpretation. The connection between mind and body might seem to be one of correlation, in that both are attributes of the same Substance. But when Spinoza discusses their relation in the *Ethics*, Part II, Prop. XIII, he says that "the object of idea constituting the human mind is the body, in other words certain mode of Extension which actually exists, and nothing else." This use of the word "object", I venture to opine, suggests that the relation between mind and body is not only one of correspondence, but is the relation between knower and known as well.

Now it is time that we take up the question of the position and status of individual persons, places, and things in the comprehensive and sublime scheme of universe as enunciated and explained by Spinoza. Here too let us turn to Spinoza and see what he himself has to observe. In the corollary of Prop: XXV., of the first part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza writes: "Individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a fixed and definite manner." God is not only immanent but ubiquitous as well. We are all supreme God or Substance, but in a modified state. Here we find Spinoza in consilience wth the sages of the *Upaniṣads* and the mystics of the Advaita Vedānta, and with the Chinese philosophers like Lao Tse and Chaung Chou, and with Plato, Plotinus and Thomas Aquinas. Philosophers seldom disagree! Spinoza is not oblivious of higher and lower states of existence. A higher state of existence implies less of the modification of or deviation from God or Substance; and a lower state of existence connotes more of the modification or obfuscation of the Substance. Differences of degree are affirmed.

Spinoza is a scientist by attitude and disposition. There is nothing in the universe, which is supernatural, arbitrary, and capricious. At the very beginning of Part III, of the *Ethics*, Spinoza declares: "Nothing comes to pass in nature, which can be set down to a flaw therein; for nature is always the same, and everywhere one and the same in her efficacy and power of action; that is, nature's laws and ordinances, whereby all things come to pass and change from one form to another, are everywhere and always the same; so that there should be one and the same method of understanding the nature of all things whatsoever, namely, through nature's laws and rules." Nothing is uncaused. Everything is a nexus in the eternal concatenation of causes. Bodies do not have the power to move themselves or rest themselves, they are always moved or brought into rest by some other body. The mind too is a fixed definite mode of thought having no absolute faculty of positive or negative volition. Prop: XLVIII of part II of the *Ethics* says: "In the mind there is no absolute or free will; but the mind is determined to wish this or that by a cause, which has also been determined by another

cause, and last cause by another cause, and so on to infinity." Hence, we find there is no room for free will in Spinoza's philosophy. Man is a link in the chain of necessity, and imagines himself free only because he is ignorant of the causes of his determinations and is conscious of his actions. But to be conscious of one's acts, by no means signifies that we are free agents acting solely in consonance with our unhampered and unimpeded volitions.

Prof. H. H. Joachim in his well-known commentary on the *Ethics* of Spinoza, rightly observes: "Spinoza, a rationalist without reservation, allowed no appeals to God's inscrutable will or to theological mysteries in the design of his metaphysics." Nothing is voluntary and capricious in nature, all things are conditioned to exist and operate in a specific manner by the necessity of divine nature. Nothing is contingent in the scheme of universe; everything is necessary. Even God performs infinite acts in infinite ways by the same necessity of divine nature. If anyone poses the question why God should manifest himself, Spinoza would answer because it implied in its necessity of existence that it should so manifest Itself. The eternal and infinite God or Substance, does not act with any purpose in sight, but acts by the same necessity whereby it exists. The reason or cause why God exists, and the reason why he acts are synonymous. God does not exist for the sake of an end, for then he would be neither infinite nor perfect, since his very existence would be based on a particular purpose and the fulfilment of the purpose will be the signal for the disposition of God—so neither does he act for an end; of his existence and of his actions there is neither beginning nor end. Hence, a cause which is called final is nothing but an expedient concession to transient human proclivities, in so far as it is considered as the origin or cause of anything. This also leads Spinoza to the conclusion that the world as it is, with all so-called imperfections, deformities, evils, sins, and catastrophes is the only possible world. Because, if we admit the possibility of a better world, then we may as well say, there should be a better God than what he is, since the world is a modification in varying degrees of the infinite attributes of God. And this would be the height of absurdity. It may here be argued, if all things follow from the necessity of the absolutely perfect nature of God, why are there so many imperfections in nature? To this contention, Spinoza gives a ready reply at the end of the first part of the *Ethics* by pointing: "The perfection of things is to be reckoned only from their own nature and power; things are not more or less perfect, according as they delight or offend human senses, or according as they are serviceable or repugnant to mankind. To those who ask why God did not so create all men that they should be governed only by reason, I give no answers but this; because matter was not lacking to Him for the creation of every degree of perfection from highest to lowest; or, more strictly, because the laws of His nature are so vast as to suffice for the production of everything conceivable by an infinite intelligence." Those who are conversant with the philosophy of Leibniz will easily recognize the deep impact of this aspect of Spinoza's philosophy on Leibniz.

Here, I think, we should guard ourselves from basically misunderstanding Spinoza, and Spinoza is more often than not misunderstood at this point. All this brief exposition of ours, I am afraid, may lead some to suppose that Spinoza identifies God with nature and nature with God. But to believe so, is to grossly vitiate Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza in one of his letters to Oldenburg, the first Secretary of the Royal Society, writes: "The supposition of some, that I endeavour to prove the unity of God and nature (meaning by the latter a certain mass or corporeal matter), is wholly erroneous." We feel this point should be clarified, but the clarification is bound to be somewhat abstruse and technical. God is not extended (that is, an object *in* space), but Extension (the entire system of space) itself. God is the complete universe of thinking, not the thought of any individual person, but the

world of infinite mind. Neither mind nor matter is God; but the mental processes and molecular processes which constitute the two-fold history of the world—these and their causes and their principles are God. In a sense God is transcendent as well. Prof. Leon Roth, in his book on Spinoza, rightly says: "The One is vaster than the Many, although it is made up of them. Yet for all that it is not distinct from them. The infinite is not the sum of finites. The finite is a limitation of the infinite." Here we notice that Spinoza treats Substance as apodeictic or self-evident. One may be in doubt as to the forms which Substance takes, and so one can ask such questions as, "Is this really a mango ?" But one cannot suspect that Substance itself exists.

According to Spinoza, "The mind's highest good is the knowledge of God, and the mind's highest virtue is to know God." (See the *Ethics,* Part IV, Prop: XXVIII) There are three varieties of knowledge according to Spinoza; they are, first, imagination or opinion, that is, confused or fragmentary knowledge. Second, knowledge through reason and intuition, which is necessarily true. Spinoza does not dwell much on intuition but proceeds on to deal with knowledge through reason. Knowledge through reason is adequate and perfect. It acquits us from credence in erroneous and superstitious notions. With the help of reason we can eliminate the dark and obfuscating shadows of blind faith and crude superstitions. Reason enables man to canalize his passions and sublimate his emotions. Reason aids man to attain true and abiding bliss and dignity by leading him to the state of identifying himself with the entire order of nature, merging himself with the infinite Substance. Spinoza stresses the need for self-love, as rational self-love implies love of the spark of Divine being within ourselves. "The more we understand particular things," observes Spinoza, "the more do we understand God." (See the *Ethics,* Part V, Prop: XXIV) We shall then pursue true pleasure and shun pain. Pleasure is defined by Spinoza as "a passive state wherein the mind passes to a greater perfection." Pain, to Spinoza signifies "a passive state wherein the mind passes to a lesser perfection." All true pleasures are good, and all pains evil. Spinoza is not a stoic. He advocates restraint and abstemiousness, but does not plead for repression of our emotions.

This, in broad outlines, is the philosophy of Spinoza. Spinoza's philosophy has three practical values. (1) It not only tranquillizes our spirit, but also shows where our highest happiness and benefit lies, namely, in the knowledge of God, whereby we are led to act only as love and piety exhort us. (2) It shows us that we should await and endure fortunes' favours or frowns with a sedate mind, seeing that all things follow from the eternal decree of God, by the same necessity as it follows from the essence of a triangle, that the three angles are equal to two right angles. (3) This philosophy promotes social life, for it teaches us to hate no man, neither to disdain, to deride, to envy, or to be irascible with anyone.

Spinoza's philosophy is one of the most comprehensive systems of philosophies ever and anywhere evolved. Spinoza himself, however, is very modest about the greatness of his philosophy. He writes, "I do not presume that I have found the best philosophy, I know that I understand the true philosophy." Prof. F. Pollock has said: "Spinoza did not seek to found a sect, and he founded none." (See *Spinoza* by F. Pollock p. 79) Yet all philosophy after Spinoza is permeated with his thought. To conclude our paper with Ernst Renan: "This man, from his granite pedestal, will point out to all men the way of blessedness which he found; and ages hence, the cultivated traveller passing by this spot will say in his heart: 'the truest vision ever had of God came, perhaps, here'."

STUDY AND POLITICS

By Sri Chunilal Mitra

The controversy centering round students' actual role in politics is an ever-old new topic. From time to time it has assumed new forms and reappeared in new texture. It is partly of the nature of Science and Philosophy. As in the case of one so in the other, the terms 'students' and 'politics', 'science' and 'philosophy' are not incompatible. But the vital question is what sort of politics should the students do, when and how.

The maxim that study with the students must be of the type and nature of a meditation to them has eliminated much labour and unnecessary roundabout talks. The maxim may be analysed word by word and by having some sort of definitions of the words in the sentence. Whosoever go to a school or a college or a university are not necessarily students. But those who are bent upon knowing and learning something, who do or tend to learn are students. Those who have a love of knowledge, a thirst for understanding, or in other words, are eager, curious, and inquisitive to know the truth and facts about things are students. Yet, for all practical purposes and in a very restricted sense, boys and girls reading in schools, colleges, and universities are conveniently termed students.

