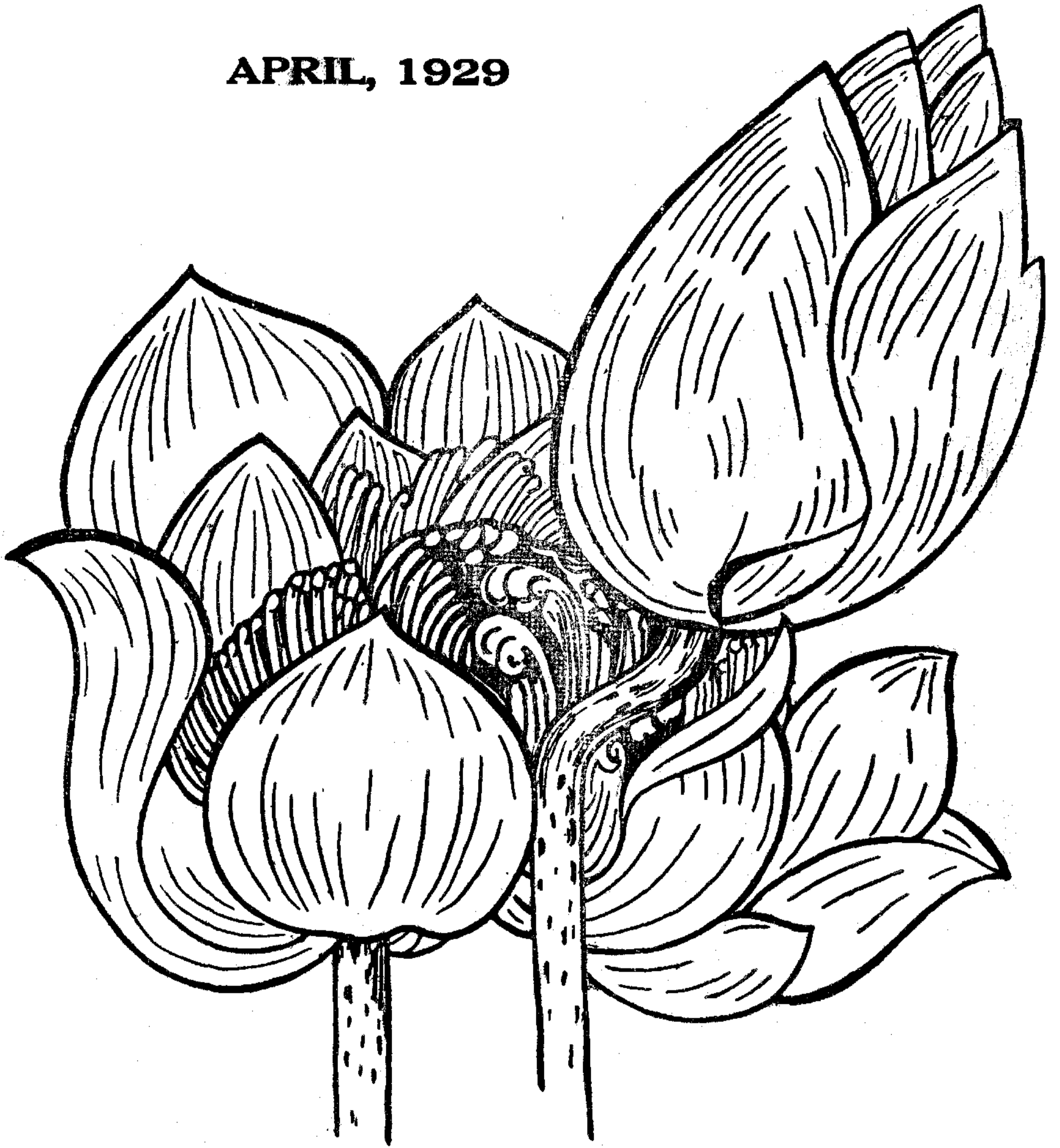


**APRIL, 1929**



**Drabuddha Bharata**

**OR AWAKENED INDIA**

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

APRIL, 1929

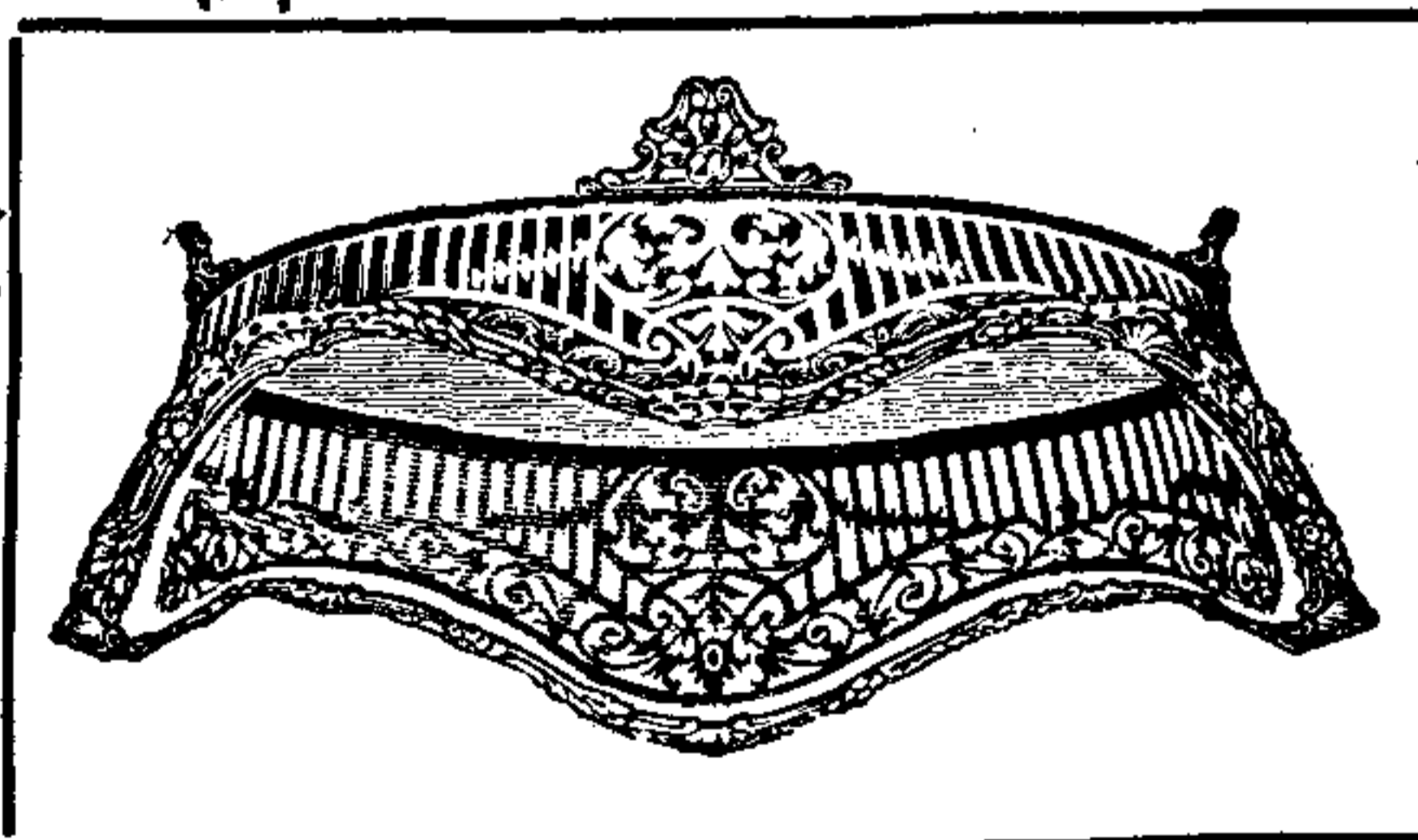
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# Drabuddha Bharata

APRIL, 1929

Volume XXXIV



Number 4

“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

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## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(To an Englishman)

IX

New York.

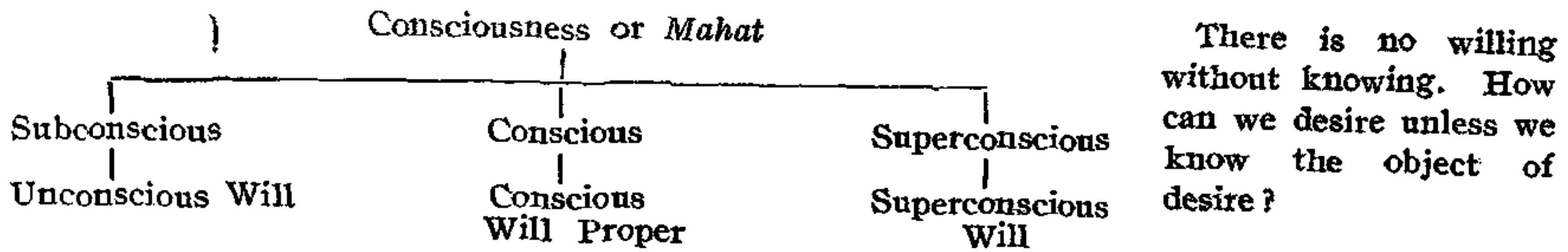
(Undated)

Ramanuja's theory is that the bound soul or *jiva* has its perfections involved, entered into itself. When this perfection again evolves, it becomes free. The Advaitin declares both these to take place only in show; there was neither involution nor evolution. Both processes were *Maya*, or *apparent* only.

In the first place, the soul is not *essentially, a knowing* being. *Sattvīdananda* is only an approximate definition and *Neti Neti* is the essential definition. Schopenhauer caught this idea of willing from the Buddhists. We have it also, in *Vasana* or *Trishna*, Pali *tanha*. We also admit that it is the *cause* of all manifestations which are, in their turn, its effects. But, being a cause, it must be a combination of the *Absolute* and *Maya*. Even knowledge, being a compound, cannot be the *Absolute* itself, but it is the nearest approach to it, and higher than *Vasana*, conscious or unconscious. The *Absolute* first becomes the mixture of knowledge, then, in the second degree, that of will. If it be said that plants have no consciousness, that they are at best only unconscious wills, the answer is that even this *unconscious plant-will* is a manifestation of the consciousness, not of the plant, but of the cosmos, the *Mahat* of the Sankhya Philosophy. The Buddhist analysis of everything into will is imperfect, firstly, because will is itself a compound, and secondly, because consciousness or knowledge which is a compound of the first degree, precedes it. *Knowledge is action*. First *action*, then *re-action*. When the mind perceives, then, as the reaction, it *wills*. The will is in the mind. So it is absurd to say that will is the last analysis. Deussen is playing into the hands of the Darwinists.



But evolution must be brought into accordance with the more exact science of Physics, which can demonstrate that every evolution must be preceded by an involution. This being so, the evolution of the *Vasana* or will must be preceded by the involution of the *Mahat* or cosmic consciousness.



The apparent difficulty vanishes as soon as you divide knowledge also into subconscious and conscious. And why not? If will can be so treated, why not its father?

## LOVE OF GOD

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

We do not accept God because we really want Him, but because we have need of Him for selfish purposes. Love is something absolutely unselfish, that which has no thought beyond the glorification and adoration of the object upon which our affections are bestowed. It is a quality which bows down and worships and asks nothing in return. Merely to love is the sole request that true love has to ask.

It is said of a Hindu saint that when she was married, she said to her husband the king that she was already married. "To whom?" asked the king. "To God," was the reply. She went among the poor and the needy and taught the doctrine of extreme love for God. One of her prayers is significant, showing the manner in which her heart was moved: "I ask not for wealth; I ask not for position; I ask not for salvation; place me in a hundred hells, if it be Thy wish, but let me continue to regard Thee as my Love." The early language abounds in beautiful prayers of this woman. When her end came, she entered into Samadhi on the banks of a river. She composed a beautiful song, in which she stated that she was going to meet her Beloved.

Men are capable of philosophical analysis of religion. A woman is devo-

tional by nature and loves God from the heart and soul and not from the mind. The songs of Solomon are one of the most beautiful parts of the Bible. The language in them is much of that affectionate kind which is found in the prayers of the Hindu woman saint. And yet I have heard that Christians are going to have these incomparable songs removed. I have heard an explanation of the songs, in which it is said that Solomon loved a young girl and desired her to return his royal affection. The girl, however, loved a young man and did not want to have anything to do with Solomon. This explanation is excellent to some people, because they cannot understand such wondrous love for God as is embodied in the songs. The love for God in India is different from the love for God elsewhere, because when you get into a country where the thermometer is 40 degrees below zero, the temperament of the people changes. The aspirations of the people in the climate where the books of the Bible are said to have been written, were different from the aspirations of the cold-blooded Western nations, who are more apt to worship the almighty dollar with the warmth expressed in the songs than to worship God. The love for God seems to be

based upon a basis of 'what can I get out of it?' In their prayers they ask for all kinds of selfish things.

Christians are always wanting God to give them something. They appear as beggars before the throne of the Almighty. A story is told of a beggar who applied to an emperor for alms. While he was waiting, it was time for the emperor to offer up prayers. The emperor prayed: "Oh God, give me more wealth; give me more power; give me a greater empire." The beggar started to leave. The emperor turned and asked him: "Why are you going?" "I do not beg of beggars," was the reply.

Some people find it difficult to understand the frenzy of religious fervour which moved the heart of Mahomet. He would grovel in the dust and writhe in agony. Holy men who have experienced these extreme emotions have been called epileptic. The absence of the thought of self is the essential characteristic of the love for God. Religion now-a-days has become a mere hobby and fashion. People go to church like a flock of sheep. They do not embrace God because they need Him. Most persons are unconscious atheists, who self-complacently think that they are devout believers.

---

## EXPANSION OF HINDUISM: A DEFENCE

BY THE EDITOR

[ We print, as our main article this month, a letter (with, of course, necessary modifications) which we wrote in reply to an esteemed correspondent a short while ago. We believe that the subject discussed in it has a wide interest for India. Our correspondent had written to us expressing his disapproval of our desire to "convert," which he considered was against the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching and was calculated to nullify it in the long run. His knowledge of our desire to "convert" was derived from some writings of Swami Vivekananda. We shall quote here, for the convenience of our readers, extracts from the report of an interview which the Swami gave to a representative of *Prabuddha Bharata* in April, 1899.

. . . "I want to see you, Swami," I began, "on this matter of receiving into Hinduism those who have been perverted from it. Is it your opinion that they should be received?"

"Certainly," said the Swami, "they can and ought to be taken."

He sat gravely for a moment, thinking, and then resumed. "Besides," he said, "we shall otherwise decrease in numbers. When the Mahomedans first came, we are said—I think on the authority of Ferishta, the oldest Mahomedan historian—to have been six hundred millions of Hindus. Now we are about two hundred millions. And then, every man going out of the Hindu pale is not only a man less, but an enemy the more.

" . . . As to the case of born aliens, did you say? Why, born aliens have been converted in the past by crowds, and the process is still going on.

"In my opinion, this statement not only applies to aboriginal tribes, to outlying nations, and to almost all conquerors before the Mahomedan conquest, but also to all those castes who find a special origin in the Puranas. I hold that they have been aliens thus adopted.

"Ceremonies of expiation are no doubt suitable in the case of willing converts, returning to their Mother-Church, as it were; but on those who were alienated by conquest,—as in Kashmir and Nepal,—or on strangers wishing to join us, no penance should be imposed."

"But of what caste would these people be, Swamiji?" I ventured to ask.



"They must have some, or they can never be assimilated into the great body of Hindus. Where shall we look for their rightful place?"

"Returning converts," said the Swami quietly, "will gain their own castes, of course. And new people will make theirs. You will remember," he added, "that this has already been done in the case of Vaishnavism. Converts from different castes and aliens were all able to combine under the flag, and form a caste by themselves,—and a very respectable one too. From Ramanuja down to Chaitanya of Bengal, all great Vaishnava teachers have done the same."

"And where should these new people expect to marry?" I asked.

"Amongst themselves as they do now," said the Swami quietly.

"Then as to names," I enquired. "I suppose aliens and perverts who have adopted non-Hindu names should be named newly. Would you give them caste-names, or what?"

"Certainly," said the Swami, thoughtfully, "there is a great deal in a name!" and on this question he would say no more . . . . ]

I must frankly tell you that your remarks have made us somewhat sad. How could you think so unworthily of us? We still have amongst us some of those who lived intimately with Sri Ramakrishna and sat at his feet. We who had not the blessedness of seeing and knowing him in the flesh, feel yet the radiance and warmth of his personality playing on our life and heart. It will take at least several generations more before the Ramakrishna Order will learn to stray away from the Master's teachings. I think Sri Ramakrishna's true followers and successors may yet be found amongst us.

I may at once tell you that we have not made a single "convert" as yet, nor do we mean to make in future. And in this we think we are faithful to Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, their ideas, the rules of our Order, the spirit of the times and the best interests of Hinduism and of humanity.

After having made this categorical statement, it is up to me to explain the true significance of certain passages from Swami Vivekananda's writings, to which you refer in your letter. But before I can profitably do so, it is necessary that I clear a few points.

### I

We human beings, especially those who have altruistic outlooks, have two

different duties,—one to our own selves and another to other men and women or the humanity at large. I hope you will agree that the present condition of the human race is not quite satisfactory and needs a great deal of improvement. I am sure you have some idea of what the ideal condition of humanity should be. We also have some idea. Swami Vivekananda thus gave his idea of that ideal condition: "The ideal of this world is that state in which the whole world will again be Brâhmana in nature. When there will be no necessity of the Sudra, Vaisya and Kshatriya powers, when man will be born with Yoga powers, when spiritual force will completely triumph over material force, when disease and grief will no more overtake the human body, and the sense-organs will no more be able to go against the mind, when the idea of applying brute force will be completely effaced from man's memory, like a dream of primeval days, and when love will be the only motive power in all actions on this earth, then only will the whole of mankind be endowed with Brahminical qualities and attain Brâhmanahood. Then only will the distinction of castes be at an end, ushering in the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age) as visualised by the ancient Rishis." To this I would like to add a few extraneous details. In those days there will not be much of credal religion. Reli-



gion will be a matter of one's inner perception, each choosing a path that he finds most suitable to himself, without automatically adopting what his parents, brothers or friends profess and practise. It will be essentially an individual concern. There will be then no 'isms' and 'ities.' There will be only 'Religion,' just as it is the case with what people call Hinduism. The true name of our religion is only 'Religion'—*Dharma* or *Sanatana Dharma*—'Eternal Religion.' Our religion had no defining or delimiting name before the Muhammadans came into India. They called us 'Hindus' and thus our religion came to be known as 'Hinduism.' This word does not occur in the Sanskrit language or our holy books. So in the ideal days there will be only Religion with its innumerable phases, the present creeds of the world as also those that will develop in course of time, being those phases, from which every man will choose according as it suits him. People will not label themselves either as Hindus, Muhammadans, Christians, or Buddhists, they will be simply men. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that it is these names that are creat-

ing great differences between man and man.

You may or may not accept all the details pictured above. But I am sure you also dream of some such thing. Now the question is: Should we make any effort to realise that ideal state for humanity or leave it to nature to evolve it in its own way? If we try, how far should we try? Should we be content with simply living our own lives according to our ideals, or should we also speak and act in a way in which the realisation of the desired state may be made possible and hastened? You have approvingly quoted Mahatma Gandhi\* as saying that the only thing permissible to us is to pray to God for the growth of our brothers in *their* own way and that we are to share our spiritual experiences with others not by words but by life and example. I think Mahatmaji speaks of this method only in regard to religion. For, in other things, he is one of the most able and indefatigable propagandists of modern India. But in this your approval of Mahatma Gandhi's utterances, I regret I cannot quite follow you. Do you mean to say that no man should ever

\* Here is the relevant passage from our correspondent's letter:

"Quite lately, at the annual reunion of the Council of the *Federation of International Fellowship* at the Satyagraha Asram at Sabarmati (13th—15th January, 1928), Gandhi expressed himself exactly in this true sense of Ramakrishna (without naming him). All the other members of the Council showed more or less the desire to employ a religious propaganda (some spoke of "sharing their religious experience with others"). Gandhi replied:

"All religions are to me almost as dear as my own Hinduism. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. Consequently no thought of conversion is possible. The end of the Fellowship should be to help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Mussalman to become a better Mussalman, a Christian to become a better Christian. The attitude of protective tolerance is opposed to the spirit of the International Fellowship. If I have in me the faintest suspicion that my religion is more true and that that of others is less true, then, although I can have some kind of fellowship with others, it is of a kind quite different from that of which we have need in the International Fellowship. Our attitude towards other religions should be absolutely clear and sincere. Our prayer for others should never be "O God, give them the light thou hast given me" but "Give them all the light and the truth necessary for their highest development."

"And again:

"Our spiritual experiences are bound to be communicated by our example, and by our life, not by our words which are a very incomplete means of expression. . . . By the single fact that you are living, your spiritual experience will have its effect upon others. But there where there is knowledge of sharing your experiences (that is to say, where there is a desire to act spiritually upon others), that is egotism. If you, whether you are Hindu or Christian, want another person to receive your experience, Hindu or Christian as the case may be, then you are erecting an intellectual barrier. Pray simply that your friends may become better men, whatever their form of religion may be."

"Forgive me if I seem to find in these words the true thought of Ramakrishna, and if having expressed it so forcibly Gandhi appears to me to have been here the true disciple and successor of Ramakrishna."



speak of his spiritual experiences? And do you mean that when we see people doing wrong and mistaken things in the name of religion, we are not to say anything? If so, it comes to this that except silent prayer and living the life, no other help should be rendered to one man by another in religious matters. If that be your conclusion, all teachers of religion, great and small, stand condemned. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda also have to plead guilty to that charge. I do not know if I have correctly understood the significance of Mahatma Gandhi's words which you have quoted. But if I have, I cannot explain much of Mahatma Gandhi's own activity. Why is there this *Federation of International Fellowship*? Why did Mahatma Gandhi speak in the way he did? Did he not thereby actually try to help the other members spiritually? He ought to have simply prayed silently. Why does he write article after article in his two weeklies, giving guidance to his readers in all matters, secular and spiritual? Why is he publishing the story of his life? Why is he never tired of preaching *Ahimsa* and other excellent things? Why does he condemn religions and social customs which he considers bad (sometimes, as it seems to us, without sufficient reason or proper understanding)? Mahatmaji not only tries to live, he also *communicates* with others on deep things through the oral and written word. I do not mean any criticism of Mahatmaji. I only want to point out that the doctrine of silent prayer and living the life is not enough for Mahatmaji in his noble work of service to humanity. And if you will excuse me, it is not enough also for you. Why are you never tired of fighting the wrongs of man in state, society, etc.? Why are you so eager to let the Western world know of the spiritual light that you have discovered in India?

What I am driving at is that we *have* other duties to perform through

*word and deed* to humanity. Yes, we must live the life and pray sincerely. But we must also tell people of the truth and work unceasingly for the betterment of the conditions of men. *It is, we think, in the ways in which words are spoken and deeds are done and in the motives that actuate them, that the difference between man and man, nation and nation, and religion and religion lies; and it is these differences of ways and motives that make the preaching of religion productive of either good or evil.*

So Hinduism and the Ramakrishna Order also must do some tangible service to humanity. For the matter of that, Sri Ramakrishna himself did it. No doubt he never interfered with any one's faith. But he emphatically condemned all dogmatism and fanaticism. In the conversations recorded by M., there are innumerable passages in which Sri Ramakrishna is found rebuking the fanaticism and sectarianism of his visitors and asking them to give up worldliness and seek God. If, however, Sri Ramakrishna had interfered with the religions of others, less Sri Ramakrishna he would have been. So there are certain things in other religions which Sri Ramakrishna himself condemned and which we also can legitimately condemn; these are fanaticism, dogmatism, worldly wisdom, etc. You will note that these are not really the essential part of any religion. But it cannot be denied that the very founders of some religions and their holy books have sanctioned and preached these dark things, and in the present age, these have to be abolished.

*What we mean by "conversion" is nothing but asking people of other religions to give up these narrow ideas. And as I have shown, in this we are absolutely faithful to Sri Ramakrishna.*

You seem to imply that even these narrownesses should be allowed to exist



## EXPANSION OF HINDUISM: A DEFENCE

without being disturbed.\* This to us appears to be an impossible position. Should we not even tell people that all religions are true and that the idea prevalent among the Muhammadans and Christians that other religions than their own are wrong is a false one? If we were to accept your implication, we would have to stop all our preaching work and have to be content with doing merely physical and intellectual service (and not perhaps all kinds of intellectual service). Sri Ramakrishna did not mean that. Nor did Swami Vivekananda. *The idea of Swami Vivekananda was that every one should be absolutely free to preach the positive doctrines of his religion*; this he considered would be beneficial to humanity. But one must not preach the negative side, the condemnatory aspect, of one's creed; for it does not do any good to men, but, on the other hand, does them great harm. He once asked a Mormon gentleman to go to India. He said that it might be that there were some people there who did not find satisfaction in the existing creeds and might find what they sought in the Mormon doctrine. He thus said in course of a lecture in Detroit in 1894: "We want missionaries of Christ. Let such come to India by the hundreds and thousands. Bring Christ's life to us and let it permeate the very core of society. Let him be preached in every village and corner of India." His idea was to establish a temple in which preachers of all creeds would be free to preach their positive doctrines.

So we must preach religion. But we must be very careful. We must never hurt the positive part of any religion, for which we must have the utmost respect possible. We must preach the essentials of spirituality, which form the basis and core of all religions. We

must never *compel* people even to give up their fanaticism. No coercion, but gently convincing by reason, life and example. Swami Vivekananda said of India: "Her influence has always fallen upon the world like that of the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers of the earth." Such exactly should be our method of work. This is the method which Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda followed and which we after them have been trying to follow.

I think I need not assure you that our respect for other religions is not a matter of mere form. We *feel* in our heart of hearts that all religions are true. In our celebrations, we often hold religious conferences to which we invite Muhammadan, Christian, Buddhist and other preachers to give discourses on the beauty and excellence of their creeds. We celebrate annually the Christmas, Buddha's birthday and auspicious days of other religions with equal enthusiasm as the Hindu festivals. In celebrating the auspicious birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, all the great prophets of all religions, including Christ and Muhammad, are equally worshipped along with Hindu deities. I wish you could live with us for some time and see for yourself in what spirit we practise the harmony of religions, which was one of the central doctrines of Sri Ramakrishna. Believe me when I say that it will take a few centuries yet before we can be so degraded as to forget this teaching of Sri Ramakrishna and seek to *convert* others as Muhammadans and Christians try to do. We have therefore *no fear* that in asking people to give up fanaticism and learn the true spirit of religion, we shall overstep the proper limits and hurt the essentials.

\*Our correspondent wrote: "And the essential characteristic of each religion is to pretend that it possesses the whole truth. He who wishes to respect it entirely, should suffer it to keep the illusion, with the indulgent smile of Ramakrishna, when he spoke of a young man, very satisfied with himself, 'O Divine Mother, let him enjoy it a little longer.' (What an exquisite remark is this, at once so charming and so human!)"



## II

I wonder if you agree with me so far. If you do, I would request you to accompany me one step further. Suppose a large number of people have been convinced that all religions are true and lead equally to God. Suppose one born of a Vaishnava father feels that Shâktaism is equally efficacious as his father's faith, and finds his inclinations more towards Shâktaism than towards his father's faith. What will he do? Surely he will, being free of all fanaticism, become a Shâkta. And that would be natural. For we have to recognise that temperaments differ. Not all of the same family have the same likes and tendencies. We readily recognise this principle in education or choosing a vocation in life. But in religion it has been so far recognised only by Hinduism. Christianity and Islam do not recognise it. It is a sad commentary on the religious consciousness of the West that whereas the Westerners have readily applied the principle of individual choice in all matters, social, occupational, political, educational, etc., they have not applied it to religion. Surely you will admit that to apply so is the natural, rational and scientific course. Why people are not doing so is because they lack a scientific knowledge of the principles of religious life and because they are obsessed by deep-rooted dogmatism and fanaticism.

When, therefore, this fanaticism will abate and people will conceive a sane view of religion, the natural consequence will be that every one will choose a religion that is best suited to his mind and nature, just as one now chooses a career for himself. (Therefore Swami Vivekananda said repeatedly: "Let there be as many sects as there are men in the world; for then, each will have a most suitable religion for himself. But let there be no sectarianism.") There are many creeds in the world, many within the fold of Hinduism, many in Buddhism and Christianity, etc. Thus it will naturally happen that a

man who is Muhammadan may have a son who will worship Kâli; or a Vaishnava's son will worship Christ. What I mean is that *with the spread of the true ideas about spiritual life and the removal of fanaticism and superstition, intermixture of religions is inevitable.* We Hindus are not specially constituted. We have this intermixture amongst us in a great degree. Every one is free to take to any method of God-realisation. Are all non-Hindus so peculiarly constituted that they do not need a similar individual choice? The one reason why Hindus are so advanced in religious things is this freedom of individual choice. Other races cannot hope to progress much spiritually unless they also adopt a similar flexibility.

We have to keep in view the above-mentioned future of religion. *We are convinced of its inevitability.* Within a century this intermixture is likely to begin. And we have to be prepared for it. We as Hindus have our duties clear. We are ever ready to welcome all religions into our fold. There may be many Hindus who will find in Christ and Muhammad, their highest ideals. Christ and Muhammad, therefore, should have equal place with Rama and Krishna in Hinduism. The Ramakrishna Order considers it its duty to prepare the Hindu mind for this assimilation. Other religions also must learn to assimilate other religions. And then, what will happen? I am sure, you will admit that many many will take to Hinduism. You will also admit that of all religions, Hinduism will prove the greatest attraction, not only because of its preponderant spiritual wisdom and its all-embracing nature, but also because such great spiritual giants as Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have been born within it in the modern age. If you study the rise and fall of religions, you will find that spiritual upheavals have always synchronised with the birth of great spiritual persons.

It is this indirect "conversion" which is meant by Swami Vivekananda. We



are content simply preaching the essentials of religion and religious harmony, backing it with our life and example. The other consequences will follow of course. When the Swami speaks of "great efforts" to be made in "converting" Muhammadans and Christians, simply this is meant: we are to live and preach the essentials of religion and make Hinduism all-inclusive. This is the prospect which Swami Vivekananda so often spoke of and preached as the realisation of the Universal Religion. Universal religion is one in which all natures will find scopes and ways for their fulfilment. That is the goal towards which humanity is travelling, and we believe that the Ramakrishna Order has a great part to play in its realisation. We do not want to call the universal religion Hinduism, nor do we want what you refer to in your letter, as an "Empire." There will be no central creed governing the other creeds or any other kind of government except what is inherent in spirituality itself,—the spiritualising tendency of every creed. We are not vain-glorious. But scanning all the signs and symptoms, we are compelled to recognise in Sri Ramakrishna and the movement he has inaugurated in the world the most potent force working towards the realisation of world-unity on the spiritual basis.

It is universal religion and universal society which Hinduism has been aiming at from its very inception. Through the succeeding ages, it has been nearing that goal, and in no other age have the circumstances been so propitious as in the present age. I have pointed out how we are trying to realise the universal religion. The same activity of ours will also bring into being the universal society in which all races and cultures will be united into a beautiful and perfect harmony.

So far as I can imagine, I find only two possible futures before the different religions and communities. (1) They may all become more or less all-inclusive; in which case, all non-Hindu

faiths will be changed beyond recognition and would be scarcely distinguishable from Hinduism,—because they will all profess the same views and contain the same creeds. The societies and cultures also will undergo profound changes and will scarcely retain their present forms and tendencies, for changes in religious outlook must effect corresponding changes in social and cultural outlook also. (2) The non-Hindu faiths will fail to respond properly to the liberal tendencies of the present age, or will only partly liberalise their own creeds without assimilating or including alien faiths; in which case, a vast number of their votaries will go out of their folds; for the spirit of the age must influence their mind and make them apply the principle of individual choice to religion and seek spiritual knowledge in accordance with their likes and temperaments. The societies will become liberal; but not being enlivened and inspired by living spiritual forces, will be decadent and induce their members to seek more living societies. So far as I can understand, the latter alternative is more probable. For the non-Hindu faiths are extremely dogmatic and lack the assimilative genius lamentably. The expected assimilation, therefore, will be mostly by Hinduism of the non-Hindu faiths and not *vice versa*. Thus in future years large masses of non-Hindus are expected to seek admission into Hinduism. This will bring into being not only the universal religion in Hinduism *but also the universal society in Hindu society*, a prospect which we are eager to realise. In fact, essentially for this happy consummation, we are anxious that our universal teachings should penetrate and deeply influence the non-Hindu communities. The racial and cultural position of India are unique. Here almost all the different races and cultures of the world have assembled. If a universal society is to be created, it must be done in India. We, therefore, frankly confess that we do want to "convert" Muhammadans and Christians, if *conversion* it may be



called. This high aim is surely a sufficient justification for our wish to "convert".

### III

But even apart from this ultimate aim and *as leading to its realisation*, there are certain considerations which force us to desire an amalgamation of all races in India with Hinduism. The *first* consideration is the defence of Hinduism.

The Hindu society must live, it must be saved from total extinction. You have referred to the organising of Hindu society and expressed your regret that we should seek to so organize. That is because you do not know the precarious position of the Hindu society. Had you been in India and seen the appalling conditions, you would not have thought as you have done. Do you want the Hindus to exist as a race? I think you believe that Hindus are some good to the world. But we are yearly *dwindling* away in numbers. Every census shows a decrease in the number of Hindus and rapid increase in that of Muhammadans and Christians. I shall just mention the case of a Bengal district. Some 40 or 50 years back, the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants were Hindus. Now there are scarcely 10 per cent. of them, the overwhelming majority being Muhammadans. We must remedy this state of things or in 100 years, we shall be swept off our existence. It would be a lurid tale if I could tell you all the details.

This decrease is no doubt partly due to our internal defects. But the more potent cause is the aggression of the non-Hindu races, Muhammadan and Christian. Hindus are too superfine in their ideals of life, they are not tough fighters,—they lack coarse grains. They are, therefore, no match for the aggressive Muhammadans and Christians in this respect. How can we solve this life and death problem for us? There are only two ways before us. The *one* is to spread our spiritual, peaceful ideas among the aggressors. We do not want

to convert them in the Muhammadan or Christian fashion. But we must teach them to feel and behave better. They must be taught to cease from their aggression. That can be possible only by changing their mental outlook through our spiritual and religious teachings, not the sectarian, but the universal, part of them. If they once learn to appreciate this teaching, they will cease proselytising; and the result will be the liberalisation of the religious outlook with its necessary consequences, of which I have written above.

But this change in the non-Hindu mentality will require a long long time to take place. In the mean time Hindu society is in danger of being deleted. So we must have also accessions to our ranks from the outside. We must take all who are ready and willing to enter into Hinduism. This is the *second* way. Such conversion is *absolutely* necessary if Hinduism is to survive all kinds of attacks from the non-Hindu races. But (and this is a very significant *but*) we must never compel or lure any one into Hinduism. Our method must be as noble and peaceful as it habitually has been. We shall spread ideas and let them soak into the mind of the non-Hindus. And when the necessary change of mind has taken place, and when they have become eager to enter Hinduism, then we shall let them in. Hinduism must grow within them before they can be formally taken into Hinduism.

You may say that ours also will be the same aggression for which we are complaining against Muhammadans and Christians. No doubt apparently it looks like that of other societies and religions. But is there not a world of difference between the two? By "*conversion*" we do not want to change any one's faith, nor do we want to deprive him of his inherited culture. We simply want him to recognise that he belongs to a religion and a society which people call Hindu but which is really of a universal character, and feel its spiritualis-



*ing influence.* This recognition is wanted not only for the safety of Hinduism which is the only religion existent on earth, that stands for universality and is therefore most precious and indispensable to the future growth and welfare of man, (we say *safety* of Hinduism, for, an alien is not only one Hindu less, but also a potential and actual enemy more, as experience has taught us dearly) ; but also for the realisation of a universal community in which all races, cultures and communities will live in harmony (we shall speak of this more later on). The conversion practised by Islam or Christianity is nothing of the kind. They force their stereotyped faiths and cultures into every one they convert. This basic and tremendous difference must never be lost sight of in estimating the motives and nature of Hindu "conversion."