Study is not mere reading, but reading to know, to explore, to make findings by systematic probing into subjects. Meditation in the case of a student means the application of perseverance, sacrifice, attention, and eternal vigilance for the attainment of the objective, for the fulfilment of one's own mission. The more the risks undertaken and the hardships overcome, the greater is the success. It is, therefore, neither in jest nor in a loose and flippant way that study with the students has been equated with meditation. The truth and significance of the saying cannot be challenged; even a little analysis goes to confirm and reaffirm it.

It has been estimated that the detailed, organized, and systematic study of even a fraction of the prescribed course for a particular standard takes a period of decades if not a whole life. It is a long journey to know all about the life history of an author, the occasion of the piece, allusion for words and all the paraphernalia in between them. If, on the other hand, a mere success in the examination and not the acquisition of knowledge as such is deemed to be the object of study for the students, a period of several years for the School Final, Intermediate, B.A. or M.A. examination is not at all enough. To fare there well we are to study strenuously and continuously for the whole period. Students should hardly find a respite to make extra work and mix up with extra problems other than the study. In matttrs educational and in learning there is no proxy, and none can stand surety for another. As in the code of Ethics so also in reading there is no act of vicariousness. One well-known Law of Economics is fully applicable to the case of students. It is the Law of Diminishing Returns. As in the case of one so with the other, returns and results are never proportionate to the labour and capital spent. The output from a plot of land is never found in the ratio of plough, labour and manure employed. The duration of a journey by boat can never be lessened indefinitely in exact proportion to the number of rowers engaged. Similarly, students cannot do marvels by overnight exertion just before their examinations. They cannot make up their deficiency by doing extra work or reading continuously for a week or fortnight. The result is never commensurate with the labour, as the work of years cannot be done in weeks. In other words, there is no

'short-cut', no 'digest', no way of 'sure-success' in study. It is meditation pure and simple. Of course, there are rare students who study for a very short period and yet make tremendous progress. But then these are exceptions, and here as elsewhere, exceptions prove the general rule. And even in their cases, study must be a sort of meditation in the sense and to the extent that, if they would do well in a short period, they could do ten times better in a longer period and throughout their career. And by deliberate negligence and meddling in others' affairs they have probably denied themselves and the society they belong to, the best fruit of their possibility, their inner being.

Years back, Sir Mirza Ismail, the then Dewan of Mysore, in a Calcutta University Convocation address remarked about knowledge somewhat in the form of a definition that it is that part of learning which we *retain* and *remember* after forgetting whatever we had learnt. To speak more precisely real knowledge is that part of learning which is retained and *transformed* into action and materialized in life. In that case we are to make life-long study, to learn, to know and to mould life into a right and ideal pattern.

Study is the means, and knowledge the end. This knowledge has been equated with Truth, which, in its turn, is never fixed, permanent and at rest. Centuries back Heraclitus told us that we cannot dip twice in the same river. Truth in the manifested form is thus fluctuating and flowing. It is in constant motion. Successful living depends upon the ability to observe it and to adjust one's actions to it wisely. Even to understand the truth of a particular institution, an object, or an event in detail it takes years of study, and it necessarily forms a sort of meditation. What then to say about the acquisition of the knowledge needed for leading a noble life!

Young minds are found inclined towards politics. But how and when should they take active interest in it? What sort of politics do even their elders know? Without meaning any disrespect to anybody, let us address ourselves and the brothers of our faith and profession. We, as teachers, acknowledge, rather confess, that we know nothing, as we believe in the counsel of the sage, 'Physician, heal thyself.' It is the same lesson that the Upaniṣadic *ṛṣis* have taught: *Ātmānam Viddhi'*, the dictum 'know thyself'. Before mixing up with any politics we must first know it. The chief politics and the politics of the majority of the youth is to express enthusiasm for any new movement that captures their imagination. As it is unwise and inopportune to talk of anything without fully knowing its 'universe' and context, so also, it is inadvisable and unprofitable to take any active role in anything without a thorough knowledge of that thing. Let us take communistic ideas, for example. Before raising cheap slogans, we must know Carl Marx and make a thorough study of his monumental work 'The Capital' and know for certain what he did really mean. Volumes have been written as elucidations and explanations of the principles therein, and it takes decades to *master* them. This applies equally to other systems of political thought as well. Thus, before entering into actual politics it requires a careful study for anyone to know its fundamentals. There is no need, then, to speak of students who are expected to devote their time to the acquisition of knowledge of many subjects besides politics.

Now, in a wider and more flexible sense, not only students as such, but all teachers, professors, lawyers and physicians come within the purview of the term 'student'; and in their respective realm each and every one of them is to make life-long study to make any tangible contribution to his profession and to do any real good to society. For instance, only those teachers and professors are found to be good and successful who are conversant with the 'latest' in their subjects. Before teaching they are to make constant acquisition of knowledge as learners. Unless the 'capital' is increased year after year, decade after decade, and generation after generation, even the big capitalist or a landlord becomes

a bankrupt. His wealth is sure to become spent up in no time. Likewise, if the teachers have got nothing 'more' to cater for the ever-growing new needs of the taught, the former are likely to be condemned aud rejected. They have thus to study, learn, and know more and more and make constant acquisition in life. Only the lawyers who pass sleepless nights in studying, cultivating and mastering their subjects, the objects of their clients, can make themselves 'established' and outstanding in their profession, while only those physicians, who are in touch with the latest findings of the medical theory and practice—the Art and Science of it—can heal their patients well and do lasting good to society. With all of them, cultivation of greater efficiency in their respective subjects is literally a meditation. The less meditative they are the more incompetent they become.

If study is taken to mean 'observation' and not mere reading of books even industrialists and athletes can be rightly regarded as students. They too have to make close observation in their own fields,—the development of the business, the market, and the commodity in the one case, and the growth, improvement, and special features of the particular sport in the other. It takes years of 'study' for them to learn and know things as they are and as they should be.

Students of all types should be perfectly free from restlessness, disobedience, or impatient haste. None should disturb them and drag them into active politics. Their time is sacred. It should be devoted solely for making a thorough, sober, patient, and close study of the selected subjects, including political science to the extent that it forms part of the syllabus. That would equip them properly for whatever political work they might decide to take up later. Their period of study at college is never too long to master at once their own subjects and those of their elders. It is the duty of elders too to make them realize that the available time ought to be utilized to become efficient in their own chosen subjects first. The determination and the power to be thorough in them can later on be applied to various fields of work, as and when situations arise.

THE VISION OF DIRGHATAMAS

By Prof. P. S. Sastri

A close examination of a few typical hymns of *Rgveda* will reveal clearly the philosophic speculations of the Vedic age. To begin with there is the famous hymn of Dīrghatamas. This great but loosely knit song, 1.164, is a beautiful philosophical ballad. It raises a series of questions and answers them. It employs symbols and dogmas in a lyrical network. The marvels of nature and humanity, speculations about the ultimate problems are all woven here into a fine poetic texture. The whole song is full of symbolism and contains stanzas couched in mystic contradictions.

The starting-point of Dīrghatamas throughout is that of scepticism, with a burning desire to understand the nature of the ultimate problems. Naturally, the attention is directed towards Reality. The poet asks:

> "Who has seen Him as He came to exist,
> Seen how the boneless supports the boned?
> Where is the Spirit, life and blood of the earth?
> Who can meet Him who knows to question it?" ((1.164.4)

According to Sāyaṇa, the questions here refer to the corporeal stuff, the subtle body, and the soul, for blood and life are "*prithivī*

tattvas'' ; all these are evolutions of *prakṛti*. But as Ludwig observes, the sages talk about things beyond the power of comprehension. In this passage the poet attempts to ask the nature of the world, throughout maintaining the dependence of the latter on God. Reality comes to appear as immanent in the world, and none can see this beginning. Reality is boneless in the sense that it is not limited like the finite things. The finite things are limited by spirit, life and blood. By calling Spirit or *Ātman* also a limitation, the seer seems to be postulating an inseparable relation between Body and Mind.

Next, the seer attempts to explain the transcendence of Reality. Imbedded as he is so far in ignorance, the seer requests the wise to enlighten him.

> "Who was that one in the form of the Unborn, that has established and firmly fixed these six regions of the world?" (1.164.6)

Since God created all the regions, He must be superior to the world itself. And it is the secure station of the lovely Bird that he wants to know, for it is the rays of this Sun that give and absorb the waters. (1.164.7). Everything is dependent on Reality.

The dependence of the world on God is inviolable. They are inseparably related and united by transcendence and immanence. This is represented as the marriage between God and the world. But it is clearly stated that the universe wedded God in spirit with thought (1.164.8). This conception has profound implications regarding religious consciousness. The universe is spiritually and intuitively related to Reality. They are not poles apart but transcendently and immanently united. Here the seer calls Reality "Father", and the universe "Mother". Speculations are ripe regarding these parents. The Occidentals have seen here the Greek prototypes of Father Heaven and Mother Earth. The ritualists saw after Sāyaṇa. But the cogency of interpretation can be gained by interpreting them to be Reality and the world respectively.

Then follows a beautiful conception of Reality as Time or Duration. Reality is steady or immovable. It is unchanging. But time is within it with all six seasons, 360 days and 360 nights. But unfortunately this conception is not elaborated. Yet we may note that Reality though timeless, contains time within it. It is both dynamic and static. (1.164.15-19).

After this account of Reality, the seer takes up the problem of knowledge. It is in the form of a short 'parable of the tree of knowledge'.

> "There are two birds with fair wings, and closely attached to each other with bonds of friendship. They found refuge in the same sheltering tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit of the fig-tree, while the other only witnesses it;
>
> They hymn ceaselessly their portion of immortality there, where the wise protector of the entire universe has entered me;
>
> Upon the top of that tree where the fine birds eat the sweetness, take rest, and beget children, there the fig is delicious; none gains it who knows not the father." (1.164.20-22)

These three simple *ṛcs* have occasioned much controversy and varied interpretations. The truth of an exposition lies in finding out the true nature of the two birds. According to Sāyaṇa these two birds represent the Individual Self and the Absolute; the former alone enjoys the fruits of *karma*. Griffith is too eager to be more faithful to ritualism than Sāyaṇa himself; and accordingly he takes the protector to mean Soma, when the fine birds will be priests. But he apparently indulges in the hope that the seer has employed the numeral unnecessarily. Surprisingly enough does Ludwig hold that this triplet is an unconnected fragment brought in and inserted here simply because the term 'Snparṇā' has occurred, various other scholars have interpreted 'Suparṇā' as two souls, day and night, sun and moon and so on. Some have even read the plural here and thought that the reference is to the rays of light, stars, metres, spirits of dead, priests and the like. The tree is explained as the body, the orb of the sun, the sacrificial post, the world, the world tree and so on.

But the tree is that of wisdom, whose higher fruit is the knowledge of God. As Geldner has observed, the two birds represent the two species of those who are eager for knowledge with different faculties of comprehension. Only one of them, to whom the poet belongs, discloses the highest knowledge; while the other, who is not speculatively inclined, comes off empty-handed. The portion of immortality referred to is the fruit of the higher knowledge, called *parā vidyā* in the Upaniṣads. They enjoy the sweetness—that is, the fruit—and beget offspring. This symbolizes the handing over of the secret knowledge or wisdom to the son by the father, because the higher knowledge is considered a secret, or as the Upaniṣads called 'Rahasyam'. It cannot be imparted to all and sundry.

Thus in this triplet a distinction is made between the empirical or *a posteriori* knowledge, and the philosophical or *a priori* knowledge. *A priori* knowledge alone leads the individual to Reality; it is the 'Pathway to Reality'. Though there are two types of knowledge, the connecting factor is the spiritual knowledge. Even the uninitiated has an experience of the Absolute by virtue of the identity of the individual self with the Absolute in its generic aspect.

Next the seer is preoccupied with the problem of Life in the *ṛcs* (1.164.30-33). Ludwig, Henry, and Pischel read here a reference to Agni, contrary to Sāyaṇa's correct interpretation of body and the soul. Life and death are the theme of the first of these four. Life reposes in breath, in activity; and it is the swift walker. The *Jīva* or the soul acts as long as there is life in the body. When life disappears, it remains as a pillar in a calm house. The soul of the dead wanders of its own will. The immortal soul has the same origin as the mortal frame. Here is the contrast and the apparent antithesis between the sleeping and the waking states. *Jīva* here means both life and soul.

Next the seer begins to consider the possibility of a disembodied soul. The soul is to be distinguished from simple breathing and consciousness as well. The soul is spoken of as having a will of its own. This implies that activity is the nature of the soul. The soul can be disembodied; but it does not mean that the body and soul are unrelated. They are spiritually related, and the poet observes, *'Amartyo martyenā sayoniḥ'*. In the sense that both the immortal soul and the mortal body spring from the same source, Reality or Absolute, and depend upon it, they are related.

The riddle of thought is taken up in the 37th *ṛc*: "I know not what I resemble, what I am. I wander secret and well prepared with thought. As soon as the first born of the mortal law approaches me, I obtain a portion of this speech." The seer speculates on the possibility of identifying the individual soul with anything. He comes to the inevitable conclusion that it is impossible to know the nature of the soul with simple thought or knowledge. Thought being discursive cannot comprehend Reality. As such Thought and Reality are not convertible terms. The seer is fully equipped with the speculative knowledge or consciousness (*Manasā*), and runs after the secret and the mysterious (*Niṇyah*). Reality cannot be comprehended with our sensations or reflections.

The moral law of the world is God realized as ethical. The first born of the moral law is the conscious human being. When the seer comes into contact with the human beings, he begins to feel his responsibility. The ethical realization of God is in society, in discharging duties and in claiming responsibilities. Though the seer is not explicit, he intends here the autonomy of the will in the realization of God as ethical.

The next verse has a further philosophical import: "Back and forwards, he goes through his own strength. The immortal (soul) and the mortal (body) have the same origin. Both these move ceaselessly in opposite directions. When one perceives one of them, he does not perceive the other". The individual has an autonomy of the will and he alone is responsible for whatever he does.

Activity is the principle of the universe. Reality includes the activity of both Mind and Matter, for it is immanent in them. As such the pursuit of one alone is injurious to the understanding of Reality. The individual cannot realize it only in and through the universe around him. Such a realization can be through service and prayer. The seer accordingly proceeds to a conception of the Logos. The deity is said to repose in the highest sphere, in the permanent mystic consciousness of the eternal *ṛc* or Logos (1.164.39). This speech is potential and is in the highest Empyrean. It is latent in Reality. The universe breathes with its help (1.164.42). It is imperishable and from it flows the distinction between the various perishable things. Speech can be said to have four parts, three parts of which are hidden, the fourth being employed by human beings (1.164.45). Thus speech is both potential and kinetic. As potential it is prayer or Thought. This speech as prayer brings forth the unity amongst diversity. Thought is the relating factor. In other words, Thought always refers to Reality, though it does not comprehend it. As the Idealists say, every judgement is an affirmation of Reality.

The culmination of this speculation is reached in the next *ṛc*, where the seer proclaims the oneness of Reality. Reality is one alone; yet the wise call It in a variety of ways and give It different names: *'Ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti'*. The unity of the world, the spiritual realization of the universe, the goal of speech and of thought, the culmination of worship and of prayer, are all realized only in this Absolute.

SRI AUROBINDO'S SAVITRI *

By Sri P. Sama Rao

It is indeed intriguing to review something which is in its own nature both a review and an assessment. The task becomes not a little arduous when the subject is concerned with one of the greatest poetic and philosophic geniuses of the present age,—Sri Aurobindo—who has promulgated a spiritual tradition of his own through *Savitri* and *Life Divine*, his magnum opii. If the westerners would be catholic they can be convinced that Sri Aurovindo's *Savitri* has easily eclipsed Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Inferno* both in spiritual content and in the manner of expression; he has expressed the subtlest of thoughts most poetic and metaphysical language as their vehicle has been capable of achieving up till now. Any detailed discussion of Aurobindo's art in *Savitri* is out of place here for we are concerned only with Sri A. B. Purani's understanding and interpretation of it. It may however be observed that Sri Purani, what with his own spiritual adequacy and lucid expression, has done his job well. It shall not be an unmerited praise of him to hold that without this interpretation *Savitri* would remain a hermetically sealed mystic text.

In the very words of Sri Aurobindo which

*SRI AUROBINDO'S SAVITRI, An Approach and a Study by Sri A. B. Purani—*Published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1956. Pp. 393—Price Rs. 10/-*

This is the second enlarged edition of the one published in 1952 probably soon after the MSS. had been finally revised and the whole was issued in a book-form. As the author declares, there has been an addition of "three or four topics" such as "The Yoga of Aśwapathy" and "The Yoga of Sāvitrī" together with "Overhead-planes and Aesthetics". Thus this is a more comprehensive study of the poem.

determine the relation between a poet and his critic,

> "In poetry, as in everything else that aims at perfection, there are always two elements, the external and the time-element. The first is what really and always matters, it is that which must determine our definite appreciation, an absolute verdict, or rather our essential response to poetry. A soul expressing the essential spirit of Truth and Beauty through some of the infinite variations of beauty, with the word for its instrument, that is, after all, what the poet is, and it is to a similar soul in us seeking the same spirit and responding to it he makes his appeal. It is when we could get this response at its purest and in its most direct and heightened awakening that our faculty of poetic appreciation becomes at once surest and most intense. . . There is also the personality of the poet, and the personality of the hearer, the one giving the pitch and the form of the success arrived at, while the other determines the characteristic intellectual and aesthetic judgment to which its appeal arrives. The correspondence and the dissonance between the two decides the relation between the poet and his reader, and out of that arises what is personal in our appreciation and judgment of his poetry. . . . This is the individual aspect of the personal or time-element. But there is also a larger movement to which we belong, both ourselves and the poet and his poetry; or rather it is the same movement of the general soul of mankind in the same endeavour towards the same objective." *

Sri Purani has justified himself in the light of the above statement which determines his own *adhikāra* and due responsiveness to the poet.