Besides expansion is the birthright of every man and nation. We cannot deny a man or a nation the right and freedom to preach the *excellences* that he or it possesses. I think it is an essential of civilization that different cultures should exchange their gifts. Otherwise progress of civilization will be very slow, if not impossible. We have not the least objection to taking whatever is good and great in Islam and Christianity. In fact we have already taken much of it. What we object to is nefarious propaganda against a man's inherent culture and religion, indiscriminately against its good and evil, and the thrusting of an alien culture and creed on him. Let us all broadcast all that is *positive good* in each of us ; this is absolutely necessary for the good and growth of humanity. We are not to remain within watertight compartments. It is against stupid, obstinate and fanatical aggression that we complain. Let millions of Padres and Mullahs come to India, we do not mind. But let them give us only positive things, and that in a scientific, rational and sensible way and not in the present day stupid, dogmatic and fanatical fashion.

The *second* consideration is that India must become a *nation* and not merely a *state*. To become a nation the different races and cultures must be united. *This union is an essential condition of the birth of nationhood.* If India is to survive Western (and also probably Asian) aggression and exploitation, we *must* become a nation. Do you not know how the different religions and social and cultural systems in India are at loggerheads with one another now? How to resolve this communal strife and bring about national unity and peace? The *only* way is the uniting of the different races and communities of India into an organism with the Hindu culture as the nucleus. Of course any other race and religion can be the centre (for a centre of crystallisation is necessary). But it is an undeniable fact that only the Hindu genius can accomplish the desired synthesis. So social and cultural union is urgently needed ; and that would be possible only by Hindu religion and culture becoming aggressive.

The *third* consideration is a fundamental one. Is it not a fact that no race, nation or society can exist without always expanding and assimilating new elements? Is not such continuous expansion and assimilation the law of life for all organisms? That is why Swami Vivekananda said in one of his writings : "The problem (of India) assumes a two-fold aspect, not only spiritualisation but assimilation of the various elements of which the nation is composed. The assimilation of different races into one, has been the common task in the life of every nation." To deny this function of assimilation would be to condemn Hinduism to perpetual stagnation and eventual death. Expansion and assimilation are absolutely necessary for all societies. But utmost care should be taken that in assimilating we do not destroy the uniqueness of what we assimilate.

I think I can guess what is worrying you. You want peace among the



different races of mankind. You want that such as they are at present, they should forget mutual hatred and live in peace and amity. But we must not forget that in spite of all the good that is in the different creeds and cultures, their present forms and positions are due largely also to their present fanaticism and ignorance. If you remedy these defects, their present forms and positions will undergo tremendous changes. If you insist on their retaining their present forms, they may love and smile at one another, but that love will be empty and that smile inane. Let us not forget that universal brotherhood and peace will be realised on earth only when all races and nations have conceived deeply the spiritual view of life, and have learnt that the only thing worth coveting and struggling after is Divine realisation and that all life-activity should be conducted accordingly. Don't you think that that viewpoint to prevail over the whole world, the societies and races must undergo tremendous changes for many many centuries? No, sir, we must harden our heart a bit and be prepared to see drastic operations being done on many social bodies. It will not do to become indulgent simply to maintain the present forms.

#### IV

So Hinduism must preach its positive ideas among non-Hindu races. And, as I have shown, we must be prepared for the inevitable consequences, the absorption of new creeds, races and communities. From this, however, it does not follow that these new elements will be anyway metamorphosed by Hinduism. The religious hospitality of Hinduism is proverbial. It accommodates new forms of religion intact without affecting their essential features in any way. Hindu society also does the same with new racial cultures and social forms. It leaves them intact, free to grow in their own way. No race need fear that it will lose the uniqueness of

its culture and social polity by being incorporated into the Hindu society. This is no place for describing the ways of Hindu social assimilation. I shall only mention that Hinduism never means to *convert* the alien social systems into the so-called Hindu social system. In fact the Hindu social system is not a uniform system. It is more an aggregate of various systems than one homogeneous system. Each caste may be considered to be a complete system which is trying to realise within itself and in its own way the highest perfection. Any new social system, therefore, may become in this fashion an autonomous province of the Hindu society. Hinduism therefore does not wilfully change any assimilated races and cultures. Only on one point it is adamant. *The races must learn to conceive a spiritual view of life.* This, certainly, requires some changes in the new races' social and cultural life. These changes, however, are brought about in a way in which no harm is done to their integrity. Hindu society is mightily afraid that its immemorial policy, that of the spiritualisation of life, may be thwarted by the new-comers. It, therefore, requires of the new-comers the observance of certain *âchâras* or rules of conduct. That is what Swami Vivekananda refers to as the investiture of sacred thread, etc. But Swami Vivekananda also says that these should not be insisted on in the beginning.

Is modern Hindu society in a position to offer sufficient freedom and scope to the new-comers for their growth in their own way? I have already said that Hindu society, like Hindu religion, possesses a great deal of liberalism. For many reasons social catholicity has not been so prominent as religious catholicity. But, of course, we must improve our social outlook a great deal before we can be in a position to grant the necessary freedom and scope to the new races. For that the first thing needed is a further liberalisation of the Hindu social idea. The Western contact with



India has undoubtedly helped the broadening of the social views of the Hindus to some extent. Western individualism has been reinterpreted through the Vedantic doctrine of the solidarity of the Atman. Besides, new forces are active everywhere in the Hindu society because of the Hindu spiritual revival. Social liberalism has naturally resulted. Such has been the case in all times of spiritual revival, e.g. in the times of Buddha and Sankara. Hindu society is slowly making room within it for the outlying races.

Anyhow we have first to remould Hindu society on a more liberal basis and at the same time propagate the spiritual view of life among other races and nations. Would you call that an imposition? But unless you preach this spiritual view, how can you hope the world to be ever improved? Even before people can be taught the harmony of religions, they have to be taught the spiritual view of life and thus to care for religion. Therefore along with the preaching of the essentials of spiritual life and harmony of religions, we are preaching the spiritualisation of life. There are many societies which are pre-eminently secular in outlook. These societies will have to change their ways, otherwise they will always remain a menace to themselves and to the world at large. We do not mean to force them. We are content spreading the ideas. If there is sincerity in us, the ideas will surely tell.

In short, those sublime teachings which Sri Ramakrishna lived and preached and which Swami Vivekananda lived, preached and applied to India and international conditions, will first liberalise religious consciousness; will lead, secondly, to intermixture of religions with great attraction to Hinduism; thirdly, to universal religion with Hinduism as the nucleus; fourthly, to the liberalising of the Hindu social consciousness; fifthly, to the defence of Hindu society from alien aggressions; and sixthly, to the

absorption of alien races and cultures into the Hindu fold;—all resulting in the establishment of the universal religion with a universal society in India and universal brotherhood.

All what we have *directly* and consciously to do is to preach and spread those fundamental teachings, and live our life according to them. You see, even if we do not want those indirect results, they will eventually follow from our teaching. If I may say so, it is our purpose, as I have indicated before, to destroy all artificial separateness between religion and religion and culture and culture. We want eventually to destroy "Hinduism" itself (that is to say, the credal view of it common among people), so that out of it may fully manifest the universal religion. We also want to transform what is now called the Hindu society in such a way as to make it a society of all races and men, which the presence of the multifarious races and cultures in India will make possible. In that society there will be utmost freedom and scope for all types.

You say of our desire to spread the truth: "I know well with what a good intention this had been thought out and written: people are in the possession of the wholesome truth, people are anxious that others should share it and they end up by believing that it is a duty, a duty to truth, a duty to humanity . . . . . Without a doubt! But *all* the great religions think exactly the same on this point. In all pious disinterestedness, they think of their duty of converting to themselves those who think otherwise. And from this holy desire how many misfortunes have come forth! Between the "converting agents" of different religions, the conflicts have been, are and will be always fatal, and fanaticism is sooner or later sure to follow. In every case, even if these unhappy consequences can be avoided, it rests on this that people *wish to convert* to one religion; and so the *Ramakrishna Math* and *Mission* becomes a religion; *it is no more*



*than a religion like the others, better(?) it may be, but of the same kind."* But do you not find any difference between us Hindus and other religionists in their spreading of truth? History clearly indicates that Hinduism has never destroyed but has always fulfilled. All religions do not think and act in the same way in their methods and motives of propagation. Hinduism has never been accused of fanaticism and destructive propaganda, whereas other religions have been. As I have already pointed out, *the evil does not lie in spreading the truth but in the wrong motives and methods followed.*

No, there is no fear of Ramakrishna Mission and Math becoming circumscribed and fossilised into a new religion. Nor do we seek to convert any one to any such religion. Because we already *have all religions within us.* It may astonish you to know that among our monks there are worshippers of all existing credal ideals in the world, of Christ, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, Siva, Kali, Vishnu, the formless personal God, and the Absolute; there are dualists, quasi-monists and monists,—Bhaktas, Jnanis, Karmis and Yogis. All are living under the same roof in complete harmony and unity. How can such a thing become a limited creed? It can only grow into universal religion, nothing else.

There is, of course, the fear that we may make of Sri Ramakrishna another God. Against this Swami Vivekananda has left strict injunctions. Our monks do not all look upon him alike. Some look upon him as a Divine Incarnation, others as an enlightened soul. And we are very careful that the personal aspect of Sri Ramakrishna is not emphasised unduly.

## V

In conclusion I would like to mention one or two points. The word "convert" has repulsed you. The implications of that word are not Hindu. The associations connected with it are derived

mostly, if not wholly, from the proselytizing activities of the Semitic religions, which have been sometimes really horrible. We shall at once detect a difference between the Semitic conception of conversion and our idea of it, if we remember what Swami Vivekananda regarded as Hinduism, how he used to interpret it and what he wanted it to become. He wanted to shed the name "Hinduism"; he meant what is now regarded as Hinduism to manifest itself as a full-grown universal religion. And to convert people to such a universal religion, that is to say, to make them grow into it, would you call that *conversion* as it is usually understood?

Sri Ramakrishna no doubt preached the harmony of all religions, "in which all religions and all sincere thinkers could *live together* without any one seeking to make the others feel his superiority, without any one, above all, seeking to absorb the others into himself." But we must not infer from this that all religions are *equally* developed or all thinkers are *equal*. You are a sincere thinker, I am also a sincere thinker. To Sri Ramakrishna both of us would have been welcome. But surely he would have appreciated you more than me, for the very simple reason that there is more depth and worth in you than in me. That is to say, the laws of things cannot be negatived by the doctrine of religious harmony. There are higher and lower in the existing things, religious and secular. None can deny that. Of course that difference does not entitle the higher to absorb or browbeat the lower. *But nature will act in its own way.* It is the law of things that the greater gains more than the smaller. People will naturally go more to you than to me. If Hinduism proves more perfect than the other religions, none can prevent people from being attracted to it more and more. Even if we do not seek to convert (and we really do not), people will flock to Hinduism of themselves. How can you prevent that? I do not



think we need therefore be disturbed in any way. If the West to-day has more of scientific knowledge than the East, the East has nothing to be disturbed about it. Of course, the East must go to the West and learn it. But it is bounden on the West to see that the Eastern students are not made to feel any shame or humiliation because of such going. Similarly Hinduism must see that those who come to it from the outside, lose nothing of the good that they already possess. We are sure Hinduism is extremely careful about that.

We must not forget also that Sri Ramakrishna did not mean by his doctrine of the harmony of religions that the *status quo* is to be maintained in the position of religions. He often said that the coins of the days of the Nawabs were not current in the Company's rule; meaning thereby that older religions do not best serve the purposes of a new age and that every new age must have a new spiritual outlook. I have shown before how the realisation of the harmony of religions will lead to intermixture of religions and eventually to universal religion. The universal religion is

the religion needed for the present age. *The future requires every man to grow after the pattern of Sri Ramakrishna into a synthesis of all ideals and all religions. We try to do so. We try to embody in our life all the different ideals of religion,—Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muhammadan,—Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma. Each of us must become an embodiment of all ideals. That is the ideal of the future man. Can it possibly be realised if we maintain the status quo in the position of religions?*

You have expressed the fear that the followers of Sri Ramakrishna may spoil the true message of their Master through their excessive zeal. I need not tell you that none are more cautious than ourselves in this matter. We think that *as yet* we have not deviated even an inch from the guidance given by Swami Vivekananda. And if Swami Vivekananda understood Sri Ramakrishna well and truly, well, we may say that the evil day is not yet. I assure you we are fully conscious of the great trust that is in our hands, and surely, surely, it will be a long time yet before we shall turn faithless to it.

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## NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

18TH JULY.

Swami Vivekananda's lecture on Vedantism was read. Swami Turiyananda said:

"His words have melted away into the air. With all your renunciation and your learning, what have you been doing? Days are passing, but you are simply vegetating. Who ever feels or says as the Master did at the end of each day: 'O Mother, the day is gone, yet I have not seen Thee!?' You are damp, spiritless and inactive. Do you not feel your blood wax hot when you read the words of Swamiji? 'Who is living-dead? He who is effortless.

You are twenty-seven years old. Swamiji said that he had achieved everything by his twenty-ninth year.

"But you are not to blame. You do as you see. We are also not working hard enough. We say we are old and diseased. But that is all nonsense and lame excuse. We saw Swamiji working hard till the end. During his last illness, he would press a pillow under his chest in order to relieve breathing difficulties, but he would still roar: 'Arise! awake! What are you doing?' If the body is to go, let it go working. Rousing the Divinity in yourself and in others,—that is the ideal.

"If you are convinced of its truth, then be up and doing. Go out at once. Put off everything else. Now or never. Go to Uttarkashi and live there by the side of the Ganges and cry to Her saying: 'Mother, I want only Thee, I want nothing else.' Prepare the mind even now for living such a life. Work and everything else will be considered afterwards."

20TH JULY.

*Swami T* : "You will have to work your mind yourself. Others cannot do that. The Master said again and again: 'You must try a little. Only then will the Guru reveal the Truth.' Let me tell you from our experience that if any one advances towards Him a single step, He advances him ten steps. This is our personal experience. If you do not make some effort, none can do anything for you.

"The Great Ones point out the way. Is that little help? If you tell us your mind, we can help you.—We also have travelled the same path, so we can tell you about it. Does one want that the butter should be churned out and held before his lips?—Even then he keeps his mouth shut! Have we to feed him also? This is a mental disease, *styāna* (idleness),—the mind refuses to labour or do anything.

"Do you ask: 'Will not the Lord do anything for His devotee?' Yes, He will. But you will have to become a devotee first, you must learn to feel devotion for Him. And devotion, *Bhakti*, is no trifling thing.—You have to give Him your mind, life, everything. If you cannot do that, then cry to Him for not having attained Him, for not loving Him. People have to shed potfuls of tears before they can earn money. If you do not do that for God, why should He do anything for you? Little does He care! If you feel miserable for want of Him, know that He is very near to you,—you will soon have His vision, you will soon realise infinite bliss.

"You must analyse your mind very carefully. The Master asked me to in-

crease my lust infinitely. I was amazed to hear it. He then explained: 'What is lust? It is the desire to get. Then desire to get Him and strengthen this desire greatly.' . . .

"Let me tell you. Through the grace of the Lord, I can even now do all my work. I do not require anybody's service.

"Everyone wants to exhibit his good side and conceal his evils. Whoever can speak out his own faults frankly, will get rid of them. It is not easy to confess so. If any one does so, know that he has worth in him.

"You must make every one your own. The more you will approach God, the more you will become frank, sincere and generous. Our Master was the very personification of guilelessness and sincerity.

"He who has realised the Personal God can also realise the Impersonal, if he so wills. But he often retains his 'I' in order to taste the love and bliss of God. He also has the knots of his heart sundered and has realised his real nature. He does not seek *Nirvāna*. He is no longer afraid of the world. He who wants *Nirvāna* laboriously works his way to the goal, ever anxiously protecting himself against the world. But is it not better to be afraid of nothing?

"The Lord of the devotee can be both angry and pleased. The Master said that he could not bear the sight of egotistic persons. Those who go to God without seeking *Nirvāna* are *Iswarakotis*."

In course of a letter which the Swami wrote that day to a devotee, he observed: "If you are miserable for not having realised God, the more this mood grows, the more you will earn His grace. Intensify it still more. But if your misery is due to other reasons, then carefully shake it off."

29TH JULY.

*Swami T* : "Why will you not realise Him? Surely you will. Or why have you come here? Cry to Him,—make Him restless. Strike your head on



the ground till it breaks (in the agony of your soul). Tell Him: 'Thou art the Inner Controller. Look within me, see if there is anything.' Even to pray to Him thus is something."

30TH JULY.

*Swami T*: "The Master one day thus spoke about his throat-disease. He was asked if he felt the affections in his throat. The Master replied: 'What shocking things you say! Does the body ever become *Sadhu*? It is the mind that becomes such.' Unless the mind remains unaffected, a mere Spartan-like fortitude is not much;—you feel the pain, only you suppress its outward expression. If you feel that all pains and sufferings are of your body, not your own, and that you are separate from the body, only then are you right.

"You must finish all your spiritual practices long before old age and decrepitude overtake you. 'What is the use of digging a well, when the house is already on fire?'

"Mere suppression of passions is little use. There must be a high ideal along with self-restraint. Without a high ideal, the passions will find another outlet. You must give them a new direction, then you will be automatically rid of them. *Matparah samyatendriyah*—'Take refuge in Me and control the senses.' As for example, lust. Think that you are His child. Why should you be so low as to be lustful? Or think that you are ever pure, ever conscious.

"To stand on one's own legs means to rely on that 'I' which also comprehends the cosmic 'I', not on the 'I' which thinks that it is so and so and has passed so many examinations, etc;—to stand on this is no use.

"Work should be looked upon as a *Yajna*, a sacrifice. The whole work should be done perfectly, even as one would perform a sacrifice. Every work

should be considered a *sādhanā*, a means of God-realisation. Only thus would character be formed."

*Swami S*: "It is very good to meditate before sleeping and pass into sleep while thus meditating. Vishnu used to have very deep meditation. But the moment the Master would touch him, he would wake up looking at him. Nityagopal used to pass very often into deep ecstatic states. His eyes would roll up and his chest would turn quite red. And when he would meditate, all blood would rush into his face which would look red. The Master used to say to him: 'Not so much, not so much. You must also keep to the common human ways.' Nityagopal had a shining body, looking completely devoid of all grossness. It is from him that I learnt endurance. I used to pass whole nights meditating and repeating His name in the Beadon Square and Cornwallis Square (in Calcutta), and sometimes also at the Keoratola Ghat at Kalighat." . . . . .

*Swami T*: "I tell you from my inmost heart, I can this moment go away even as I am now, without caring to look about to see how things are left behind. Even now I can live on alms. Without this conviction I shall be undone.

"Man always seeks advantage. He has been doing it not only in this life but also in many previous lives. *Mukti* (Emancipation) is nothing but giving up seeking advantage. Man wants to avoid suffering; he is always sparing himself. Swamiji used to say that man wants only to gossip.

"This (Sannyasin) life is no fun. One must live very cautiously. One must be very alert and circumspect. One must never retaliate, one must endure. If you retaliate, it must rebound on you. It is no child's play. The Sannyasin's life is an attempt at going beyond all life. He alone will be saved, who will dwell constantly on good thoughts."

# THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF GODHEAD

BY WAHED HOSAIN

## I

It is generally said that Islam is severely monotheistic. A critical study of the Quranic texts and traditions of the Prophet will convince the seeker after truth that its texture is interwoven with the threads of abstract monism, and concrete theism. The wonderful combination of the two ideas running side by side throws light on the Islamic conception of the Supreme Being. The notion of an Absolute Existence (*dhat-i-mahaz*), and of the Divine Essence endowed with certain qualities often finds expression in the same texts. In some passages *Allah* is described as an Absolute One beyond human conception and comprehension. Sometimes the description of the Divine Being gives a vivid idea of a personal God as a Helper, Supporter and Grantor of Peace, as a Beneficent Friend and Vigilant Guardian over all. Sometimes the description rises to the height of poetic effusions in depicting the Deity as a Gracious Being, full of splendour and majesty, beauty and perfection. Sometimes it takes the turn of showing Him as an Intelligent Author of this wonderful Universe directing and regulating all its movements and functions. Sometimes it shows Him as a wise and omniscient Being bringing into existence wonderful beings and things without a design or premeditation. And sometimes the texts portray Him as a Powerful, Just and Wise King dispensing even-handed justice according to one's merit and desert.

Al-Quran declares: "Your God is Allah who is one in His personality and without any participator in His attributes. He is God alone. There is no being which is like Him—eternal and everlasting, nor has any being its attributes like His attributes."

Another text says: "The sight comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth the sight. Thy Lord is incomprehensible, gracious and wise" (Sura VI).

The Supreme Exalted Being who is called *Hay-Subhanahu*, is conceived as one single entity not capable of division. There is no plurality in Its Essence (*kathrat dar Zat*). If any notion of multiplicity is to be connected, it always refers to Its attributes (*Sifat*). The Muslim metaphysicians (*Mutakallamin*) therefore hold that "Oneness refers to Its Essence and plurality to Its attributes" (*Wahdat dar Zat wakathrat dar Sifat*).

It will presently be seen that Islamic religion is not monotheism as has wrongly been supposed, but it is monism. The metaphysical significance of monotheism materially differs from that of *Touhid* as used by the Muslim philosophers and logicians (*Mutakallamin*). Monotheism "makes God to be single but finite; or supposes that of the two self-existing principles one is personal and the other impersonal—God and matter. In other words the tendency of more advanced thought was to restrict personality to one of the rival powers, and to condense a single God of unlimited goodness, but limited in power by another principle outside of himself, and self-existent like himself, but impersonal." This is not the conception of *Allah* or the Supreme Being in Islam. Perhaps monotheism is an unconscious mistranslation of the Arabic term *Touhid* or *Wadhat*. If it is monotheism at all, it is then a concrete monotheism.

## II

The real Islamic conception of *Allah* is monism which consists in affirming



the Absolute Existence of one self-existent Being having self-consciousness ('*Ilm*), self-distinguishing and self-controlling power, and potentiality of evolving finite things and minds out of itself (*Zahur-i-dhat*, and *Kul min-indil-Allah—everything from Allah*) and directing and co-ordinating them for serving some Divine purpose. This idea of monism as embodied in the term *Touhid* may be considered in its several aspects :

(1) The idea of abstract monism is to be found in the Arabic expressions *dhat-i-mahaz* or *dhat-i-bahat* which means absolute existence, or in *Dhat-i-mutlaq* i.e. Absolute One. These expressions are used in contradistinction to "relative existences which are finite." In its abstract sense *Touhid* or monism conveys the idea of one indivisible unity, or indivisible oneness. In this sense God is *Ahad* (indivisible one). In Al-Quran two words are used in describing the unity of God, viz., *Ahad* and *Wahid*, meaning one. Although the two words convey the idea of unity or oneness, there is a sharp and subtle distinction between their metaphysical and esoteric significance. *Ahad* means such an entity as is not capable of division ; while *Wahid* means an entity which is capable of mathematical division, such as half, one-fourth, one-third, and so forth. Thus God (*Allah*) is *Ahad* i.e. the absolute one, and the nature of the absolute is to be "indivisible unity."

(2) The idea of the Absolute One connotes and conveys the idea of completeness in itself, i.e. perfection. Consequently Islam holds that the Absolute One is the perfect Being and that perfection or completeness is in its very nature.

(3) As a corollary to God's being absolute and perfect He is infinite— infinite as to His Eternal Existence, i.e. not limited to time and space ; or in other words, self-existing from eternity without beginning (*azal*) to eternity without end (*abad*) ; infinite as to His

power and potentiality (*qudrat* and *Irada*) i.e. inexhaustible in His activity and creative energy (*kul yumin hua fi shan—“He is at His functions every moment”*) ; and infinite as to His nature, i.e. not limited by anything outside His own nature.

(4) As a perfect and infinite Being God (*Allah*) is unconditioned, i.e., His reality is within Himself and as a Real Existence, He is not dependent on anything beyond Himself. In other words, all finite things and minds are dependent on Him as condition precedent, while *Allah* is independent of all conditions lying beyond Himself.

(5) The Absolute One being complete and perfect in Itself, exists wholly by Itself ; and as such It is aware of Its completeness and perfection. This consciousness has reference not only to Itself but to what is outside of Itself, i.e. the Absolute Being is conscious of His own existence, completeness and perfection ; He is equally conscious of all those activities and products which spring forth into existence out of His own nature (which are, in the terminology of modern science, called evolution, in that of theology called creation, and in that of the Muslim mystics (*Sufis*) called manifestations).

However, it should be noted that human cognition is sense-intuition i.e. awareness through the senses. But God's cognition is not sense-intuition like ours. It may be called *Intellectual Intuition*, i.e. cognition of reality otherwise than through senses.

In describing the absolute nature of the Supreme Being the author of the '*Awarif-ul-Ma'rif*' says: "The Divine Essence is all purity, completely free from the accidents of form, colour, magnitude, dimension, similitude, union, separation, association, descent, issue, decline, growth, change, alteration and transaction. It is absolute one ; there is no plurality in its oneness. His existence is therefore described by unity and known by singularity."

The Divine Being is said to be an



Absolute Existence (*dhat-i-mahaz*) ; It exists by Itself (*Wajib-ul-wajood-liz-dhatihi*) ; an Universal Existence (*dhat-i-basit*) pervading the world of phenomena. The author of the '*Awarif-ul-M'arif*' further expresses the idea of abstract monism by saying that "the Divine nature is full and exempted from whatever is contained in reason, in understanding, in the senses, and in conjecture" (Chap. I, sec. ii, on *Touhid*). "The sight comprehends Him not, but He comprehends the sight. He is incomprehensible and wise," says Al-Quran (Sura VI).

Such, then, is the nature of the Absolute Being according to the Muslim metaphysicians (*Mutakallamin*). The problem of *Touhid* may also be considered from another point of view, viz., of concrete monism which to some extent corresponds to the idea of *Wahdat-ul-wajood*. The doctrines of *Wahdat-ul-wajood* explains the theory of the unitary system of the Universe. According to the Islamic doctrine *Allah* is a concrete reality, a self-conscious Being with unlimited power of initiative and control. But God (*Allah*) being an Absolute Entity (*dhat-i-mahaz*) which is beyond human comprehension, He, as such, is an intellectual abstraction. How can then the Absolute One be a self-conscious reality? This difficult problem is solved by the Muslim philosophers in two ways: (1) According to the theory of *Wahdat-ul-wajood* which has been propounded by some Muslim *Mutakallamin* and worked out with great minuteness by *Ibu, 'Arabi, Jami, Rumi* and some other writers belonging to the Sufi school of thought, the infinite and the finite, the absolute and the relative, are not mutually exclusive, but correlated to each other ; and both of them together constitute one concrete reality. In this view the Absolute Being becomes the *Becoming* of something. The infinite Being is an inexhaustible process of creation, more strictly speaking, of manifestation or evolution. These manifestations proceed either from the

Essence (*Zahur-i-Zat*) or from its attributes (*Zahur-i-Sifat*). According to their theory, the creation is but a process of evolution or series of manifestations.

The orthodox section among the Muslim theologians does not accept this theory in its naked form. They credit the pure Divine Essence with certain qualities and hold that the finite and the relative are the outcome of these qualities and products of the Divine attributes of action. But at the same time they cling to the idea of *positive* creation by the command of God who created all things out of nothing. They reject the view which holds that "something cannot be created out of nothing." Their retort is that if the God of the philosophers is not powerful enough to bring out something out of nothing, the world has no need of such a weak and impotent God.

However, the conception of God, as *concrete monism*, is not without its advantages, viz.,

(1) it supposes a connection and establishes a sort of relation between God and the world, between spirit and matter ;

(2) it establishes the *necessary existence* of the Divine Being (*Wajib-ul-wajood*), and explains how He can be infinite and absolute and at the same time a concrete Being, as a permanent self-existent reality ;

(3) it avoids the idea of pantheism (*hama woost*—all are God), and conveys the idea of panentheism—all are in God (i.e. within the fold of His universal Existence—*Zat-i-basit*) ;

(4) it gives a relative reality to the world of experiences making finite things and minds dependent on His Existence ;

(5) further, it makes the Supreme Being to be transcendental (*balantar*) over the universe, and at the same time immanent in it (*'alakul-i-Shayin Mohit*).

### III

From what is stated above it will be seen that the Islamic conception of God



(*Allah*) is realistic. Its realism consists in holding that this world of phenomena is not unreal or mere illusion. All finite things and minds are real in the sense that so long as they endure, they have real existence. According to this view God is a permanent reality—a reality in substance; while anything else than God (*masiwa Allah*) is relatively real; because all finite things and minds are transient and subject to annihilation (*fani*). God only is *baqi*, i.e. everlasting. But finite things and minds exist only for a period. During the period of their existence they are real; or in other words, their existences are not illusory or deceptive. Al-Quran says: "We have not created the heaven and the earth otherwise than in truth" i.e. in reality. This idea is expressed in other verses also. The Quran points out the transient nature of all finite things and minds by declaring that "whatever exists in this world is subject to annihilation save the personality of the Lord who is exalted and beneficent" (Sura XLV). A tradition says: "Everything is destructible." From these texts it is clear that this world of experiences is real but transient. According to this view God is a permanent reality, while matter is relatively real and destructible.

#### IV

The above consideration leads me to examine the question of dualism in Islam. From the realistic points of view it appears that Islam countenances dualism, for it assumes the reality of matter though not permanently or absolutely so, like the reality of God. This, it is said, is a qualified dualism. This view is held to be incorrect. The notion of dualism seems to be based on misconception. The arguments that have been advanced to point out the unsoundness of the view may be stated below:

(1) Dualism is an aspect of ditheism which is not countenanced by Islam. It assumes the existence of two rival powers or principles—good and bad—

each equally powerful enough to defeat and frustrate the end and object of the other, such as, *Yizad* (*Mazdak*) and *Ahriman*—benevolent spirit and malevolent spirit of the Zoroastrians. Islam never looks upon matter and spirit in that light, nor does it consider God and the world as two rival powers in opposition.

(2) From the point of view of realism as explained above, God is a permanent reality, eternal and everlasting; while matter (finite things and minds) is finite, conditioned, and relative. It is dependent entirely on God for its existence. During the period of its transient existence, it is subservient to God who has the complete power to bring it to *non est* at any moment. Consequently dualism has no room in Islam.

(3) It is also contended that by making the world illusory, dualism is not avoided, for the existence of an illusion is itself dualism. The Sufis also try to escape from dualism by making the world a reflexion of God. But it is pointed out that the existence of reflexion is itself dualism.

(4) They further contend that it is the mental or intellectual aberration of those who consider relatively real existence of transient matter as dualism, but do not consider the relatively real existence of illusion or reflexion as dualism!

This view of realism militates against the idea of a qualified dualism in Islam.

I have shown that realism is an important feature of the conception of God in Islam. But the most noticeable feature is its transcendence. According to the transcendence doctrine of Islam, *Allah* (God) is superior to everything, and is more than this universe. He is transcendent as to His Essence, transcendent as to His qualities and attributes, transcendent as to His holiness and perfection, His majesty and splendour, and transcendent as to His nature. In this view,

God does not exhaust Himself in this universe as the theory of immanence supposes. This world is but an infinitesimal part of His transcendental existence. Consequently God is not co-extensive with the world in the sense of being the sum-total of finite things and minds, because no sum-total of the finite can exhaust the infinite.

On the other hand, the theory of immanence makes the Divine existence co-extensive with the world. In this view God becomes limited in the world. But the doctrine of transcendence as propounded in Al-Quran makes God embrace all finite things and minds within the fold of His all-pervading existence (*dhat-i-basit*), and at the same time makes Him more than what they are (*bala tar*). Thus the immanent idea of the Divine existence is a subsidiary feature of the transcendental conception of God in Islam.

Now, from the foregoing account and explanation, it is evident that the Islamic conception of God includes abstract monism and concrete theism, as well as realism and transcendentalism. Dualism comes in, if it comes at all, as an aspect of and in connection with realism.

All these ideas are to be found vividly portrayed in the Quranic texts and traditions describing the Divine Being and pointing out the nature and characteristics of His qualities and attributes. A summary of these ideas is given below. It may be pointed out that they are accepted by the Muslims belonging to all schools of thought.

*Allah* is the creator and intelligent author of the whole universe. He is one universal whole (Being), and has no partner or co-equal. He has been in existence from eternity and will continue to exist to eternity. His existence had no beginning and will have no end. His existence is absolute. He exists by His very nature, and has no cause for His existence. He has need of nothing, but everything has need of Him. He is not confined to

body or matter. He does not resemble anything, nor does anything resemble Him. The questions *how* and *what* and *where* have no reference to Him. He cannot be the subject of thought or imagination. The words *great* and *small* are not applicable to Him, as these are the qualities of created beings and things of matter, and He is neither. He has no connection with body or matter. He has no shape, measure or dimension, no form or colour. He is not confined to any space, time or direction. He is nowhere and yet He is everywhere. He is not liable to change, nor is He subject to birth, growth, decay, death or annihilation. He is unconditioned, perfect and infinite and not subject to any limit. His power is vast and unlimited. He has the power of initiative and control. The creation discloses His intelligence and profound wisdom. As an intelligent Author, He brings into existence beings and things of diverse forms, shapes, and colours wherein no defect is to be found, and supports and maintains them out of His infinite mercy. His creation is not based on any pre-existing model or measure. He is full of splendour, beauty and perfection.

His attributes are the same at present as they have been in the past and will remain the same in the future. These attributes do not affect His Essence, and in no way increase or decrease it by manifestations or their withdrawal.

His knowledge is vast, deep and perfect. The whole universe and its happenings are within the grasp of His knowledge. The hidden and the visible, the manifest and the unmanifested are within the compass of His ken. He is omniscient. As His wisdom does not require premeditation or consideration, so His knowledge does not require physical organs or apparent means.

He sees and hears everything, but not through the medium of any organ.



The light and darkness are the same for His sight ; the far and near are the same for His hearing. He speaks but not with a mouth or a tongue, nor in words of a language. As an idea in the mind of man is a dumb speech without form or language and cannot be heard by men, so is God's word known to those who can understand it.

He is far and near and surrounds everything. The whole universe is within the vast fold of His omniscience.

He is not perceived through the senses, yet His presence can be felt through the eyes of faith and conviction ; and His voice can be heard through meditation and concentration.

The Divine Essence is all purity—full of perfection. Although the Supreme Being is beyond the ken of perception, yet, He is not beyond realisation. His epiphany or manifestation can be seen within the heart made free from impurities and imperfections.

(To be continued)

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

### INTELLECTUALISM VS. SPIRITUALITY

By what we have hitherto said about the necessity of knowledge, art, work, etc. in the preparation for religious life, some may be led to think that they are integral parts of spirituality. That, however, will be a wrong conclusion. There are people, especially those who have been influenced by the Protestant culture of England, who hold that spirituality is a harmonious development of head, heart and hand. A religious ideal which excludes or does not emphasise the development of intellect and the faculty of activity is at best imperfect ; and mere culture of the heart is, according to them, little good and abnormal. It is possible our previous articles may have been construed as advocating such a view. To think so, as we have said, would be an error.

This conception of harmony appeals to many. It appears so natural. But religion is nothing if not the reversal of what is called the natural. The habit and experience of countless lives have taught us to regard what is really unnatural as natural. No religion ever really says that the human soul is material or finite. Reason also dictates that the immaterial and the infinite must be beyond all definition, limitation or want, and that the ways of the infinite

can never be like those of the finite. Yet we have been so befooled and deluded that our conception of perfection often partakes of the nature of the limited and the imperfect. We resist the idea of the negation of our present nature. We magnify our imperfection and call it perfection.