The book is in two parts: the first part relates to the literary criticism and evaluation of *Savitri* as Sri Aurobindo's poetic magnum opus. Since it is unique in itself and has no parallel in English Literature (although in its framework a resemblance could be traced more to Dante's *Inferno* rather than to Milton's *Paradise Lost*) so far it is unnecessary for Sri Purani to have considered the "Trends in Modern English Poetry", for despite the haze of spiritualism in modern poetry it cannot be said to have touched even distantly the Vedāntic core of the Hindu Culture which informs *Savitri*. In an appraisement of the Sun both the star-flicker and the translucence of the nebulae of the other poets are quite out of place. For the comparison could only be with the poetized visions of the Vedic Seers to which the author has adverted in his introduction, and *Savitri, An Epic* (Part I). On the other hand a juxtaposition of Sri Aurobindo with Blake, Shelley, Francis Thomson and Robert Browning would have served a better purpose. Lewises and Eliots are not quite helpful in clarifying very many of Sri Aurobindo's poetic utterances. The key to the unravelling of the mystic truths can be found only in yogic experience on planes supramental and supramundane. It is only the acute intuition, the fruit of either yogic *samskāra* or strenuous spiritual endeavour, that can duly capture the super-sensuous and super-conscient beauty of Sri Aurobindo's many visions strewn with the prodigal's abandon, as it were, in this great poem, or evaluate duly their encasement in phrases and lines such as

> "A brilliant code penned with the sky for page." (I, 1), "An eye awake in the voiceless heights of trance." (I, 3), "Matter smitten by matter glimmered to sense." (II, 4), "In darkness' core she dug out wells of Light." (I, 3), "God found in Nature, Nature fulfilled in God." (I, 3), "Where the god-child lies on the lap of Night and Dawn." (I, 3), "A marriage of eternity divinised Time." (IV, 2), "All knowledge left a questioning ignorance." (Ibid), "Know death for a cellar of the house of Life." (Ibid), "Many are God's forms by which He grows in man." (VII, 4), "Infinite wore a boundless zero's form." (X, 3), "Dawn built her aura of magnificent hues, And buried the seed of grandeur in the hours." (I,1), and "Lulled by Time's beats eternity sleeps in us." (II,5).

There is a great resemblance between many of Sri Aurobindo's images in *Savitri* and those of the Vedas, Upaniṣads and *Bhagavadgītā* mostly, although some of them are less direct and inverted. The author has taken pains to illustrate this in his introduction and Appendix, III. It will not be an error to suggest that their eternal wisdom, verified however as true in his yogic experience, has been the main source of inspiration to him for both *Savitri's* conception and execution. As Sri Aurobindo has admitted,

> "I have not anywhere in Savitri written any-

* *Mother India*, Lights on Life's Problems, 35.

> thing for the sake of mere picturesqueness or merely to produce a rhetorical effect; what I am trying to do everywhere in the poem is to express exactly something seen, something felt, or experienced."

Sādhaka's lyrical experience attains to an immeasurable height and grandeur. He has interpreted both man and nature together with the domains of the Spirit. In this endeavour Sri Aurobindo has crossed and recrossed many a psychic kingdom known and unknown till now, pierced through their manifold veils luminous, entered "the vaster realms of the self and other universal states and the powers that stand behind our life and soul's eternal spaces", and bearded the Great Bear in its own den in the very manner Aśwapathy to deserve godly child Sāvitrī, and Sāvitrī to rescue her beloved Satyavān from Yama with *Tapas* did. In a way this epic is Sri Aurobindo's spiritual involution as well as evolution, thrown however into this mythic mould.

Part II of the volume encloses the summary of the fifty cantos forming the twelve Books of the entire poem. Excluding the appendices of 28 pages where some Letters of Sri Aurobindo on *Savitri,* Sāvitrī's appearance before Aśwapathy, Nārada, and before and at facing Yama, and citation of parallel passages from his other poems such as *Ahana, Bird of Fire, God's Labour, Rose of God* etc., and *Ṛgveda, Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Bhagavadgītā* etc., this summary is more than twice the length of the First Part. The learned author has paraphrased the text truly into clear prose adding however his own links of clarification for the uncertain lines. This is indeed a labour he has so lovingly executed with such an admirable fidelity and unction. But in a few instances such as of the line, "God found in Nature, Nature fulfilled in God", interpretation may not be correct or comprehensive; for it is the highest achievement of Nature to evidence in abundance the Godhead in her. She can then be said to have fulfilled herself in God. This perception of oneness from out of the multiple glimpses of the Godhead in the myriad excellences of Nature can be equated to "God found in Nature". But this shall not detract from the high quality of Sri Purani's work.

The philosophic significance of Aśwapathy's penance for a child is a striving to realize his own self in its relation to the Supreme for the redemption of himself and the world, inclusive of his own progeny. Sri Aurobindo's interpretation is really not so novel as is here made out. The outward manifestation of God during creation as evolution, as well as the absorption of the created into Himself at the Finale as involution connote communal salvation; they could be seen in the cosmic vision of the Almighty Vāsudeva (*Bhagavadgītā,* XI). Communal salvation is not therefore quite a distinctive feature of the so-called 'Integral Yoga' of Sri Aurobindo. Nor could the metaphysical dialogue between Yama and Sāvitrī be deemed novel again, for though we do not find its parallel in the Purāṇas (between Yama and Sāvitrī) we find it still in sūtraic form in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad.* There is however an elucidation of this in *Savitri.* The Purāṇas are not metaphysical theses exclusively: they but illustrate through stories in simple and direct phraseology the many metaphysical truths embedded in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. According to them, and being a god-child of spiritual descent, Sāvitrī was potent enough,—and accoutred too with the mail of her own *Pātivratya*—to vanquish Yama outright without invoking the Mother to enter into herself and do it. Thus there seems to be no need for undertaking any special penance for vanquishing Yama and rescuing her beloved from his noose. Sri Aurobindo's 'Yoga of Sāvitrī' could be justified only on the ground that he seeks thereby to invest her with an avatārhood of the Mother, though she had descended through the grace of Sāvitrī, Her own emanation. What may be deemed as incomplete in the penance of Aśwapathy seems to have been completed with the penance of Sāvitrī; for aspiration and fulfilment perfect the Round. Yet, these penances of the father and the daughter have shown up to the *sādhakas* the various planes, mental, supramental, sensu-

ous and supra-sensuous, and their Beyond as a sort of guidance to them in their yogic endeavours to reach the Absolute. In this context it may be said that *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* gives us their parallels.

Giving anything a name does not confer upon it either uniqueness or novelty. The 'Integral Yoga' is as old as the Hindu *Darśana* (*Puruṣa-sūkta* and *Bhagavadgītā*) and connotes a cosmic vision of the Absolute in the triune function of creation, preservation, and destruction. Collective salvation is implied in it. God the Infinite will not descend into anything investing it with His own potentiality except to work for the collective salvation of humanity. It is doubtful if Sri Aurobindo could claim any exclusive virtue for 'Integral Yoga' as against the yogis of yore when he declares that they used to rise individually to "this transforming supra-mental plane and stay there in union; they did not bring it down to act upon our terrestrial consciousness. Perhaps they did not even attempt it." The yogis of yore were least autobiographical and preferred to remain anonymous: and that is the reason we have no historic evidence of any such activity on their part excepting their own metaphysical statements in our scriptures, from which we could still infer Integral Yoga.

On his own premise that for collective salvation mankind must be duly qualified with the capacity to receive divine transfiguration and that "everybody does not want bliss or enlightenment; men are at different stages of development and this makes any universal panacea for life's evils an impossibility as the history of human experience has proved again and again," . . . that "Teachers of the land of Love and Oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation, but not till the Time-Spirit in man is ready, can the inner and the Ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality," even his hopes to make of this earth the Supramental world where "imperfection and disharmony" is bound to disappear, cannot be realized by his 'Integral Yoga', (*Among the Great*, by D. K. Roy). It is however to Sri Aurobindo's credit that his selfless endeavour for collective salvation has succeeded in transforming the world partly into something spiritually better. *Savitri* is a delicious and sublime expression of Sri Aurobindo's invocation "On earth for the light of a higher world to manifest a new power" which will continue to exist as a new influence in the physical world and will be a direct manifestation "of the Divine in time to come in our entire being and daily life." In other words *Savitri* is an epic of the soul out to meet the Over-Soul.

It cannot be said with certainty that "the conception of Time-Eternity as a dynamic Reality depending organically upon Time-less-Eternity is one enunciated clearly for the first time by Sri Aurobindo in the world of thought (Vide St. Augustine's *Confessions* and Dr. A. C. Coomaraswami's *Time and Eternity*). Nor is it true that Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Avatār is unique as against that of the Scriptures.

The basic idea in "Hiraṇmayena pātreṇa . . . ." (*Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*, V. 15) is not so much as the limitation of the mind or intellect, as invoking Pūṣan to help one in removing the golden lid of illusion covering *Jagat* in order that the Truth may be perceived.

Judging *Savitri* by the poetic ideals of an epic propounded by Sri Aurobindo himself (p. 30) it cannot be said to have eclipsed *Rāmāyaṇa* or *Mahābhārata*, or for that matter even *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa*, *Savitri* can be said to resemble mostly. From the standpoint of simplicity and directness *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, Dante's *Inferno*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and even Keats' incomplete *Hyperion* can be deemed *Savitri's* superiors. Overstressed symbolism and allegory are no substitutes for these qualities. Metaphysically *Savitri* is one of the sublimest epics of the soul to find its own sublime Primitive in the Over-Soul to attain oneness with It. *Savitri* is a grand testament of Sri Aurobindo's *sādhana*.

One fails not to notice the Viśiṣtadvaitic element of Grace in the Poem. It is idle to

discuss various theories of poetry to assign a place to Sri Aurobindo. For his poetry and especially *Savitri* is a record in indelible terms of his suprasensuousness and perfect humanness alchemized into the divine. It is only the godmad intuition ripened into a likeness of his that can grasp and appreciate and assign a star-dwelling to his unique greatness as a poet.

It may be noted there is no element of wonder of the Vedic Seer in Aurobindo's poetry. There is however a superambient intellect hovering over his images.

Sri Purani seems to be a *sādhaka* in the line of Sri Anrobindo. That is the secret of his successful interpretation of *Savitri* in such precise and not uncertain terms.

The volume has a neat format, but the text needs a sharper correction. It has been enriched with the latest of Sri Aurobindo's photo. The price is not high for the fare provided.

ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA

By Swami Vireswarananda

(Continued from previous issue)

Another interpretation of the Sūtra followed by many commentators, including the Vṛttikāra, is as follows: The text, 'All this indeed is Brahman . . . one ought to meditate on It calmly' etc. prescribes that, being calm, one should meditate on Brahman as the Self of all. The text, 'Therefore he should think' is an additional statement with respect to this instruction, stating certain qualities of Brahman for meditation, such as 'consisting of the mind', etc. The meaning, therefore, is that one should meditate on Brahman which has attributes like 'consisting of the mind', etc., as the Self of all. A doubt arises whether the individual soul or the Snpreme Self is denoted by the word 'Brahman'. The opponent holds that it is the individual soul, for that alone admits of being co-ordinated with the word 'all'. The word 'all' denotes the entire world from Brahmā down to a blade of grass. The state of Brahmā is an appendage of the individual soul, due to nescience and the soul's *karma;* and this is not possible in the case of Brahman which is all-wise, omnipotent, free from sin, and in which not even a trace of nescience can be fonnd. It cannot be this 'all' which is full of evil. The word 'Brahman' is also used sometimes to denote the individual soul and in the state of release it is also said to be infinite. 'It is fit for infinity' (*Svet.* 5.9). As the nescience of the individual soul is due to *karma,* the individual soul can very well be said to be the cause etc. of the world. The text means: 'The individual soul, which by nature is infinite and therefore of the nature of Brahman, attains, due to nescience, the state of a god, or a man, or an animal, or a plant.'

This view the Sūtra refutes because the text, 'All this is Brahman. Let one meditate on this world as originating, ending, and existing in Brahman' refers to Brahman as something well known. All this is Brahman, because the entire world originates, ends, and exists in It (*Tajjalan*); and so, that which is well known in Vedānta texts as the First Cause is also stated here. This well-known Being is Brahman alone. Vide *Taitt.* 3.6.1 and *Svet.* 6.9. As the world has its Self in Brahman because it originates, ends, and exists in It, this world can be identified with Brahman. Brahman is the Self of the world both in Its

causal and effected states, for in the former state It has for Its body all sentient and insentient beings in their subtle state, and in the latter in their gross condition. This kind of identity with the world is not incompatible with Brahman's possessing excellent qualities; for imperfections of the world, which forms Its body, cannot affect Brahman. What has been stated by the opponent, that the individual soul also can be said to be identical with the world, is not correct; for there can be no such identity as individual souls are different in different bodies. Again, the released soul, though it is not limited, yet has not the power of creation etc. Vide Brahma Sūtra 4.4.17. Therefore in this text under discussion the Supreme Self is denoted by the word 'Brahman.'

विवक्षितगुणोपपत्तेश्च । १ । २ । २ ॥

2. Moreover the qualities desired to be expressed are befitting (only in the case of Brahman; and so the passage refers to Brahman).

'He who consists of the mind, whose body is *Prāṇa,* whose form is light, whose resolve is true, whose nature is like that of ether, from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed—He who embraces all this, who never speaks, and is never surprised' etc. (*Ch.* 3.14.2). The qualities mentioned in this text are possible only in Brahman.

अनुपपत्तेस्तु, न शरीरः । १ । २ । ३ ।

3. On the other hand (they) are not appropriate (in the case of the individual soul) and so the individual soul is not (referred to in the text).

All the qualities mentioned in *Ch.* 3.14.2 cannot belong to the individual soul whether in the bound or released state, for it is very insignificant, subject to great suffering and to *karma,* and is ignorant. So it is not the individual soul but the Supreme Brahman that is referred to in this text.

कर्मकर्तृव्यपदेशाच्च । १ । २ । ४ ॥

4. And on account of the mention of the attainer and the object attained (the reference is to Brahman and not to the individual soul).

In the same chapter of the *Chāndogya* there occurs the passage: 'When *I* shall have departed from hence, *I* shall attain Him (3.14.4)', where 'Him' refers to 'who consists of the mind', the object of meditation, the thing to be attained, and the *I* refers to the individual soul, the attainer. Therefore the reference in the text is to Brahman, who is different from the individual soul.

शब्दविशेषात् । १ । २ । ५ ॥

5. Because of the difference (indicated by the case endings) of the words.

In the text, 'This my Self within the heart' etc. (*Ch.* 3.14.4) the individual soul is denoted by the genitive case, while the object of meditation, 'who consists of the mind', is in the nominative case. So it is clear that the object of meditation is different from the individual soul. Vide *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* 10.6.3.2, where they are still more clearly differentiated: 'As is a grain of rice, or a grain of barley . . . so is that golden being in the self', where the individual soul and 'the self consisting of the mind' are clearly described as two different entities, for 'the self consisting of the mind', which is in the nominative case, is described as being in the individual self, the word denoting it being in the locative case. Therefore the reference in the text is to Brahman, and not to the individual soul.

स्मृतेश्च । १ । २ । ६ ॥

6. From the *Smṛti* also (we learn that the individual soul is different from the one referred to in this text under discussion).

The *Smṛti* referred to is: 'I am centred in the hearts of all' etc. (*Gītā* 15.15); 'He who, free from delusion, thus knows Me' (*Gītā* 15.19); 'The Lord, O Arjuna, is seated in the hearts of all beings. . . . Take refuge in Him etc. (*Gītā* 18.61) Here the texts clearly describe the individual soul as the worshipper and the Supreme Self as the object of worship.

अभकौकस्त्वात्तद् व्यपदेशाच्च नेति चेत्, न,
निचाय्यत्वादेवं व्योमवच्च । १ । २ । ७ ॥

7. If it be said that (the passage does) not (refer to Brahman) because of the smallness of the abode (referred to, viz. the heart) and also on account of its being designated as such (i.e., as minute), (we say) not so, (because Brahman has been so characterized) for the sake of contemplation and because (in the same passage) It is said to be like ether.

The text, 'He is my self within the heart', declares him to be small in size, as he dwells within the small space of the heart. The minuteness is declared also in the text, 'Smaller than a grain of rice' etc. (*Ch.* 3.14.3) vide also *Muṇḍ.* 1.1.6 and *Svet.* 5.8). So that being cannot be the Supreme Self; it can be only the individual soul. The Sūtra refutes this and says that Brahman is characterized as such for the sake of contemplation, and that minuteness is not Its true nature. For further on the same text says that It is infinite like ether, 'greater than the earth, greater than the sky' etc. (*Ch.* 3.14.3) Its omnipresence is not marred by regarding It as limited by the space in the heart, or as minute in size. The case is analogous to that of the ether in the eye of the needle, which is spoken of as limited and small, whereas in fact it is all-pervading. Therefore the limitation of the abode and minuteness in size are meant only for the sake of meditation.

सम्भोगप्राप्तिरिति चेत्, न, वैशेष्यात् । १ । २ । ८ ॥

8. If it is said that (if Brahman dwells within all bodies, It would also, like the individual soul) experience (pleasure and pain), (we say) not so, because of the difference in the nature (of the two).

The mere fact that Brahman dwells within bodies, like the individual souls, does not subject It to pleasure and pain, for what results in pleasure and pain is not mere connection with a body but being subject to the influence of good and evil deeds. That does not exist in the case of Brahman which is free from all sin. The scriptures also say, 'One of them eats the sweet fruit, while the other looks on without eating' (*Muṇḍ.* 3.1.1).

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

In 'Memories' Sri Mohini Mohan Mukherji gives us two beautiful glimpses of the great heart that shaped the R. K. Mission's work for about two decades. Real renunciation means the transformation of the entire personality into a vehicle for manifesting God's creative love. Even the school-going student of tender years is invited to bask in its radiant glow and warmth, and to store up all the necessary ingredients for a sweet, mature, and all round development in the future. Great souls know how to play quite unobtrusively on the delicate strings of human minds as easily as they could, on special occasions, bring out charming musical sounds from their own throats or a set of well-tuned instruments. "Study, develop physical vigour, cultivate devotion, and serve the needy"—these are the notes on which true organizers have always played in their preachings, daily contacts, and silent meditations . . . Swami Aseshananda is the Head of the Vedānta Society, Portland (Oregon), U.S.A. In this Paper, read at a Philosophical Conference, the Swami raises a number of important points and answers them, supporting his arguments with apt quotations. 'Some of the topmost scientists of today', he says, 'are of the opinion that consciousness is always present everywhere in the universe, even though its presence cannot always be detected