The idea of the harmony of head, heart and hand is an instance of this delusion. No doubt there is a stage in our spiritual progress, in which this harmony is beneficial and has to be practised. But it would be harmful to consider this as the goal itself. Let us consider intellectualism. Sri Ramakrishna said : "In the Hindu almanac, it is mentioned that on a particular day there will be twenty *âdâs* (measure of capacity) of rain-water. But you will not be able to squeeze out of the almanac a single drop!" This saying of the Master goes to the very root of the matter. A map of a land is not the land itself. When we philosophise about God, we do not really *perceive* God. The concept of God is not God Himself. This distinction has to be clearly borne in mind. We must remember that reason or intellect is concerned with systematising the knowledge of things, not with *perceiving*



things. But things must be perceived first. That is essential. We perceive external objects through sense-intuition, and mental things through mental intuition ; and then we systematise these perceptions, which is an indirect process. Similarly we must perceive the Spirit through spiritual intuition. That is religion. That is spirituality. So intellectualism and spiritual intuition cannot be identical. They are altogether distinct. All of us have heard how Sir J. C. Bose has demonstrated that plants have life and sensibilities. Sir J. C. Bose's experiments have given us the intellectual comprehension that plants feel as we feel. But we do not yet *perceive* them as so feeling. To perceive them as living and feeling we must raise our consciousness to a higher and subtler level. We must acquire superconscious perception. Otherwise the fact of plants being alive will ever remain with us a matter of intellectual conviction at best. To get the intellectual conviction, the manipulation of a few instruments is enough. But to perceive the life of plants, to *feel* plants as endowed with happiness and sorrow, joy and suffering, we have to acquire a new kind of perception. This is a fundamental difference between intellectualism and spirituality.

In order to be religious, what we absolutely require is the development of a new power of perception, through which we are to know the universe not as material and mental, but as spiritual. Intellect is not that power. Therefore intellectualism does not help us spiritually. Therefore we find that even giants of intellect are sometimes babies spiritually. Intellect is satisfied with the appearances of things. Spirituality penetrates beyond the appearances and reaches the heart of things, which is Divinity. We have said that a fundamental difference between intellect and religion is that the former is concerned with the conception of things and the latter with their perception. But that perception should be not of external

aspects but of the very essence, which is always Divine. This, then, is another great difference between intellectualism and spirituality.

A third difference lies in the difference of personal attitude towards Reality, as implied by intellect and religion. Intellect reduces even a living thing to an idea ; religion makes even an idea living. God, to intellect, is a concept ; to religion, the soul of one's soul. In religion, we seek to realise Reality which is appearing to our present experience as a half material, half living universe, as the Eternal Person endowed with infinite consciousness. This differentiates religion essentially from intellectualism.

If spirituality is so different from intellectualism, why did we then recommend the pursuit of knowledge as a preparation for religion? The reason is obvious. The utility of knowledge is more or less negative in character. We want knowledge and intellectualism not for any positive spiritual gain, but for being rid of the grossnesses of our nature, to reach a state of refinement where we can usefully and efficiently take up the culture of spirituality. When our mind has become fine enough, when through knowledge, activity, æsthetic and moral culture, and social service, our mind has become averse to sense-enjoyment, longs for spiritual realities and searches for the One in the many, then the time has come to take to new ways, to turn a sharp corner, to give up the habitual outlook on life and things and develop a new, the spiritual, outlook. In fact, by then, our mind has already unsciously developed new ways. A new vision has been slowly rising of itself. What we have to do now is to leave off the old ways completely and perfect the new vision. Now the world has to be completely forgotten. No more book-learning or intellectual gymnastics. No more so-called social service and moral idealism and æstheticism. Now to know God, to drink deep of His love and to be for



ever lost in Him ; and to that end, to eradicate all feelings from our mind except the consciousness of God. Who cares for head and hand now? The heart is the temple of God. Where is the place of philosophy in the communion between lovers? In order to love a man, do we require the knowledge of physiology, anatomy or biology?

It is a partial vision that looks upon head and hand as necessary associates of heart in the realisation of perfect spirituality. Where is the place of much knowledge in that realisation which is of the One? The knowledge of the many has no place there. Where the phenomenal world exists, only there the knowledge of phenomena is of use. But where the manifold world is non-existent, there the so-called knowledge is out of place. Such a knowledge does not at all help us in gaining spiritual realisation. And work? Work is possible only in our present state of existence and knowledge. This state, however, is due to our spiritual ignorance and has to be transcended.

Of course we are here speaking of the culmination itself. In the intermediate stages, we cannot altogether do without the exercise of head and hand ; in fact, it is beneficial and necessary as we shall see later on. What we are trying here is to indicate the nature of the state we have to try to reach, and the true value of intellectualism etc. For many days yet, we shall have to play a double game, to feel the ultimate worthlessness of intellectualism etc. and yet utilise them in realising the higher, spiritual, vision. It, therefore, must not be understood that as soon as we have reached the stage of refinement where we can seriously take to religion, we are to give up all intellectual culture and become credulous fools. There are people who become fools in the name of religion. Because it is said that God cannot be realised through the intellect, they rush to the conclusion that religious matters must be all reasonless and

that to become credulous fools is the first step of spiritual progress. Religion is nothing of the kind. Once for all let us lay it to our mind that while religion cannot be realised through reason or intellectualism, but has to be realised through the development of a distinct spiritual intuition, the ways and conclusions of religion are never irrational. If irrational and foolish things are presented in the name of religion, we may fearlessly discard them as nonsense. But of course we must judge calmly and carefully before we so discard.

Anyhow the time is not yet when we can dispense with intellectualism. That time will come when we shall feel an overwhelming love for God, or at least when we shall be firmly established in the knowledge of the ideal we want to realise and its pros and cons and ways and means. For unless there is an unassailable conviction about the ideal in our mind, a serious and uninterrupted practice is not possible. Our mind is bound to be disturbed by conflicting ideas. To-day occultism, tomorrow theosophy, on the third day another *ism* will come and disturb us, and we shall be bandied about like a shuttlecock. Not only the conflicting attractions of different religious views and philosophies, but also secular ideals are bound to be disturbing. In these days people are so intimately associated with social, economical, political, cultural, national and international movements that unless their religious ideals are conceived in harmony with them, these have every chance of interrupting the even flow of their religious life. Hence the urgent need of a thorough intellectual grasp of one's religious ideal in all its details and bearings.

We thus see three different evaluations of intellectualism. In the first stage, its culture is positively beneficial as it leads to the refinement of mind. In the second stage, we feel that it does not lead to spiritual knowledge proper, which we have to acquire



through quite a different kind of perception, the spiritual intuition or *Yoga-sakti*. But though we feel the ultimate worthlessness of intellectualism, we have yet to culture it, until we are engulfed by the overwhelming love of God, and in order to be fully convinced of the truth and

worth of our chosen spiritual ideal so that there may not be any subsequent conflict. In the third stage, our mind has become thoroughly one-pointed. We want to realise and love God alone and forget every other thing. The world seems trash. Intellectualism is then an obstruction and painful.

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## SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT THE SHANTI ASHRAMA

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA

It is our inestimable good fortune that we have been born in this age, an age in which great souls adorn this world with their presence. We have had the blessing, and we are enjoying the blessing to-day, of living in the presence of great men.

It is said in our scriptures that one of the means of attaining liberation is association with the wise. The mind, naturally inclined to occupy itself with mundane existence, is checked in its course by contact with holy men. No matter how sincere we may be, our natural tendency is to turn away from godly aspirations, and to allow our minds to flow back into old channels of worldly concern. It is only through association with the wise that we are reminded again of the vanity of ordinary everyday existence, that we are reminded of the fact that God alone is real and all else but a passing dream.

The truth of this we have been able to verify in our contacts with the revered Swami Turiyananda. For having lived with the Swami Turiyananda, we have lived with a wise and holy man, a saint whose life was a demonstration of the truth of the scriptures.

When the Swami Vivekananda was about to return from America to India his promise was that he would send to us in America one of his brother Sannyasins, who would show us how to live the life of which the great Swamiji himself had given us the precepts. "He

is the living embodiment of Vedanta," Swamiji said. "He will lead you into the right way to spiritual attainment."

With such a promise before us, it was not strange that we awaited the arrival of Swami Turiyananda with considerable anticipation and even curiosity. Teachers from India were in America a novelty in those days thirty years ago. Some of us who joined the Vedanta classes later on had not met the other Swamis, had never seen a Hindu in all their lives. For these, to meet the Swami Turiyananda was certainly a new experience, for Swami Turiyananda was not an ordinary man. On meeting him, one noticed a peculiar tendency, a tendency expressed even in his eyes. And that tendency was a certain reserve, a certain withdrawal of the mind inward. Part of the mind was exercised outwardly, was used to meet the demands of the external world. But another part was occupied on another plane, was not allowed to mix in the experiences of everyday life. This gave to his eyes often a far-away look. And in contact with people it often made him appear absent-minded. Rarely, in those earlier days, did he give an immediate reply to serious questions. He took the question inward, and from his deeper consciousness came the reply. People not being accustomed to this, would repeat their questions, thinking that the Swami had not understood them. It was sometimes a little disconcerting when being asked



a question, the Swami began softly to chant "Om, Om, Om," his eyes looking beyond the questioner, in a vacant way. But gradually we became accustomed to his ways, and we discovered that when the answer came it was to the point and most satisfactory.

In the life of the Swami Turiyananda, we saw demonstrated the words of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita when the Lord tells Arjuna, "What appears as night to the worldly man, is day to the knower of Brahman; and that which is day to the worldly-minded, is like a dream to him who knows the Truth."

What struck us as very strange and unique was the Swami's attitude towards life in a new and strange country. We thought he would be curious about many things, and that he would enjoy going about seeing this and that, hearing our music, seeing our theatres, and what not. So he received many invitations to performances and other forms of entertainment. But such invitations held out no charm to him. And if, reluctantly, he accepted, it was noticed that his mind was elsewhere. In the midst of a performance one would hear him softly utter the name of God, and it was clear that the performance made little impression on his mind.

During these early days in America, the Swami seemed constantly to be absorbed in a form of meditation. And often when invited to go here or there, he would reply, "Why do you want to go out? Let us think and talk of Mother." He would pick up a book from the library, the life of some saint, and he would begin to read aloud, explaining the reading as he went along. And when he went out with some one for a walk, his conversation would be invariably on religious subjects. He would speak of the life of his Master, he would repeat his Master's anecdotes, or he would try to make us understand a little of the greatness of the Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji always was a favorite subject of his talks. His devotion to Swamiji was complete.

Once a strange thing happened. The Swami had told us in our morning class in the Shanti Ashrama many secret things in the life of his Master. After the class, when he came to the tent he then occupied, he told me that he had accidentally bitten his own tongue. A little blood even came in his mouth. Then he said, "Perhaps Mother was not pleased that I revealed so many secrets about the Master. It may be some of the students are not ready for the higher teachings."

In those days the word "Mother" was constantly on his lips. "Mother tells me to do this," or "Mother wants me to tell you that." The Swami felt that the Divine Mother was guiding him in every way, that She was directing all his actions, even his speech.

When one of the students asked him to organize the work in the Shanti Ashrama, he replied, "Organization kills the spirit. But if Mother organizes then it is nice. Don't you see how She has organized us already? Everything goes on smoothly and regularly. What more organization do you want? You people in the West must have your rules and regulations. But there is only one power that organizes without doing harm. That is the power of love. Let us learn to love, and organization will take care of itself."

It was in this same spirit of trusting in God alone, that the Swami was very strongly opposed to all planning. There also, he used almost the identical language. "Why do you plan? Why are you scheming? Why do you look so far ahead? Let Mother plan. Her plans come true. Human planning is all in vain, if She does not consent. She knows what will happen. The future is an open book to Her. Live in the present; make the best of your time and opportunities. Don't think of the future. Know it for certain that Mother's will shall come to pass. Trust in Her; leave everything to Her. Only try to love Her sincerely; give yourself to Her, let Her



do with you as She wishes." But on one occasion he added, "Trusting in Mother does not mean idleness. Try to know Her will, and then be up and doing like a man. Don't you see, I am never idle? The mind must be occupied somehow or other. If you don't do physical work you must use your mind,—read, or study, or meditate, and don't spend your time in idle gossip. Gossip breeds mischief. If you talk, talk of the Lord."

Of reading, the Swami once gave us the advice to read only books written by men of realization. When he found a lady student studying a book on New Thought, he told her, "Go to the source. Don't waste your time reading the ideas of every fool who wants to preach religion. There are thousands of books on religion. You cannot read them all. Therefore select the best. Only those who have realized the truth can speak with authority. Otherwise it is the blind leading the blind. Both come to grief; both fall into the ditch. Only the true Guru can lead us aright, and the true Guru is he who knows Brahman."

At the Shanti Ashrama we were just one big family with Swami Turiyananda at the head. He called us Mother's children, and he treated all alike without distinction or favoritism. When we came there, there were no buildings. We lived in tents, and water had to be brought from a very long distance. Then we discovered a muddy spring on the place, and we began at once to dig till clear water came. Later on we went deeper, blasting through rock, and we had a good well. Gradually little one-room cabins were built, and a larger room for classes and meditation. Also a dining room was built from canvas on a wooden framework. In the summer, however, the classes were held outside under the pine trees. There the Swami took up Raja Yoga, then the Gita; and he translated to us the Vivekachudamani by Sri Sankaracharya. It was also

under the trees that he taught us how to meditate and concentrate the mind. And a great part of these classes was taken up by answering questions. But this was not the only way in which he taught. During the meals he would tell us stories from the Puranas.

During the day he would sometimes come to our tents, and would ask us how we were getting along. "Forget the world now," he would say. "We are fifty miles away from civilization. We live in the forest; we must create our own atmosphere. And that atmosphere must be filled with Mother. Think of Her, talk of Her, dream of Her. Forget your city and your friends, and relatives. Remember only God. We are human beings, we must strive for the highest. Don't rest till you have realized something. This is the time; this is your opportunity."

Sometimes, but not often, when he detected a weak spot in some student, he would ask him or her to perform some form of Sadhana. A very talkative gentleman was asked to practise silence. Others would fast, or stay in retirement in their tents, not seeing any one. Thus the spiritual fire was kept burning.

As we had no servants in the Ashrama, we had to do all the work ourselves. We cooked, washed the pots, gathered fuel, washed our clothing, even built the cabins ourselves. The Swami was very happy to see us do this. And often he would himself help in the work. He even carried water from the well in big canisters, and cut up the wood for the kitchen fire. We remonstrated that he should not do physical labor. But the Swami would not listen to us. "Unless I give the example," he would say, "why should you all work so hard? Let me share in the work. Many hands make the task light."

Once, when he was cutting up wood with a big axe, a splinter of wood flew into his face and cut his nose so that blood came. But he only laughed, and



said, "I must learn to be a good wood-cutter. The children of Sri Ramakrishna must be able to do everything."

The work of Swami Turiyananda at the Shanti Ashrama was character-building. "Be yourself," he used to say, "and be strong. Realization is only for the strong, the pure, the upright. Remember that you are the Atman. That gives the greatest strength and courage. Be brave ; break through the bondage of Maya. Be like the lion ; don't tremble at anything. Swamiji has taught you that every soul is potentially Divine. Realize your own Divinity, then you will realize that all souls are Divine. A cloud obscures the sun. We say, 'there is no sun.' But the sun always shines. So the cloud of ignorance makes us believe that we are weak human beings. But the sun of Atman is always shining. Remove the cloud of ignorance and the Atman will reveal itself in your heart. When you realize that, then you are a man. Otherwise you are not different from the beasts."

And when asked, How this can be realized, he answered, "Through meditation. **Meditation is the key that opens the door to Truth.** Meditate, meditate! Meditate till light flashes into your mind, and the Atman stands self-revealed. Not by talk, not by study, but by meditation alone the Truth is known."

In those early days in the Shanti Ashrama we were all vegetarians. No meat or fish ever came to the Ashrama. And we practised non-killing. Even poisonous snakes were not killed. Once it happened that during meditation, a poisonous beetle bit the Swami on his hand. He made a motion with his hand, which threw off the beetle. The Swami thought no more about it ; he had not even opened his eyes to see what insect had bitten him. But after an hour or so, his hand began to swell. Then he told us that he had felt the sting of an insect. The swelling increased, and we could not bring it down.

The following day the entire arm was swollen, and we became alarmed. What to do? The nearest doctor was fifty miles away. We had no motor, only a horse and a two-wheeled cart. Neither was there a motor road, no car could cross the mountains. But something had to be done without further delay. The poison was spreading. Then something unexpected happened. In the evening a gentleman came to our Ashrama on foot. He had walked all the way, fifty miles, and at last had found the Ashrama. When we asked him who he was, he told us that he was a doctor. He had come from New York, more than three thousand miles away, and arrived just at this critical moment. He at once made some incisions. He said, any delay might prove fatal. He had a few simple medicines with him, disinfectants, and soon the Swami was out of danger. It was like a miracle. The Mother had sent this young doctor to save the Swami's life.

To those who lived with the Swami Turiyananda in the Shanti Ashrama, it is a sheer delight to call these days to memory again. The Swami was in the prime of manhood, energetic and filled with enthusiasm. He realized the necessity of a peace retreat in the West where life is intense, where with a high material standard of living, the mind is constantly drawn outward, where worldly ambitions and demands call for endless activity, where the spirit is drowned in an ocean of worldly pursuits. He found in the West a restlessness of mind he had hardly imagined even to exist. But he also realized that given the proper directions these same minds, alert, quick to understand, tenacious in their purposes, could under proper training become worthy of his attempt to lead them into spiritual channels. He, therefore, gave himself heart and soul to this task. He never spared himself ; he did not think of his own health or comforts ; he had only one object, namely, to bring these

eager students to the feet of his Divine Master.

Swami Vivekanda had called him to this task. He had told him to forget India and to plunge into his new work with no other thought but to do the Master's will. He felt from moment to moment that the Divine Mother was behind him, was leading him, was guiding him. He became a channel of the inflow and the outflow of a great spiritual Power. He had no other thought but to do God's will.

Under such conditions results were inevitable. Such sincerity, such self-effacement, such an outflow of energy could not go in vain. The students *had* to respond; the Swami's ardor was infectious. At the Shanti Ashrama characters were changed, lives were changed. The very atmosphere of the place began to breathe a different spirit. It was as if the minds of the students, variously constituted as these minds were, gradually came under the spell of a new charm.

Natural tendencies and ambitions seemed to be transformed, seemed to be replaced by one single ambition, to realize the Truth, even in this life. In the Shanti Ashrama we realized the value of association with the wise. And even to-day twenty-six years later, the students of the Swami Turiyananda look upon him as their true Guru, as the one who helped them to cross more safely this ocean of life. His memory is, and always will be, sacred to them. And the Shanti Ashrama, to these early students, will always remain a place of pilgrimage, a place of holy atmosphere and sacred recollections.

In New York, in Boston, in Los Angeles, in San Francisco, the Swami had given public lectures. But lectur-

ing was not to his liking. It was necessary to reach the masses. But his real work was done in classes and with individuals. Swami Vivekananda had told him that all he had to do was to live the life, to be an example. "Can you improve on my lectures?" Swamiji once asked him. "What are you saying, Swamiji?" the Swami replied. "No one can improve on your lectures." "Then," Swamiji said, "don't bother about lecturing. Live as you lived in India. Live the life and you will perform miracles. These Western people have lecturers enough. But who is there to show them how to live?"

It was his life, his example, that drew us to the Swami. In him we saw a man of realization, a man who lived what he taught. That is why he impressed us. Such a man we had never seen before. From the East, light and wisdom had come to us in the West. In the midst of a world of turmoil and striving, and worldly ambitions, there was with us *one* man who counted not name or fame or worldly success. One who lived at peace with himself, an inner life, a life dedicated to God and the service of humanity—a man who attracted through love; who conquered through love. To his disciples, the Swami Turiyananda was the greatest blessing that ever entered into their lives. To them, his memory is a sacred memory, a memory that strengthens in time of need, a memory that brings sweetness in moments of distress, a memory that stimulates every new attempt to the realization of Truth. To think of Swami Turiyananda is an act of purification of the mind; to remember his life, an impulse to new endeavour.

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*'Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.' . . . . 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' . . . . 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves.'*

—Early Christian Mission Charges.



# A FEW WORDS ON SANKHYA AND VEDANTA

BY KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

## INTRODUCTORY

It may not be unnecessary to begin with a few words about the interpretations that Sankhya and Vedanta have respectively put upon the world or *jagat*. Later Vedanta, e.g., Panchadasi, Vedânta-Sâra and Vedânta-Paribhâshâ appear to have been influenced by the Sankhya idea of *prakriti* and the evolutionary series of the Sankhyas. Badarayana and Sankara, however, look upon sankhya as their chief antagonist (प्रधान मल्ल) and have not only totally rejected (a) the Sankhyan doctrine of evolution but also (b) the Sankhyan conception of *prakriti* and (c) the Sankhyan evolutionary series, both psychological and cosmological—and that not only from the *pâramârthika* or absolutistic but also from the *vyavahârîka* or empirical standpoint.

From the *paramarthika* standpoint, of course, evolution cannot stand, for evolution implies dualism—the dualism of *prakriti* and *purusha*. The *prakriti* of Sankhya is an independent real and its evolution is spontaneous like the evolution of modern science. From the *paramarthika* standpoint of Vedanta this *prakriti* is *mâyâ* which is not an independent real like the Sankhyan *prakriti*, but has its locus (अधिष्ठान) in Brahman (which is without *bheda*, स्वगत, स्वजातीय and विजातीय) just as the illusory snake has its locus in the rope. The snake is false. The rope is the truth. Things are not what they seem. The manifold does not exist. नैव नानास्ति किञ्चन। The so-called reality is not

value. Value is all in all. *This value we call परमपुरुषार्थे।*

Thus everything that has been said about the *achetana jagat* (non-living) and *chetana jiva* (living) in the Brahma-Sutras has to be understood in the light of the introductory chapter, otherwise known as the *adhyâsa-bhâsya* of Sankara's commentaries.

### (a) SANKHYA DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION AND VEDANTIST CRITICISM.

When from the *paramarthika* standpoint we come down to the *vyavahârîka* world, what is it that strikes us? We see that Badarayana systematically opposes the spontaneous *parinâma* of the Sankhyas from the 5th Sutra of the first chapter of the Brahma-Sutras down to the second *pâda* of the second chapter of the book. The principle and fact of change are frankly recognised. Three kinds of *bheda* or difference (the essence of *maya*), viz., स्वगत, स्वजातीय and विजातीय are also recognised with equal frankness. But he rejects the idea that *achetana pradhâna* without the active intervention of *chetana saguna Brahman*<sup>1</sup> can change at all. Sankaracharya has elucidated the *Sutras* with copious illustrations. The most important point to be observed is that विजातीय भेद or difference between one species and another, according to Sankaracharya, can on no account be explained by the Sankhyan doctrine of evolution. There can be no cause-and-effect relation between a horse and

<sup>1</sup> If you say that such *chetana saguna Brahman* is no better than *deus ex machina*, then the Advaitist will reply: "Very well. So much the better. Admit then frankly that change or 'variation' is inexplicable, or, in other words, say outright 'I do not know.'" Now, to say "I do not know" is the same thing as to accept *Mâyāvâda*, for *Maya* = *Avidyâ* = *Ajnâna* = I do not know. What do I know then for certain? Only one thing immediately, by intuition: I AM. What is this I? Find it out and you will see that this 'I' is the same as Brahman and you will also see that the world has vanished. THIS IS THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL METHOD OF VEDANTA.



a buffalo, says Sankara in his interpretation of the *Sutra* युक्ते षड्दान्तराच्च (2.1.18). In this connection it should be said that according to the Sankhyas, what is not in the cause cannot be in the effect. This is the meaning of the *Sat-kârya-vâda* of the Sankhyas. According to the Sankhyas there is no विजातीय भेद। The Vedantist says, there is विजातीय भेद।<sup>1</sup> To say that there is no such thing would not be honest. The argument of Vedanta against Sankhya applies with greater force against the modern doctrine of evolution.

(b) SANKHYA CONCEPTION OF *Prakriti*  
AND VEDANTIST CRITICISM

Now, from Badarayana's and Sankara's hostility to the Sankhya doctrine of spontaneous evolution *not only from the paramarthika but also from the vyavaharika point of view*, let me come to the Sankhyan conception of *prakriti*. According to the Sankhyas, *mulâ prakriti* or *pradhana* is the equilibrium of *sattwa*, *rajo* and *tamo gunas* which are its *parts*. Note well the word *parts* (अंश). The word *parts* implies स्वगत भेद and not विजातीय भेद, not even स्वजातीय भेद। What do these *gunas* (substances—not qualities) represent? *Sattwa* represents *sukha* (happiness); *rajas* represents *duhkha* (misery); and *tamas* represents *moha* or blindness. Sankhya has here mixed up matter and mind, macrocosm and microcosm, the cosmological and the psychological. Sankara in his interpretation of the *Brahma-Sutra* 2.2.1. scouts the idea that *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* can have anything to do with the external world. According to Sankara these *gunas* should be interpreted psychologically. The later Vedantists have here parted company with Sankara in the well-known treatises Vedanta-Sara, Panchadasi and Vedanta-Paribhasha. They have accepted the Sankhya view of *prakriti*. Where there

is a difference between Sankara and later Vedantists the safe rule seems to be to be guided by Sankara.

According to Sankhyas and some later Vedantists there is no fundamental difference between the living and the non-living (चित्त and अचित्त), nor even between the mental and the material. They derive both body and mind, life and non-life from one principle (*prakriti*). According to Sankaracharya this is wrong. In his interpretation of the *Brahma-Sutra*, 2-4-4 he clearly says that life and mind are distinct principles derived directly from Brahman and therefore by implication not material or भौतिक। It should be also noticed that the term तन्मात्र, if I remember aright, does not occur in Sankara though it occurs in Sankhya and later Vedanta. Sankara uses the term सूक्ष्मभूत in contradistinction from स्थूल भूत। Sankaracharya again distinguishes *manas* (मनः) from the ten *indriyas*. Ten *indriyas* plus मनः make up eleven, but मनः is not *indriya*. Vedanta-Paribhasha here elaborately supports Sankaracharya in the eighth *prakarana* of its first chapter in refutation of the *Naiyâyikas*. मनः IS A VERY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE. Brihadâraanyaka Upanishad in 4.4.19. clearly says that Brahman is to be known by the mind and though in Taittiriya Upanishad (2.4) it has been said that Brahman cannot be reached by the mind, yet all that Taittiriya means is that Brahman is not knowable by the impure mind but knowable by the pure mind.<sup>2</sup> Vedanta-Paribhasha very clearly explains this in the fourth *prakarana* of its eighth chapter. This is in perfect agreement with the saying of Bhagawan Ramakrishna that He is knowable by शुद्ध मनः or pure mind. Swami Vivekananda has also said that "God is the highest ideal of man" (Mayavati Memorial Edition of Vivekananda's Works, III. 89) and that "He reveals himself to the pure heart." In

<sup>1</sup>The three dominant ideas of to-day's science are *discontinuity*, *variability* and *relativity* as opposed to *continuity*, *uniformity* and *evolution* of the 19th century.

<sup>2</sup>This is the psychological method of Vedanta.



the West if anybody mixes up mind and matter he is called a materialist even though matter be immaterial. The criterion of mind is awareness or consciousness.<sup>1</sup> The term CHIT or JNANA should not be rendered into the term "consciousness" but into the term "spirit" or "spiritual wisdom" or "gnosis", if you please, which is another name for the pure ideal, the theme of the Vedanta. Chit or jnana or Atman or Brahman is अप्राणीयमना शुद्धः (Not to be thought in terms of the vital or the mental. It is white or pure). It is knowable by the mind but it is not the mind and not consciousness.

(c) SANKHYA EVOLUTIONARY SERIES AND VEDANTIST CRITICISM

I come next to the evolutionary series of the Sankhyas known as the 24 tattwas. According to the Sankhyas the first vikâra or evolute of prakriti is mahat or buddhi. From mahat proceeds ahankâra, the second evolute. According to Sankaracharya all this is absurd. He scouts the idea in his interpretation of 2.1.2. of the Brahma-Sutras and says that it is neither *loukika* (supported by experience) nor *Vaidika* (supported by the Vedas). In the Upanishads there are no doubt many conflicting accounts of *srishtih* but Sankaracharya has mainly followed Chhândogya. Sankaracharya begins with matter and then ascends through life to mind. This is in agreement with modern science. This is also common sense.

It has also to be stated that according to the Sankhyas *buddhi*, *ahankara* and *manas* are three distinct *tattwas* but according to the Vedanta *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahankara* are but different manifestations of one *antahkarana* (see Brahma-Sutras, Sankara's *Bhasya*, 2. 4. 6). It has further to be noted that the word *manas* in Vedanta sometimes means *antahkarana* and

sometimes it implies volitional function only (*sankalpa* and *vikalpa*).

'DHARMA' AND 'ADHARMA' AND SPIRITUAL LIFE  
'ADHARMA' AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

Let me conclude with a word or two about the most important concepts, *dharma* and *adharma*, *pâpa* and *punya*. From Non-Life to Life, from Life to Mind, from Mind to Spirit, the climax. I have come across teachers of Vedanta who make light of the distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice. They say that it is all *vyavaharika* nonsense. Such teachings are most mischievous and cannot be too strongly condemned. THE VEDANTA PREACHES NOTHING BUT THE PURE IDEAL WHICH IS NOT ONLY NOETIC OR EPISTEMOLOGICAL BUT ALSO ETHICAL. As Max Müller has rightly observed: "Ethics is at the beginning, ethics is in the middle and ethics is at the end of the Vedanta philosophy." Over and over again we come across the expression *apahata-pâpmatâ* (sinlessness itself) in connexion with Brahman. *Suddham Apâpa-biddham, Santam Sivam Adwaitam*—such is the ethical ideal and THIS ETHICAL IDEAL IS IDENTICAL WITH THE ONTOLOGICAL TRUTH. It is another name for *Moksha* and *MOKSHA* and *BRAHMAN* are synonymous terms. As Sankaracharya has said नित्यबुद्धनक्षत्ररूपत्वान्मोक्ष in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutra* I. 1. 4. It is the pure ideal, wholly impersonal, *nirguna* or *nirvisesha*. It is *Swarupa*. It is Pure Bliss. This Bliss has nothing to do with hedonism, for there is a world of difference between the propositions "virtue is happiness" and "happiness is virtue"—and a man CAN identify himself with the ideal and become Truth itself, Wisdom itself, Goodness itself, Bliss itself. These are really one though the names are many. The man who realises the ideal and becomes it loses his individuality or limitation, trans-

<sup>1</sup> This we know by intuition and not by the external method of behaviouristic psychology which is materialistic as it rejects the subjective or introspective method and depends mainly on stimulus and re-action.



cends all differences (*bheda-buddhi*) and proclaims: I am That, I am That—One without a second, *ekamevād-witiyam*.

If the ethical ideal, the ideal of Absolute Good and Perfection is the goal of Vedanta, then why is it that we sometimes come across such propositions as "Brahman is above *dharma* and *adharma*, above *papa* and *punya*"? The answer is: Because the terms *dharma* and *adharma* and *papa* and *punya* are used in two different senses. One sense is legalistic, *pravritti-mulaka*, the sense of Jaimini to whom ritualism or *karma-kānda* is all in all and whose end is not निःश्रेयस but अमुदय or happiness here and also in Heaven, and the other sense is ethical or *nishkāma* or *nivritti-mulaka*.<sup>1</sup> In the ethical sense *dharma* or *punya* means *Sivam* or good and *adharma* or *papa* means *a-Sivam* or evil. *Brahman* is not above *Sivam* for *Sivam* does not belong to the realm of *maya* but *Brahman* stands opposed to *a-Sivam*. *A-Sivam* is *papa* or *mrityu* or *maya* (which is विज्ञप्ति)<sup>2</sup> and *Sivam* is *amritam*. That is why the words *mrityu* and *amritam* in Maitreyi's famous prayer "from death (*mrityu*) lead me unto immortality (*amritam*)" have been explained by Sankara in the sense of *pāpāsakti* (attachment to sin) and sinlessness. *Immortality* does NOT mean continued individual existence after physical death. It is now and here. *Individual existence has got to be renounced*.

In the present state of our country and the world it is the ethical aspect of

the Vedantic ideal that should be stressed again and again.<sup>3</sup> Holiness is strength. Holiness is fearlessness (*abhayam*). Apply it to life and all its departments and Vedanta becomes practical, and practical Vedanta is the special message of Swami Vivekananda, the prophet of New India. It is no use talking of the Infinite and Eternal to ordinary people. It is very difficult for them to understand that *the ideal itself is infinite (bhumā)* because it has nothing to do with Space and Time, because it is *neither immanent nor transcendent, neither inside nor outside* (अनन्तरमवाह्यम्). Talk to them of the Infinite, and they will think of endless space. Talk to them of the Eternal, and they will think of endless time. Speak to them rather of moral good and moral evil, *dharma* and *adharma*, and they will understand. Also place before them a personal ideal, and they will appreciate. Such a personal ideal we have in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, the most forceful because most recent and most historical. They at least are not myths or legends. Let us not forget that the spread of Buddhism was not due to its philosophy but to the personality of Buddha. Philosophy is for the few; personality for the many. But even the few need a personal ideal to remind them constantly of the Impersonal and make their spiritual progress easy. The value of personality in spiritual life and experience can never be ignored, and the *adwaitist*, the believer in the Impersonal, fully recognises the personal ideal. Not a single spiritual value is lost in *adwaita-vāda*.

<sup>1</sup> Vedantic ethics is based on इहामुत्तमार्थफलभोगविरागः ।

<sup>2</sup> Brahman and Maya are opposed to each other as light and darkness. (See अध्यास-भाष्य). Yet this is not dualism for *Maya* is false.

<sup>3</sup> Much should not be made of epistemology. "Lotze has well concluded his Metaphysics with the dictum that "the true beginning of Metaphysics lies in Ethics." Through his identification of religion with judgments of value and his interpretation of dogmas in terms of their expression of religious experience Lotze is related to an important movement in philosophy of religion."—Perry.



## PASSING INTO THE MODERN AGE

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

The problem which confronts India to-day is that of passing completely into the modern age. The present is an age of world-consciousness. Owing to the discovery of steam and electricity it is now possible for the least adventurous of us to explore the world. Modern trade has already done so, modern science is struggling to follow suit. The very drawing-room contains trophies from every country and every era. In fact, by each individual human mind, as by Humanity as a whole, the earth in its entirety is being visualised, geographically and historically.

This modern age is also an age of exploitation. For the most precious things, Europe has to go back to other eras, or to communities not yet modernised. The rugs of Persia and of Turkey, the needlework of Bokhara, the beautiful porcelains, and the metal-work of the Church, all these things are demanded, but they have to be found like flowers growing in old-world gardens, secluded and apart. No sooner do the suburbs of the city extend themselves to include these gardens than they are straightway trodden down and ruined. Even the industries of Kashmir are growing vulgar, under the footsteps of the passing tourist. London is teaching drawing to the children in her board-schools, but why? In order that they may *understand* the works of Botticelli and of Michael Angelo. The dreams and faiths that made such work possible, *these* she cannot give. Everyone to-day can read Shakespeare, but where is a new Shakespeare to be looked for? Even the prayers that satisfy us most deeply, are they not the utterances of rapturous lives lived long ago in worship and in cloister? In an hour maybe we can patter off all the prayers of Chrysostom and Teresa and Ignatius

Loyola put together, but it would have taken years of concentration to have been the first utterer of one such word as theirs. This age is an age of exploitation, not of creation.