by scientific methods.' According to the author of *What is Life,* 'Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular . . . there is only one thing and . . . what seems to be a plurality is merely a series of the different aspects of this one thing produced by a deception (the Indian Māyā); the same illusion is produced in a gallery of mirrors.' Among the other interesting topics dealt with by the Swami are the theories of 'one birth', 'many births' (Reincarnation), and *Karma.* He also shows in what respects scientific evolutionists and reincarnationists agree and disagree. He closes his Paper by pointing out that 'Reincarnation is not to be confused with immortality...Anything that an individual acquires as a result of his *Karma,* he loses again when the momentum is exhausted. Immortality is to be gained here and now by cutting the knot of the heart which is rooted in ego-sense.' ...Sri Subash Chandra, M.A. has made a special study of Spinoza. In his article, after quoting Spinoza's view that 'individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God' the writer adds the comment that 'we are all Supreme God or Substance, but in a modified state.' He also says: 'Here we find Spinoza in consilience with the sages of the Upaniṣads and the mystics of the Advaita Vedānta and with the Chinese philosophers like Lao Tse and Chaung Chou, and with Plato, Plotinus, and Thomas Aquinas.' There is a special way of studying which helps us to harmonize the teachings of different philosophers. We shall be greatly benefited if more articles based on such a comparative study will be forthcoming from him and from other writers as well . . . 'The mind's highest good is the knowledge of God, and the mind's highest virtue is to know God' . . . 'Reason enables man to canalize his passions and crude superstitions, . . . to attain true and abiding bliss and dignity by leading him to the state of nature, merging himself with the infinite Substance . . . This philosophy promotes social life, for it teaches us to hate no man, neither to disdain, to deride, to envy, or to be irascible with any one.' . . . 'Study and Politics' is a timely reminder to all concerned that 'before entering into actual politics', or 'raising cheap slogans', there must be careful study and thorough preparation. 'We, as teachers,' says Sri Mitra, in his humility, 'acknowledge, rather confess, that we know nothing, as we believe in the counsel of the sage, "Physician, heal thyself".' That study should be a sort of meditation, and that the whole of life should be considered as an opportunity for such meditation, bringing greater knowledge and efficiency with it, is a valuable lesson for all of us, 'even industrialists and athletes', as he puts it. . . The Hymn of Dīrghatamas 'raises a series of questions and answers them. . . The whole song is full of symbolism and contains stanzas couched in mystic contradictions.' Prof. Sastri, in his usual scholarly manner, traces the general line of thought running through the entire hymn, and points out his own views in many cases where the interpretations of Sāyaṇa and of Western authorities have widely differed. He dwells at length on such passages, as for example, the one that speaks of two birds sitting on the same tree. According to Sāyaṇa these birds are 'the individual self and the Absolute.' Prof. Sastri explains that the tree is the tree of 'wisdom, whose higher fruit is the knowledge of God.' The two birds represent two types of seekers; only one of them, to whom the poet belongs, discloses the highest knowledge; while the other, who is not speculatively inclined, comes off empty-handed.' . . . In the Review column we are introducing to our readers *Asya Vāmasya Hymn,* brought out quite recently by Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, with a valuable introduction, English translation and notes . . . Sri P. Sama Rao has made a study of *Savitri,* and of Sri Purani's interpretation of it, from the standpoints of poetry, *sādhana,* and philosophy. 'There is a great resemblance between many of Sri Aurobindo's images in *Savitri* and those of the Vedas'; 'He has interpreted both man

and nature together with the domains of the Spirit. In this endeavour Sri Aurobindo has crossed and re-crossed many a psychic kingdom known and unknown till now'—these are heart-felt offerings of tribute paid by the writer. His own studies and sense of duty, however, make him point out that it is doubtful 'if Sri Aurobindo could claim any exclusive virtue for Integral Yoga, as against the yogis of yore', specially in the light of his assertion that 'they did not bring' the supramental consciousness 'down to act upon our terrestrial consciousness; they perhaps did not even attempt it.' In answering this assertion Sri Sama Rao combines clarity, directness, and a disinterested and profound reverence for the science of spiritual illumination as handed down by the ancient masters. In his quiet remark that 'The Yogis of yore were least auto-biographical, and preferred to remain anonymous' he has shown the risks involved in the moderner's tendency, directly or indirectly, to convince others that he is somehow more evolved than his predecessors.

EARLY TRAINING AND TESTING

A person who knows a subject well is not afraid of being tested. Rather he may feel delighted because he gets an opportunity to express his knowledge in speaking, writing, or in some other manner suited to the context. It is only when he doubts his own proficiency that he dreads examinations, or tries to find arguments against them. Our object here is not to discuss the advisability of continuing or modifying the system of examining students annually to see whether they are fit for promotion to higher classes. Our aim is to inquire how or from what angles tests may be framed to enable students of any religion to master its main principles and learn to apply them in their day to day life. We naturally leave out those who believe that religions do not serve any useful purpose, and take into consideration only those who are convinced that religious practices widen the mental horizon, deepen insight, and add richness and fullness to life's experiences,

It is interesting to watch those families where elders lead a holy life. There children learn many things through continuous observation, even before they begin to read and write. Through their eyes and ears they take in pictures of the parents engaged in reading sacred books, chanting hymns, praying in the chapel, and celebrating festivals. What they may do with these pictures in later years depends upon various factors. If the relatives are wise they will encourage the children to participate in these activities. They will help them to memorize those passages which seem to capture their imagination from time to time. Children take delight in repetition, whether it be for learning or for exhibiting what they know. Without feeling shy about the mistakes committed, they pick up with ease a considerable amount of 'traditional knowledge' in the shape of stories, ballads, rituals, attitudes, and general behaviour related to religious life. At this stage there is a happy blending of the various movements involved in teaching and testing on the side of the elders, and learning and stabilization on the side of the children. Love acts as a transformer. It makes the parents clothe periodic tests in the form of gentle invitations to the child to show to a friendly visitor the new verses and chants it has mastered. The visitor too knows how to coax and smile, so that the little one may acquire the art of associating joy and confidence, instead of fear and hesitation, with every act of recollection or narration. Correct training makes learning go hand in hand with an abiding sense of inner expansion.

Older generations in India laid special emphasis on developing the power of memory. They knew that meditation or the faculty of focussing all the powers of mind on any given topic, can unlock the door to every attainment. And meditation means unbroken memory. Since the ancient system aimed at thoroughness from the start, it adopted various interesting exercises to strengthen this important faculty. Children at the present day build up their memory with the help of the

written, printed, and illustrated page. The 'traditional' Indian method was based on words and proper accent. Attention was made to run along sounds, cadences, and meanings. A faint idea of it can be had from the patterns of chanting, like *jaṭa* or *ghana*. To illustrate: Let us suppose that the passage to be taken up on any day of study has *Namaḥ Rudrebhyaḥ Ye* as its opening words. We may for convenience simplify them into N. R. and Y. Now, one arrangement is to repeat them in the order: N-R; R-N; N-R as a single 'unit', and proceed to the next 'unit' as R-Y; Y-R; R-Y. The second form of arrangement is a little more complicated. Its first 'unit' itself would embrace three words at a time and would take the form: N-R; R-N; N-R-Y; Y-R-N; N-R-Y. Whichever pattern is accepted, it must be continued till all the words in the verse or hymn are formed into a plait without violating the prescribed accent. What an elder does with ease and with light musical modulations of his voice, the youngster learns to repeat again and again with the utmost pleasure till he becomes a master himself.

The control thus achieved is next switched over to the meanings and interpretations of scriptural texts. In due course the student gets such an efficiency that he begins to move in the field of ideas with the freedom and sense of power which a king feels when he travels through his domains. Tests cannot frighten him. We may question him on any topic mentioned in the texts he has read. The relevant passages would, so to speak, stand up in their sections and chapters and appear before his mental vision as surely as the appropriate threads in a loom rise or sink with the change of levers. Scholars of the old type carry their knowledge, not in books, but in their heads. They can teach or hold prolonged discussions, depending only on their ability to recollect, group, and regroup sacred texts at will.

The student of modern days begins his training with the taking down of notes. If these notes are dictated by the teacher, to that extent the student loses his power to do independent thinking. If, on the other hand, he learns the art of making his own notes after reading useful books of his choice, he gains in resourcefulness. But that is only one-way traffic. He is only taking ideas in. If there is no basic training in recalling those ideas, or the passages in his notes, he is not likely to shine well in the examination. Even if he manages to keep everything fresh in his mind, determined to use it to advantage in the written tests, chances are that his ideas would slowly sink into oblivion when the stage of examinations is crossed. Only that knowledge can be called fruitful which springs np from within when wanted, and not that which is written down in books, although by oneself after patiently consulting a dozen authorities.

When we speak of religious examinations, the first idea that comes up is that of testing the student's ability to assemble scriptural texts and comment upon them in the light of the questions given to him. We may present before him apparently contradictory verses, taken from different chapters, and see how far he has developed a harmonizing attitude. The questions, then, would be on the model: What did the prophet or saint intend to teach while speaking in such dissimilar veins? As there can be different schools of thought among those who use the same ancient text, the answers given by the student must be expected to conform to the teachings of the particular tradition to which he owes allegiance.

The real difficulty starts only when we wish to know to what extent the student has changed himself as a result of the study he has made. There are two angles from which we may like to view the changes within him. The first is with regard to his own emotions. Has he been able to strengthen his virtues and make his heart turn Godward for guidance? What is the psalm or prayer he likes most? Is he able to experience the same intensity of devotion whether he sits in a place of public worship, or in his own room, or in noisy, unfriendly environment? And so on. The

second is with regard to his capacity to apply spiritual principles to face situations, the like of which did not confront the prophets of old. To give a rough example: We may frame a question like this: Jesus could not imagine that white and black races could come into a clash. What, do you think, is the duty of a true Christian if such a clash comes? Instances can be multiplied to suit other religions.