The modern age is an age of organisation. In the case of the machine, a screw here or a wheel there enables us to avail ourselves of vast areas of force, otherwise inaccessible. Similarly, the crowning temptation of the modern world is to treat human areas from the same point of view. We are apt to think of whole populations as if the only question to be considered were of their usefulness to ourselves, to our comfort, our luxury, our culture. We have learnt to organise life and masses of men with the regularity and precision of machinery. We see this in shops and offices and factories, and we also see it in the government of empires, and in the constant annexing of slices of one country by the official classes of another.

The modern age is an age of the people. We are all familiar to-day with the questions of expediency and of responsibility which were hitherto the preserves of monarchs and of cabinets. Our habits are those of kings. Yet we are not kings. Our education is also of a kind which was once open only to the privileged. The exploitation of the people leads to the criticism of the people; the thought, the responsibility ultimately to the organisation of the people. The genius of Toussaint L' Ouverture announced, and that of Napoleon Bonaparte echoed, "All careers are open to ability," but had they failed to proclaim it, the decree must have gone forth sooner or later, for it is one of the master-notes of the modern world.

Such then are a few of the characteristics of the modern age. India is to a large extent mediæval still. What



does this imply? The Middle Ages were ages of *production* rather than *exploitation*. The strenuous dreamers dreamed by the light of more or less childlike beliefs. The masses of the nation were less widely informed than now, and vastly simpler in their aims and habits. Political responsibility was somewhat of a monopoly. Each life, and each group, was more concentrated in its activities than is the case to-day. Science is the characteristic product of the modern world. Art was the characteristic product of the mediæval. Work was performed by hand, not by machinery. Hence it was slow, and products could only be accumulated very gradually. Generation followed generation, therefore, in the attempt to furnish, or in the work of using, a single room. And for this reason an old farmhouse kitchen, in any part of the world, is universally admitted to be more beautiful than a modern drawing-room.

Most of us will feel that wherever it is possible to retain the mediæval and refuse the modern, it is desirable to do so. But in India the possibility is not open to us. The mediæval suffers here from a mortal wound. It has been wounded, in the first place, by the touch of trade. The mechanical productions of the West, quickly created, quickly worn out, rapidly succeeding each other, have driven out of the mind the patient accumulations of successive generations. Squalor and vulgarity, the two horns of the modern dilemma in taste, are threatening the lovely old simplicity of India with increasing force. And this means that the crafts themselves are passing out of being,—the men of craft-guilds, or castes, being starved, or turned into work for which they have neither desire nor aptitude.

And finally mediæval India is under the sentence of death, through the existence of those political connections which make the country an English-speaking territory. For good or for evil, the work of modernising has gone too far to be undone. India is now a figure in the

twentieth-century mart of the world. As proud as ever, as sensitive as ever, she is no longer isolated, no longer sure of herself, no longer satisfied with her specific achievements. Every country has a right to a scheme of things which shall not only provide incentive and ambition to her noblest children, but shall also tend increasingly to call her meanest to higher aims. In India to-day, however, the meanest are frankly and revoltingly imitative. The noblest work against incredible difficulties towards ends that the society around can hardly comprehend. And the majority stand between, uncertain in what direction to bestow their efforts. Spiritually, morally, intellectually, and socially, we shall best understand the India of the present moment if we conceive of her as bewildered and in doubt.

In order, then, to co-ordinate her efforts, it is clear that she has to face and carry through vast changes, which we may designate conveniently as the assimilation of the modern consciousness. That is to say, accepting the modern method of thought and expression, she has so to increase the content of the existing expression as to prove herself equal, if not superior, to those other nations with whom she will thus be competing on equal terms.

Instead of merely learning modern science, she has to prove herself able to apply the methods of modern science to the solution of some of its unsolved problems. Instead of merely accepting other men's steam-ships and mechanical contrivances, she has to produce great inventors who will add to the convenience and potentiality of life. Instead of enjoying a foreign literature, she has to pour into that literature masterpieces of a new type. Instead of admiring national evolutions and heroic leaders in other countries, she has to consolidate her own forces and bring forth her own heroes, to constitute an army of nationality on her own soil.

Perhaps in nothing is it easy to understand this as in the matter of art.



The old Indian school of painting produced very beautiful works of art. But the method and its continuity of effort have suffered destruction in the modern catastrophe. Many young art students to-day are simply toiling along, in the struggle to put colour on canvas in the European way, in order to express thoughts and illustrate poems, in a fashion only would-be European and not genuinely anything. It is clear that what we want here is workers who after a training in technique can catch and express a great inspiration of their own, in any manner whatsoever, that they feel to be adequate. It is clear that, in acquiring mastery of materials, what we really want is a great school of artists, a national art movement. And here it must not be *method* of work, but the message which is sought to be conveyed, that constitutes nationality.

In other words, all for which that country is precious will vanish out of the world, unless the children of the land can group the thought of India as India and learn to live and work in expression of this idea alone.

There can be no doubt that one of the most important features of such an awakening would lie in a movement towards the study of Indian history. A man's face contains, for the seeing eye, his whole past. A national character is the *resumé* of a national history. If we would know what we are, or whither we tend, we must be made aware of our own antecedents. And the study of Indian history ought to possess unusual attractions for the Indian people, inasmuch as it is a history which has never yet been written, which is even as yet unknown.

Nothing, if well understood, can be more beautiful as a historic spectacle than the process of the Indian evolution. The orderly sequence of consolidation and individuation by which new elements are worked into the nationality in each age, is something that could never have been so perfect, had the Himalayas and a forbidding coast-line

not combined to isolate the experimental field.

Already there have been two Indias, --Hindu India under the Asokan empire, and the Mogul India under the house of Babar, and it remains for the people themselves to produce a third, the National India. All preceding or intervening periods are to be regarded as preparatory to these, as periods merely of the incorporation and elaboration of new elements. We are able to understand and state this, because it is to-day clear that history is dynamic; it never dies. If a nation at any period reach great spiritual or intellectual achievements, these do not exhaust, they conserve and heighten the national vigour. The strength spent in physical orgy of any kind is indeed spent; but the energy that shone forth as Vikramaditya and his brilliant court represents so much gained for eternity by the nation as a whole. In this respect there is a polar difference between attainment and enjoyment. The effort to produce a great art, great science, or a world-religion, never exhausts a people. If they subsequently show exhaustion, we may be certain that a close search will discover forms of luxury and excess which occurring simultaneously sowed the actual seeds of premature decay. Water will always rise to the level it has once reached. Similarly, the height that a people may have once captured they can always achieve again.

No, History is the warp upon which is to be woven the woof of Nationality. Only in the mirror of her own past can India see her soul reflected. And only in such visions can she recognise herself. By the study of history alone, therefore, can she determine what are to be the essential elements of her own nationality when grown to its full height of manliness and vigour.

But we cannot know much of India if we know nothing of the world outside India. How shall we recover the truth about ancient Pataliputra, if we



know nothing of Persepolis, of Babylon, of China, and the international relations of all these? Or how are we to understand the growth and significance of Benares, if we have never studied Cologne, Chartres, Durham, or Milan? What will the history of Hinduism mean to us, if we have never considered that of Christianity or of Islam?

Even in the study of the prehistoric, then, the comparative method is essential. If we would rebuild the India of early ages, we must be prepared also to build up and place beside it Phoenicia, Egypt, Chaldea, and the rest. The international consciousness of early periods is one of the most fascinating subjects that could be offered to a student, and would certainly well repay whatever labour he might spend upon it. Thus it is not only necessary that the Indian historian should have a grasp of sociological method, and of such facts as are known in regard to the development of civilisation; it is also requisite that he should be thoroughly abreast of the research of his time as to the formation and movement of ancient empires. Here we enter upon something more like the firm ground of history. Archæology is revealing more and more of the past, in Egypt, in Chaldea, in the old empire

of Heth, in Crete. India, whether pre-Aryan and Dravidian, or post-Dravidian, and Aryan, was an integral part of the world and the epochs to which these belonged. Asoka himself was a modern in his day, the heir of an immense, unrecorded, but not perhaps at that time unremembered, history. What has India herself to tell us of this past?

The tale of her own past that India awaits, must combine the critical acumen of the modern, with the epic enthusiasm of the ancient writer. Remorseless in its rejection of legend, it must nevertheless know how to seize the core of truth that legend so often conveys. Supported and adorned by a knowledge of the external world, it must for its own part be the poem, the psalm, of the Indian country. And above all, it must not end with the past, but must know how to point the finger onwards to the future. It must be not only reminiscent, but also suggestive. It must not only chant the word "Remember" but also find ways to utter the whisper "Determine!" It must not only be critical, but also fiery, proud, constructive. The foreign scholar writes annals, memoirs, chronicles, but can this Song of the Land be sung by any not of her own blood?

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## ETERNITY

BY PANDIT SURESWAR SHASTRI

Some time ago there appeared in *The Century Magazine* of New York an interesting story by H. A. S. Kennedy, which the writer described as a legend handed down through the ages in Syria. We shall quote it here for the edification of the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*:

Many thousands of years ago—so this story runs—Jesus and John the Baptist were on a journey together. And it came about that as they journeyed they passed through a desert

place, and in the heat of the day rested under the shadow of a great rock.

All around them was nothing but desert, and so they waited, talking of the things of God till the sun went down, and then went their way.

Five thousand years later, Jesus and John the Baptist were passing that way again; and behold now, instead of the desert was a great city with gates on four sides of it and towers that reached to heaven.

Being greatly astonished, they spoke



to one of the citizens who stood near the gate at which they entered.

"Sir," said they, "we pray you tell us where is the great desert that once was here?"

Whereat the man laughed, both he and his companions who stood by.

"A desert," said he, "why friends, there has never been any desert hereabouts. Do you not know that this is *The City*, the great City, the days of which no man can tell so many are they?"

"And there is the great lake, and there the great rock in the midst of the lake, and, on top of the rock, you may see the great temple which the gods, they say, builded before the world was."

And he laughed again and his friends also.

Five thousand years later, Jesus and John the Baptist were passing that way again, and, behold, now, the great city was gone, and, in its place, was a great forest.

Only the lake was there, and, in the midst of the lake, a great rock on the top of which the birds of the air made their nests.

As they entered the forest, they met a woodman, and thus addressed him:

"Sir," said they, "tell us what has become of the great city that once was here."

"A great city?" said the woodman. "Now, what a strange question is that. For indeed, sirs, hereabouts has never been a great city, but only this great forest."

"Here have I labored and my father and his father before him ; in the great forest, by the great lake, with the great rock in the midst of the lake, on which the birds of the air have always made their nests."

And he went his way.

And so it came about that another five thousand years went by, and, once again, Jesus and John the Baptist were passing that way.

And, behold, now the forest was gone, and all around them was nothing but desert, as it had been in the beginning, and, in the midst of the desert, a great rock.

And there was no man to ask concerning the matter, and so they rested under the shadow of the rock and talked of the things of God.

We have given the full story. But do not the Indian readers think that it has gone wrong in the finale? A maker of a *Purana* would not have ended it thus. The Hindu heart would have liked the last two paragraphs amended in the following way:

"And, behold, as they looked about, the forest was gone. The change gave them such a shock that with a start—they awoke, and all around them was nothing but desert where they had been resting under the shadow of a great rock in the heat of the day. And they realised that they had only *dreamt* of the city and the forest.

"Verily the One alone exists, the many are evanescent, made of the stuff of dreams."

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

सशरीरमहो विश्वं परित्यज्य मयाधुना ।

कुतश्चित् कौशलादेव परमात्मा विलोक्यते ॥ ३ ॥

अहो O अधुना now सशरीरं with the body विश्वं universe परित्यज्य leaving कुतश्चित् through some कौशलात् through skill एव only परमात्मा Supreme Self मया by me विलोक्यते is visualised.

3. O, having<sup>1</sup> renounced the universe along with the body, I am now<sup>2</sup> perceiving the Supreme Self through wisdom (received from my Guru).

[1 *Having etc.*—after knowing them to be unreal as they appear and in reality no other than the Self itself.

2 *Now*—after being instructed by Ashtavakra.]

यथा न तोयतो भिन्नास्तरङ्गाः फेनबुद्बुदाः ।

आत्मनो न तथा भिन्नं विश्वमात्मविनिर्गतम् ॥ ४ ॥

यथा As तरङ्गाः waves फेनबुद्बुदाः foam and bubbles (च and) तोयतः from water न not भिन्नाः different तथा so आत्मविनिर्गतं emanating from the Atman विश्वं universe आत्मनः from the Atman न not भिन्नम् different.

4. As waves, foam and bubbles are not different from water, even so the universe<sup>1</sup> emanating from the Atman is not different from it.

[1 *Universe etc.*—According to Advaita philosophy, the Atman is also the material cause of the universe, just as earth is the material cause of a pot. Just as waves, foam and bubbles are formed of water, and when so formed rest on the water itself, so the universe made of the Self, rests on the Self itself.]

तन्तुमात्रो भवेदेव पटो यद्वद्विचारितः ।

आत्मतन्मात्रमेवेदं तद्वद्विश्वं विचारितम् ॥ ५ ॥

पटः Cloth विचारितः analysed (सन् being) यद्वत् as तन्तुमात्रः thread only एव certainly भवेत् is तद्वत् so इदं this विश्वं universe विचारितं considered (सत् being) आत्मतन्मात्रं nothing but the Atman एव certainly (भवेत् is).

5. As cloth when analysed is found to be nothing but thread, even so<sup>1</sup> this universe, duly considered, is nothing but the Atman.

[1 *Even so, etc.*—A cloth is made of thread, and is nothing but thread. Yet we falsely think it to be something separate and different from the thread. The universe is constituted of Atman only, it is nothing but Atman. Yet we look upon it as separate from the Atman. This is an illusion. We find out our mistake regarding cloth through a little reasoning. We have similarly to get rid of our illusion regarding the universe.]

यथैवेक्षुरसे क्लृप्ता तेन व्याप्तैव शर्करा ।

तथा विश्वं मयि क्लृप्तं मया व्याप्तं निरन्तरम् ॥ ६ ॥

यथा As एव just इक्षुरसे in the juice of the sugarcane क्लृप्ता produced शर्करा sugar तेन (रसेन) with that (juice) व्याप्ता pervaded एव wholly (भवति is) तथा so मयि in me क्लृप्तं produced विश्वं universe मया by me निरन्तरं through and through व्याप्तं pervaded (भवति is).

6. Just as sugar generated in sugarcane juice is wholly pervaded by it (juice), even so the universe produced in me is permeated by me through and through.

[The verse illustrates the all-pervasiveness of the Atman.]

आत्माज्ञानाज्जगद्भाति आत्मज्ञानान्न भासते ।

रज्ज्वज्ञानादहिर्भाति तज्ज्ञानाद्भासते न हि ॥ ७ ॥

आत्माज्ञानात् From the ignorance of the Self जगत् world भाति appears आत्मज्ञानात् from the knowledge of the Self न not भासते appears हि verily रज्ज्वज्ञानात् from non-cognition of rope अहिः snake भाति appears तज्ज्ञानात् from the recognition of that न not भासते appears.

7. The world appears from the ignorance of the Self and disappears with the knowledge of the Self, even as the snake appears from the non-cognition of the rope and disappears with its recognition.



[An illusion persists only so long as we do not recognise the object on which the illusion has been superimposed. The example of the snake in the rope is pertinent in this connection. When we know the rope, the snake-knowledge vanishes. Even so, the world does not really exist, yet appears as existing through ignorance and disappears with the knowledge of the Self on which the illusion of the world is imposed.]

प्रकाशो मे निजं रूपं नातिरिक्तोऽस्म्यहं ततः ।  
यदा प्रकाशते विश्वं तदाहम्भास एव हि ॥ ८ ॥

प्रकाशः Light मे my निजं own रूपं nature अहं I ततः from that अतिरिक्तः different न not अस्मि am यदा when विश्वं universe प्रकाशते manifests तदा then अहं I एव alone हि surely भासे shine.

8. Light is my very nature and I am no other than that. When<sup>1</sup> the universe manifests itself, verily then it is I that shine.

[1 *When etc.*—The nature of the Self is *Chit*, absolute consciousness, which lends knowledge to the phenomenal world. The world itself is material and has no consciousness of its own by which to reveal itself. It cannot be known by us unless the light of Brahman illumines it. The manifestation of the world therefore implies really the manifestation of the Self.]

अहो विकल्पितं विश्वमज्ञानान्मयि भासते ।  
रूप्यं शुक्तौ फणी रज्जौ वारि सूर्यकरे यथा ॥ ९ ॥

अहो O यथा as शुक्तौ in the mother of pearl रूप्यं silver रज्जौ in the rope फणी snake सूर्यकरे in the sunbeam वारि water (भासते appears तथा so) अज्ञानात् through ignorance विकल्पितं imagined विश्वं universe मयि in me भासते appears.

9. O, the universe appears in me being conceived through ignorance, even as silver<sup>1</sup> appears in the mother of pearl, snake in the rope and water<sup>2</sup> in the sunbeam.

[1 *Silver etc.*—All these three are classical examples of *Adhyāsa*—superimposition through illusion.

2 *Water*—refers to mirage.]

मत्तो विनिर्गतं विश्वं मध्येव लयमेष्यति ।  
मृदि कुम्भो जले वीचिः कणके कटकं यथा ॥ १० ॥

यथा As कुम्भः jug मृदि in clay वीचिः wave जले in the water कटकं bracelet कणके in gold (लये एति dissolves तथा so) मत्तः from me विनिर्गतं emanated विश्वं universe मयि in me एव surely लयं dissolution एष्यति will go to.

10. Just<sup>1</sup> as a jug dissolves into earth, a wave into water or a bracelet into gold, even so the universe which has emanated<sup>2</sup> from me will dissolve<sup>3</sup> into me.

[1 *Just etc.*—All these three are examples of material cause. The Atman is the material cause of the universe which comes to be through the superimposition of name and form on the Atman. With the dawn of Knowledge name and form vanish and only the Atman remains, even as a wave becomes water when its name and form vanish.

2 *Emanated*—being conceived through ignorance as mentioned in the previous verse.

3 *Dissolve*—when Self-knowledge will be attained and the universe will be merged in Self from which it was projected through ignorance.]