What is the type of training that can aid aspirants in making these inner changes? And to what extent can questions be made to test their progress?*

**What They Believe* (by G. Edwin Covington), published by the Philosophical Library, New York, and reviewed in this issue, will be found interesting, because it is written on the basis of a questionnaire made with the object of tackling these very problems.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ASYA VĀMASYA HYMN (THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE). By DR. C. KUNHAN RAJA, Prof. of Sanskrit, Andhra University, Waltair. *Published by Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras 17. Pp. xi+136+87. Price Rs. 12/--*

In his Foreword, Dr. Sampurnanand puts 'Asya Vāmasya Sūkta' along with others of the 'same family' and says: 'Very clearly they represent certain philosophic ideas more or less common to thinkers in those days' and 'these ideas are the germs which developed into the rich philosophic systems of later days.' In the Preface and Introduction, Dr. Raja makes many significant observations. 'People,' says he, 'write about the ritualism of the priests as opposed to the free rationalism of the warrior class in India; the latter is also taken to be the beginnings of Buddhism.' As against this, Dr. Raja states his considered opinion: 'Indian tradition recognizes no such antithesis between the priests and the warrior class, between ritualism and rationalism, even between Hinduism and Buddhism. The philosophy of the Upaniṣads and the ritualism of the earlier phase of the Vedas (the original texts) formed a single harmonious unit, and the Upaniṣads simply interpret one side of this culture with the background of ritualism.' He adds later: 'I have never been satisfied with the general trend of the interpretations put upon the Vedas in modern times, and here I am making an attempt to indicate the lines along which my thoughts run in this matter.' In a number of ways he refers to the theories, commonly accepted by Western scholars and by Indian writers who take the cue from them, that the 'Aryans came as aggressors, as invaders, as conquerors'—particularly to the 'theory initiated by Max Müller and so poetically described by him . . . (that) the Aryans found themselves in a happy region of plenty where they had no need to work and where in that state of enforced idleness their intellectuals found joy in philosophical thought.' Dr. Raja remarks: 'Philosophy is not the product of idleness, it is the fruit of successful struggle in life.' 'The Vedic Aryans,' he continues, 'were not at all a primitive people; they never invaded a country and they never subdued any people . . . The *Ṛgveda* exhibits the features of a mature civilization struggling against enemies physically stronger than the Aryans.' 'My own definite view is that if there is an intellectual turn noticeable in a poem in the *Ṛgveda*, it must for that reason be put to an earlier date. I will put the Hymn of Creation (the *Nāsadīyā* Hymn) along with the poem now presented in this book, to a very early date.' 'When we study this great philosophical poem, we are not dealing with some outer growth of a later age; we are handling the life and essence of the Vedic culture.' From the time this poem was composed to the later times, 'there had been a decadence and not a progression in philosophical thought in India.' 'From the point of view of grammar and vocabulary, and from the point of view of his (poet's) associate poets in the first *Maṇḍala*, the presumption is that this poem is a specimen of the old heritage of Ṛgvedic literature.' 'There is nothing to prove that philosophy was only making its appearance in India at that time . . . Great geniuses do not fit into an arrangement in a serial on the basis of Evolution. Great poets like Vedavyāsa and Vālmīki and Kālidāsa, great thinkers like Śaṅkara, great astronomers like Āryabhaṭa, and great critics like Bharata do not wait for their turn in the queue of Evolution in their respective fields.' 'The same is the case with Dīrghatamas', the author of 'Āsya Vāmasya' Hymn in the Vedic times.

This poem, Dr. Raja says, 'seems to have been

recited at a Sacrifice where learned people had assembled. The poet describes the world and its origin and the nature of language and the secrets of the language understood hy him in his poetic vision.' 'Unless we can see Dīrghatamas sitting in that honoured position at a Soma sacrifice and reciting his last and best poem before the assembly of the great scholars and learned men, we cannot understand the true import of the poem.' Of course, 'with the symbolism lost to us, with the background obliterated, we are not able to see the significance of the whole picture.' And so, in many places, the numbers like five or seven, and imageries like that of cow and calf, appear like riddles to us now.

This edition contains the text of 52 stanzas, marked with Vedic accents, the commentaries of Sāyaṇa and Ātmānanda in big and small types respectively, a detailed appendix giving all references, and English translation and notes.

Dr. Raja has done a signal service by editing this Hymn and by making bold, original, and thought-provoking comments. In the words of Dr. Sampurnanand, Dr. Raja has 'set the ball rolling.'

S. N.

WHAT THEY BELIEVE. By G. Edwin Covington. *Published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Pp. 109. Price $4.50.*

This is a very interesting and thought-provoking book. Two thousand college students, ranging from 'freshman' to 'graduate' were given a qques tionnaire, "so constructed as to evoke the personal interpretation" of the religious doctrines to which they had been "exposed." The questions belonged to six categories: God, Jesus, Future Life, the Bible, Religion and Society, and Prayer and Devotional Life. About eight hundred students supplied written answers, on an average, and expressed their views, affirming, or negating, or remaining neutral to, the statements containing the questions. Some briefly indicated the reasons for their decisions. One hundred and fifty-two, or about 18%, of the examinees were Non-Church members. The author makes very valuable remarks as he discusses the implications of the replies, severally in detail, and in a general way at the end. Indeed, as he says, "One cannot know without this or a similar instrument how well the traditional faith has resisted the onslaughts of modernity in the battle for the minds of youth." Among the foes of Christianity, he specially points out "infidelism" springing from "scientific agnosticism," and Communism.

Under the section, "Religion and Society," statements like the following were presented: "American slavery was God's way of Christianizing the Negro," "The Civil War was God's way of freeing the Negro," and "The Negro's hair is a mark of the curse upon him." "The majority of the respondents were descendants of the victims"; yet their replies showed that "the theology of the slavery period" was still acting on their minds, creating "a damaging inferiority complex," and that "little, if anything at all, is being done to assist modern youth toward the formation of a logical attitude toward that period of history in which his ancestors were looked upon as chattel property." "It is proper for the Church to eradicate the evil it has helped to foist upon the Negro. The Negro Churches should accept this as their divinely appointed task."

Other questions relate to Christians as a whole. It is rightly shown that "inquisitive youth will one day raise" questions, and that "every answer may mean another brick out of the traditional wall of the faith." "This need not happen if youth is intelligently and honestly taught the Holy Scriptures." "The goal of religious educators is to duplicate in the lives of men what is found in the life of Christ." "If this is to be done, the approach must be by way of social emphasis." Religious people everywhere in the world will find that many similar statements, made by the author, almost on every page, with reference to Christianity, can be applied with equal benefit for their own systems. He shows remarkable breadth of vision when he speaks of "the splendid similarities of the Christian, Buddhist, and Confucian teachings." Certainly "the fact that people of every religious leaning have more in common than they can have severally should suggest a coordination of all religious effort on a wider scale than Christendom has ever experienced." But Non-Christians will surely find this breadth sadly missing when he asserts, as on page 26, that "the Bible is the most complete composite of human experience in any language. If all other books of the world were destroyed in a single conflagration, given the Bible, man could rebuild his civilization."

ANATOMICAL ALPHABET AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LITERATURE, BOOK I. By Swami Shankarananda. *498 Shaniwar Peth. Poona 2.*

It is very difficult to assess the value of a book of this kind. Indeed almost all ingenious insights are not only difficult to appreciate at their first formulation but even difficult to criticise off hand. The learned Swami Shankarananda is deeply appreciative of the literature and growth of the scripts and alphabets. Tantricism has not only deeply influenced his thought but even anatomy. But this interest unfortunately is less capable of being satisfactory than the mystical or occult claims of Tantricism. It is a field where faith rather than scientific discovery would work. It is

true that in India fortunately the claims of the *mantra-śāstra* are easily granted and even affirmed by some of the mystics we have had the good fortune to come across. But that is not saying much when one attempts a more ambitious proof of the alphabets arising from the formations of bones and cartileges and so on. Nor is there any rationale for the deriving of certain sounds from these several parts of the skeleton of man except the form, and indeed that is surely a slender evidence. There is, as we have stated, much more to be said in favour of the mystic or *cakra* theory of the alphabets, for the *cakras* are subtle and cannot be seen except by the yogic vision. This of course is by way of the special theory of *bhūtalipi*.... The diagram does not help much because it is blurred and we can see what we want to see or not.

The general discussion on the several points regarding the antiquity of writing in India is not only interesting and instructive but will get approval from the best of the informed men in that field.

K. C. Varadachari.

OUR BUDDHA. By Moni Bagchee. *Published by the Presidency Library, 15 College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 149. Price Rs. 3.*

The 2500th anniversary of the *Mahā Parinirvāna* of the Lord Buddha, which was celebrated in India in May, 1956, gathered a rich harvest of books grown on the seeds of the saint's life, philosophy, religion, and the like. Moni Bagchee's book is a good yield in that respect. He has enriched his description of that great life by examples from various authentic books on the subject. With a style at once impressive, lucid, and direct, it appeals to the heart of the readers. A more careful proof-reading, however, to avoid the broken letters which infest the book much, would have given a bright complexion to the print. The insertion of illustrations and maps has also made the book more useful to the reading public.

Swami Mahananda.

CONFUCIUS: HIS LIFE AND TIME. By Liu Wu-Chi. *Published by the Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Pp. 189. Price $3.75.*

The book is a bold unfoldment of the "*historical* K'ung Ch'iu (his Latinized name is Confucius, as he lived in the dark and restless days of decaying feudalism," sometime in 551 B. C. The author has tried to present to us the "*human* Confucius, and thereby he restores, to quote the author, "K'ung Ch'iu from his mummified state into a man of flesh and blood." The book, divided into twelve chapters, is thoroughly documented, and whether one accepts all his conclusions or not, one will find its presentation stimulating and thought-provoking. The author has also succeeded in drawing a vivid portrait of the great man, a seer and a sage, who more than any other person has influenced Chinese life and thought. We wished, however, that the writer's abhorrence to anything saintly and God-intoxicating in Confucius could have been more mild and less thrusting, because the spiritual entity of a sage is not always a myth but perhaps a measure of maturity of an ordinary human being, so far as his inner life is concerned.

Swami Mahananda

ST. SEKKILAR'S PERIYAPURĀṆAM. By J. M. Nallaswami Pillai. *Copies to be had from Mr. J. M. Somasundaram, B.A., B.L., Annamalai University, Annamalainagar P.O. Pp. 215. Price Rs. 3/-, or 6 sh., or $1.*

The brief English rendering of Sekkilar's *Periyapurāṇam* by the late Mr. J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, well known for his literary labours in Śaiva Siddhānta, is published again after thirty years, under the editorship of Mr. J. M. Somasundaram, Annamalai University. *Periyapurāṇam* (literally 'great Purāṇa') is a voluminous poetic composition containing the biographies of sixty-three Śaivite saints of South India. Its author, Sekkilar, himself occupying an honoured place among the saints, has produced one of the best classics of Tamil literature. In view of the fact that very little is known of the great Tamil classics in our own country outside the boundaries of Tamil Nād, it is very heartening to see the re-publishing of one of the earliest attempts to remove this lack. This small book contains the lives of forty-four saints, with four more added in the appendix, three of which are from the pen of the Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope. Some of the omissions, like the life of Tirunālaippovār (or more popularly, Nandanār), are regrettable, while many of the lives presented are extremely meagre, and may even appear hopelessly insignificant to non-Tamilians. The paragraph entitled 'Teachings' at the end of each life is a welcome feature. The only purpose and relevance of the book is to portray and extol devotion to the Lord and his saintly devotees, and in this light they will be read with benefit. Absence of proper diacritical marks, and of translations, of Tamil words, and rather poor printing and get-up are some of the defects of this book which forms No. 4 of the Tamil University publication series. "The sale of the volume is intended to benefit the family of late J. N. Ramanathan, son of the author and publisher of his Śaiva works. The generous response of the public is requested and it is expected to be of assistance to them."

B. I.

CHĀNDOGYA UPANIṢAD. TRANSLATED BY SWĀMI SWĀHĀNANDA. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4. Pp. lx+613. Price Rs. 8/-.*

The Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, has placed the reading public under a deep debt of gratitude by bringing out this beautiful volume. As is said in the 'Note': 'After the publication of the English translations of all other Upaniṣads on which Śrī Śaṅkara wrote his commentaries, there was a great and persistent demand for the publication of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad'; and with this volume 'the series is now completed.' Swāmi Swāhānanda has exercised utmost care in supplying word for word translation. He has also given brief but very useful notes based on Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary and the gloss by Ānandagiri. In his scholarly Introduction, Swāmi Vimalānanda says that its purpose 'will be amply met if it supplies a guide line to the reader in arriving at the facts, expressions, customs, concepts, traditions, and doctrines that find their origin or a place in the sacred text.' The Swāmi has supplied these in abundance. As he says, 'a careful study of the commentary of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya and the meticulous sub-commentary of Ānandajñāna will convince any serious student that he has to use the text long before he can find all that is in it pertaining to spirituality and religion.' For, 'there is no outstanding teaching of Vedānta that has not found its source or support' in this Upaniṣad.

In a vein of light humour the Swāmi adds: 'To expect historical scenes and situations as well as social facts in a sacred composition like the Chāndogya may not be exactly like looking for poetry in a book of chemistry; yet it is not far removed from that. What we get here with reference to historical, geographical, or sociological names, processes, and relations are accidental and not intentional.' And yet the Introduction contains an exhaustive account of them all. To quote only one instance out of many, the Swāmi has culled from the entire text all terms that have a 'clear socio-political import'. They come to fifty-seven; and after enumerating them he says that these 'disclose a picture of the society' of those days. The same accuracy and devotion to details characterize other points dealt with in the Introduction, e.g. the position of the Varṇas, motives behind religious acts, moral standards and ethical principles, and educational practice. Here is a valuable remark, taken at random: 'There is no reference to battles and wars in Chāndogya, except the mock rivalry of the sense organs and the fabled contention between gods and demons . . . On the whole the picture of the society we get here is a peaceful one . . . Life was planfully lived by all and the right of other people to live in peace was respected by the better gifted.' In the case of the thoughtful reader, these and similar remarks are sure to act as gentle pulls on the 'guide line', making him ponder deeply on the ideals presented by this ancient scripture and compare them with the ideals, plans, and programmes of the world of our own days. We heartily commend the book to one and all.

ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA. BY YOGI SUDDHĀNANDA BHĀRATI. *Published by Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, P.O. Pp. 32. Price Re. 1/-.*

This is a reprint of the Tirupanandal Math endowment lectures for 1954, delivered at the Benares and the Allahabad Universities by Yogi Suddhānanda Bhārati. Says he in the introductory remarks: "We are all citizens of Bharat and cultural exchange is sure to promote our unity. We in the South are very well conversant with Tulsidas, Kalidas, Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram and Mira...The Time-spirit calls you all in the North to have a more comprehensive knowledge of the contributions of the South, especially, the Tamil Nād." The talks abound in poetic touches as well as in examples taken from electricity, the motor car, the radio and so on. There is a valuable section on symbols and on details of temple worship, the object being "to create an enthusiasm for" the Sādhana of Śaiva Siddhānta. The lecturer also shows in a footnote his keen desire to organize "a band of missionaries" and "a Society" for the spread of this philosophy.

DIALOGUES WITH THE GURU. COMPILED BY R. KRISHNASWAMI AIYER. *Published by Chetana Ltd., 34, Rampart Row, Bombay 1. Pp. 182. Price Rs. 5/-.*

Prof. Paul Masson Oursel of the Sorbonne, Paris, writes in the Introduction that this 'manual' 'places the purest traditional knowledge within the grasp of the most modern Hindu', and that it has a value for 'India's Western friends; for it is a dissemination of this kind alone that can prevent its civilization . . . . from floundering in a chaotic humanism.' The Preface contains a brief account of the previous Head of Śringeri Mutt, H.H. Jagadguru Śrī Chandraśekhara Bhāratī Swāminaḥ, whose conversations 'provided the inspiration and the material for the book.' The record is not verbatim, but reliable. The author who acted as the interpretor in many cases, has quite reasonably clubbed together the ideas expressed by His Holiness on each topic to different persons on different occasions. Modern India's problems are not exactly what they were about two or three decades ago. Still the discussions retain their value. The very first, for example, shows the interesting turns of argument which made a European gentleman go away convinced that Vedānta, which advised him not to become a convert to it, but to become a

better Christian, was certainly 'more catholic' than he thought it was. Others who come into the discussions are Government servants, Pandits, and even villagers. They all go away feeling that the solutions to their problems lie 'in their own hands', in harder work, in positive efforts, and in accepting the essence of traditional disciplines. The printing and get-np are excellent.

VEDĀRTHA SAṀGRAHA (OF ŚRĪ RĀMĀNUJĀCĀRYA). TRANSLATED BY S. S. RĀGHAVĀCHĀR M.A. *Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. Pp. xiii+196. Price Rs. 3/8/-.*

In a brief Preface Sri Rāghavāchār refers to the circumstances which made him undertake the translation of this important treatise which he rightly characterizes as 'magnificent' 'on account of the comprehensiveness of its theme, its vigour of execution, and the luminous style of its prose.' He adds that an 'analysis of the text and connected reflections in the form of a detailed introduction' will soon be published as a companion volume. Swāmi Ādidevānanda, Head of the Mangalore branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, has written a scholarly Foreword, in which he explains briefly and forcefully the main features of the Viśiṣṭādvaitic philosophy. He sets apart one section to show that *Bhakti*, according to Śrī Rāmānuja, 'succeeds the twofold training of the mind by *Karma* and *Jñāna*, and that it is 'but meditation which has assumed the character of the most vivid and direct perception of the Supreme.' The text itself (244) raises the objection: 'It is maintained that absolute subordination is the highest joy for the soul. This is opposed to the understanding of the whole world. All sentient beings have independence as the highest object of desire. Dependence is extremely painful.' Service is verily 'a dog's life'. The book practically ends with a detailed reply to this objection. It is pointed out that 'the only one that ought to be served by all who are enlightened about the fundamental nature of the self is the highest Puruṣa.'

The Sanskrit text is printed in bold type, with proper punctuation marks, and in the English translation references are given for all the passages quoted in the course of the discussion. The translation is lucid and direct. The printing and get-up are excellent.

NEWS AND REPORTS

PASSING AWAY OF SWĀMI AVINĀŚĀNANDA

We record with great grief the passing away of Swāmi Avināśānanda, familiarly called Shivuda, at the King George Hospital at Viśākhapatnam, on 16-12-'56, after an illness of about three weeks. The Swami was 70. After taking his M.A. degree from the Madras University, Śivarāma Iyer, as he was called in his pre-monastic days, used his talents in various capacities in public life, e.g. as a member of the editorial staff on the *Hindu* and, by turns, as a Lecturer in a College at Calicut, also at the Arya Samaj College at Kangri, and as the Principal of a College at Surat. He preserved as a souvenir the pocket watch presented to him as a parting gift by his Surat friends. He endeared himself to all and quickly adapted himself to the needs of each place by learning to speak the local language. Having had his birth and early training in orthodox Brahmin style in Tanjore District, the Swami had a special love for Vedic chanting and studies, Puruṣa Sūkta and Nārāyaṇa Sūkta being some of his favourite passages. It was a fitting end for his mortal remains when they were carried to the cremation ground at Waltair with Vedic chants and his ashes mixed with the waters of the sea in front of the local Ashrama, of which he was the Secretary and monk-in-charge.

During his days of probation as Brahmachari Sura Chaitanya, Shivuda was connected with the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. After taking orders, he assisted Swami Vipulananda in organizing the Mission's work in Ceylon. He was sent to Fiji Islands where, within less than a year, he gave a positive shape to the enthusiasm of the local people and established the present Centre of the Mission in that area. After his return he worked hard for bringing out the First edition of *The Cultural Heritage of India*. He also took an important part in the publication of the Holy Mother's Centenary Volume. He wished to participate, if possible, in a similar manner in Vivekananda Centenary celebrations. One of his pet ideas was to create a fund out of whose interest sick members of the Order may be enabled to meet the expenses of their medical treatment. May his soul rest in peace !