अहो अहं नमो मह्यं विनाशो यस्य नास्ति मे ।  
ब्रह्मादिस्तम्बपयन्तं जगन्नाशोऽपि तिष्ठतः ॥ ११ ॥

अहो Wonderful अहं I ब्रह्मादिस्तम्बपयन्तं from Brahma down to the clump of grass जगन्नाशे when there is destruction of the world अपि even तिष्ठतः existing यस्य whose मे my विनाश destruction न not अस्ति is (तस्मै to that) नमः to myself नमः adoration.

11. Wonderful am I! Adoration to myself<sup>1</sup> who know no decay and survive even the destruction of the world from Brahma down to the clump of grass.

[1 *Myself*—in the absolute sense.]

अहो अहं नमो मह्यमेकोऽहं देहवानपि ।

क्वचिन्न गन्ता नागन्ता व्याप्य विश्वमवस्थितः ॥ १२ ॥

अहो Wonderful अहं I मह्यं to myself नमः adoration देहवान् having a body अपि even अहं I एकः single (अस्मि am) (अहं I) क्वचित् anywhere न not गन्ता going (कुतः from anywhere) न not आगन्ता coming (अहं I) विश्वं universe व्याप्य pervading अवस्थितः existing (अस्मि am).

12. Wonderful am I! Adoration to myself who, though with a<sup>1</sup> body am one,<sup>2</sup> who neither go anywhere nor come from anywhere but abide pervading the universe.

[1 *A body*—The body implies not only the gross one but also the subtle. Five sheaths or bodies are generally spoken of.

2 *One*—Our ego is constantly undergoing change owing to the changes in the body. It is changing its nature every moment, and we are thus having a new ego every moment of our existence. But transcending all these changes abides the Atman which is ever immutable.]

अहो अहं नमो मह्यं दक्षो नास्तीह मत्समः ।

असंस्पृश्य शरीरेण येन विश्वं चिरं धृतम् ॥ १३ ॥

अहो Wonderful अहं I मह्यं to myself नमः adoration इह in this world मत्समः like me दक्षः capable न not अस्ति is येन for शरीरेण with the body असंस्पृश्य without touching चिरं ever विश्वं universe (मया by me) धृतम् is borne.

13. Wonderful am I! Adoration to myself! There is none<sup>1</sup> so capable as I, who am bearing the universe for all eternity without touching it with the body.

[1 *None etc.*—The verse describes the infinite power of the Self. Ordinarily in order to bear anything one has to do it with one's limbs. The thing borne must necessarily be of a limited weight and magnitude, and it cannot be borne for a long time. But it is quite different with regard to the Self. It is bearing this infinite universe for all eternity even without taking the help of any instrument such as the body. Infinite and wonderful must be its capacity.]

अहो अहं नमो मह्यं यस्य मे नास्ति किञ्चन ।

अथवा यस्य मे सर्वं यद्वाङ्मनसगोचरम् ॥ १४ ॥

अहो Wonderful अहं I यस्य whose मे my किञ्चन anything न not अस्ति is अथवा or यत् which वाङ्मनसगोचरं within the range of speech and mind (तत् that) सर्वं all यस्य whose मे my (तस्मै to that) मह्यं to myself नमः adoration.

14. Wonderful am I! Adoration to myself who have nothing<sup>1</sup> or have all<sup>2</sup> that is thought<sup>3</sup> and spoken of.

[1 *Nothing*—spoken from the standpoint of the Absolute when nothing exists except the Self. Or it may mean that the Self being unattached, nothing belongs to it.

2 *All etc.*—Because the Self has created the universe and supports it.

3 *Thought etc.*—This phrase refers to the phenomenal nature of the universe,—for only phenomena can be thought and spoken about.]



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In this Number

The instalment of the *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, with which the present issue opens, formed really the postscript of a letter. The theory of evolution has been often considered as antagonistic to the spiritual view of life. The Swami's statement that every evolution is preceded by an involution beautifully reconciles the religious and scientific views. Swamiji was never tired of asserting the fact of involution. . . . *Love of God* is the report (unfortunately imperfect) of a lecture delivered by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA in the Unitarian Church of Detroit, U. S. A., on the 15th February, 1894. The Swami, we are told, referred in a forcible manner towards the end of his lecture to the foibles of the Western world. We may mention that the lecture is neither included in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* nor was it published before in *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . . Our article, *Expansion of Hinduism : a Defence*, was originally written as a letter, as we have stated in the preface of the article. We apologize to our readers for its inordinate length. . . . *Notes of Conversations with Swami Turiyananda* this month is specially full of inspiring words about God-realisation. . . . May the Swami's words bear fruit in our life! . . . . *The Islamic Conception of Godhead* was read by the writer, WAHED HOSAIN, at a religious conference held in Calcutta last December in connection with the anniversary celebrations of the Kalighat Sri Ramakrishna Samiti. Prof. S. Radhakrishnan presided and distinguished representatives of various religions, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc., spoke on their respective doctrines. Mr. Hosain is an Advocate of the Calcutta High Court. We are confident the perusal of his paper will help non-Islamic readers to better appreciate

Islam. An understanding of one another's ideals is urgently required, for that is the one sure basis of communal unity . . . . This month's theme in ANANDA'S *Practice of Religion*, though worn-out, may yet prove helpful by the way he has treated it. There is no doubt that in these days intellectualism is often mistaken for spirituality. Those who are serious about religion cannot do better than clearly feel their difference . . . . SWAMI ATULANANDA whose reminiscences of Swami Turiyananda we publish this month under the caption, *Swami Turiyananda at the Shanti Ashrama*, is an American and a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. He lived long and intimately with the Swami and his reminiscences of him, beautifully as they are written, are always inspiring. Several instalments of them were published in *Prabuddha Bharata* in previous years. . . . KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A., the writer of *A Few Words on Sankhya and Vedanta*, is the Principal of the Rajendra College, Faridpur, Bengal. He has contributed to *Prabuddha Bharata* several times before ; and his articles have been always read with interest and profit. Mr. Mitra is a bold and original thinker and an exceptionally forceful writer. His present article deals with a big subject and points to a new outlook on reality and life . . . . *Passing into the Modern Age* by SISTER NIVEDITA is another chapter from her forthcoming book. We recommend this article to the best attention of our readers. How we wish she could be living in these days of the confusion of ideas and ideals! . . . . PANDIT SURESWAR SHASTRI in *Eternity* nicely brings out the distinction between the Indian and Western outlook in a few words. . . . *Ashtavakra Samhita* by SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA continues as simple and grand as before.



Every verse has to be meditated on to be properly appreciated.

### Value of Ritualism

We regret that owing to the very distant situation of the press in which *Prabuddha Bharata* is printed,—the editorial work is done in our Ashrama in the Himalayas and the printing in Calcutta,—we often cannot take timely notice of important events and utterances. Rabindranath's Message to the Parliament of Religions which was held in Calcutta towards the end of last January, was significant in several respects.

He nicely brought out the true meaning of religion as distinguished from science in the following passage :

"The truth which is impersonal is science, the path to approach it is the same for all of us,—the sole path of reason that has no individual variedness. The truth which is universal and at the same time supremely personal is God, and the paths that lead to Him are not one, but are manifold according to the differences in our personality. The knowledge about this personal truth can never be solely through reason, but must be mostly through sympathy; to know it perfectly is the same as to be intimately related to it."

His vision of the future of man and religion is also appealing :

"The history of man is the history of the building up of a human universe, as has been proved by the fact that everything great in human activity inevitably belongs to all humanity. And we may be sure that all our religious experiences and expressions are building up from the depth of the ages one great continent of religions on which man's soul is to win its prosperity through the universal commerce of spiritual life."

All will also agree with Tagore in what he says about sectarianism. But we are afraid he does not make a necessary distinction between sect and sectarianism. Sectarianism is undoubtedly materialistic and should be condemned. But sects must remain. Tagore also seems to admit this when he observes that "the paths that lead

to Him are not one, but are manifold according to the differences in our personality." But evidently Tagore means that this variation of paths should have reference to individuals only, not to sects or creeds. No doubt this is the perfect ideal. Swami Vivekananda also said : "Let there be as many sects as there are men."

But meanwhile we cannot forget the practical needs of men. The very imperfections of our earthly life are an insuperable difficulty in the realisation of that perfect ideal. There are also other reasons. Religion is not a matter of mere opinion. It has to be practised. The spiritual truths are very difficult of access. We cannot realise them through a mere vague idealism. Certain practices are necessary. Rites and ceremonies are not humbugs. Without their help very few persons can progress in religion. Rites and ceremonies have necessarily a certain definiteness and fixity about them. It is also inconceivable, in view of the constitution of the human mind, that each man can have his own special set of rites and ceremonies. Naturally there will be grouping. This is what is meant by sect.

Rabindranath does not appear to feel the importance of rites and ceremonies and definite practices. The following passage in his Message seems to indicate it :

"We have seen in our own country a recrudescence of the blind faith that makes no discrimination between the spiritual significance of a religion and its outer crust that not only obscures it, but gives it a materialistic grossness of structure."

The "outer crust," however, is necessary. Sri Ramakrishna said that without the husk the paddy grain would not germinate into a plant. Our conception of the harmony of religions or universal religion does not dispense with the need of forms and ceremonies. These there will always be. And also grouping of people following the same paths and practising the same rituals.



But of course such groupings need not necessarily be hereditary ; they will be, we believe, more and more from individual choice in the coming days.

We have specially dwelt on the ritualistic aspect of religion, because the luxuriant growth of liberal ideas in the present age appears to be creating a tendency in many minds towards mere intellectualism in the name of religion. Practice, intense practice and realisation are the very essence of religion. And for that the help of ceremonies are indispensable for most men. Thus said Swami Vivekananda :

“The greatest men I have seen in my life, the most wonderfully developed in spirituality, have all come through the discipline of these rituals.”

“It is good for you to remember, . . . . that the world’s great spiritual giants have all been produced only by those religious sects which have been in possession of very rich mythology and ritual. All sects that have attempted to worship God without any form or ceremony, have crushed without mercy everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. Their religion is a fanaticism at best, a dry thing. The history of the world is a standing witness to this fact. Therefore do not decry these rituals and mythologies.”

### An Explanation

Our article in the February number and our note on the Thought of Mahatma Gandhi last month seem to have given rise to doubts in some minds regarding our utter faithfulness to India’s spiritual ideals. It is needless to state that now also we hold as we have always held that for India the ideal can only be spiritual. But what we have been trying to emphasise is that the preservation of that ideal requires that we live manfully and not in the comatose condition we are doing at present, and that we cannot feel our manhood and grow healthy and strong unless and until we are also materially efficient. We are aware that Mahatma Gandhi and those who are of his persuasion hold that our ancient economic

policy, the policy of decentralisation, is competent enough to lead us again to material prosperity. We do not agree with them. On the other hand, we believe that by employing the energy and resources of the nation to the revival of the *charka*, we may almost be said to be wasting them and setting back the progress of the country. If we had employed the same energy and resources to the quick industrialisation of India, we would have achieved better. We do not mean that we are to copy Western industrialism in toto. By all means let us purge it as much of its evil as we can. But it does not seem possible that we can avoid large-scale organisation in industry any more than in the other fields of life.

Let us at least look at facts. If *khaddar* is being propagated at a slow rate, large-scale, machine-conducted industry is developing rapidly in India. The spirit of the nation is disinclined to ply the spinning wheel. The national energy is earnestly seeking much larger scopes for its play and manifestation. How can we check it? We are not enamoured of Western industrialism. We consider it a necessary evil. But we shall have to accept it, even though we may not welcome it, or we shall be soon nowhere. We must pass through this fire-ordeal. And we believe that if at the same time, the spiritual ideal is also spread broadcast and made living and powerful in the life of the nation, we shall pass through it unscathed.

There is a psychological reason why we must accept large-scale industrialism. All knowledge expresses itself in action. The present outlook of knowledge is encyclopædic, universal. Universal organisation is the necessary concomitant of universal knowledge. You cannot hope to limit action to a policy of decentralisation while your knowledge is as wide, interrelated and centralised as the universe itself ; for, the same mental outlook and tendencies are behind both of them. If India is to be one in mind, her activity also must be made



one. There must be all-India organisation of all aspects of life, spiritual, intellectual and material.

It is true that knowledge can be made impersonal and disinterested in its appeal. The ideal of plain living and high thinking is not impossible. But we must remember that knowledge to be associated with plain living must be raised to the level of philosophy. When our knowledge of men and things has been purged of its grossness, it may not seek expression in outer action, it will mainly react on our spiritual outlook. But the vast majority of men are not yet ready to accept knowledge in this philosophical spirit. They acquire knowledge for efficient living, for expediency, not for knowledge's own sake. Indians are no exception. We also feel the urge of applying knowledge to the betterment of our material conditions. Few of us are ready to be merely philosophic. So our knowledge and that knowledge especially, which science is placing at our disposal, will urge for manifestation in action,—action which must be a nation-wide organisation.

The hope of the world lies in raising science to the dignity of philosophy in popular estimation. Without this, science must be abused in material self-aggrandisement. Psychological knowledge also, as is well-known, is often so abused, unless it is raised to the spiritual level. Our attitude, therefore, is clear. Let us unhesitatingly and energetically assimilate the modern industrial methods; for, through them alone lies our material salvation. But along with that, we must practise spirituality intensely, create a mighty spiritual idealism in the mind of the nation and a great love for the country, so that on the wings of them, we may cross over the dark valley of modernism, in which the West is so sadly groping. *Without spiritual idealism, modernism will spell a speedy ruin.*

India has to face the ordeal. It is a crucifixion,—for her own fault, or for the redemption of the world?—for

atonement for the wrong she perpetrated on her masses through the ages, or for demonstrating to other nations the possibility of transforming modernism with all its uglinesses into the angelic form which humanity has been dreaming of, but which none else than India is capable of realising? We think it is both.

### Man, the Centre of Creation

Is any of the stars visible in a clear night inhabited? The common supposition is that since in our solar system one planet is inhabited, some of the other planets also may be similarly inhabited; and that since our sun is not the only sun in the universe, there may be other solar systems and other inhabited planets. The well-renowned Professor A. S. Eddington of the Cambridge University, in an article in a recent issue of *Harper's Magazine*, adduces some scientific reasons to show that perhaps this earth of ours is the only globe inhabited by man.

At first there is a rotating mass of fiery gas. As the gaseous globe contracts, it spins fast and faster until a time may come when it can no longer hold together and some kind of relief must be found. This relief has been sought in two different ways, by throwing off successively rings of matter,—the way in which our planetary system has been formed, or by fission into double stars. Astronomical observation has so far shown that the first method has been followed only in the case of our solar system whereas there are myriads of double stars. Our planetary system is a freak. The researches of J. H. Jeans lead to the conclusion that rotational break-up produces a double star and never a system of planets. The solar system is not the typical product of development of a star; it is not even a common variety of development.

Prof. Eddington says:

"By elimination of alternatives it appears that a configuration resembling the solar



system would be formed only if at a certain stage of condensation an unusual accident had occurred. According to Jeans, the accident was the close approach of another star casually pursuing its way through space. This star must have passed within a distance not far outside the orbit of Neptune; it must not have passed too rapidly, but have slowly overtaken or been overtaken by the sun. By tidal distortion it raised big protuberances on the sun, and caused it to spurt out filaments of matter which have condensed to form the planets. That was more than a thousand million years ago. The intruding star has since gone on its way and mingled with the others; its legacy of a system of planets remains, including a globe habitable by man.

"Even in the long life of a star encounters of this kind must be extremely rare. The density of distribution of stars in space has been compared to that of twenty tennis balls roaming the whole interior of the earth. The accident that gave birth to the solar system may be compared to the casual approach of two of these balls within a few yards of each other. The data are too vague to give any definite estimate of the odds against this occurrence, but I should judge that perhaps not one in a hundred millions of stars can have undergone this experience in the right stage and conditions to result in the formation of a system of planets.

"However doubtful this conclusion as to the rarity of solar systems may be, it is a useful corrective to the view too facily adopted which looks upon every star as a likely minister to life. We know the prodigality of Nature. How many acorns are scattered for one that grows to an oak? And need she be more careful of her stars than of her acorns? If indeed she has no grander aim than to provide a home for her greatest experiment, Man, it would be just like her methods to scatter a million stars whereof one might haply achieve her purpose."

Is the theological view that man is the centre of God's creation, after all correct?

### Swami Vivekananda

The following short report of a speech which Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of History, Dacca University, delivered as

president of the last birthday anniversary meeting of Swami Vivekananda at the Dacca R. K. Mission, will be read with interest by our readers. Dr. Majumdar is an authority on Indian history.

He said that India had not been able to understand even a bit of the Himalayan personality of Vivekananda. If there were another Vivekananda, he would perhaps have been able to make a true estimate of his personality. Vivekananda's was a life of diversified activities. In him combined the great philosopher, the great saint, the great nationalist and the great lover of humanity. His greatest achievement was the attainment of the harmony of different religious creeds. Vivekananda realised in his heart of hearts the supreme need of corporate life—organised life—in India. His idea took practical shape in the establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission, the successful world-wide organisation, doing yeoman's service to suffering humanity. The Ramakrishna Mission, in the opinion of Dr. Majumdar, is one of the greatest organisations in the world, that have succeeded in preaching the gospel of truth to the farthest corners of the globe without state help. It was only under the fostering care and patronage of kings like Asoka and Constantine that Buddhism and Christianity could flourish and be preached in foreign lands. But the Ramakrishna Mission is preaching the message of Vedanta even in distant corners of the world without any state help. This is really unique in the history of the world. It is indeed a marvel that the Mission has achieved such a phenomenal success in organisation within a brief period of 32 years. The speaker opined that if the League of Nations were broad-based on the principles of Vedanta as preached by Swami Vivekananda, the orgies of modern warfare would be things of the past and peace would be the order of the day. The message of Vivekananda is universal, it is applicable to all ages



and all climes. Swamiji is the herald of a new era. To follow him is to find a solution of all the burning world-problems of the day.

## REVIEW

BHAGAVAD-GITA. By Vasant G. Rele, F.C.P.S., L.M. & S. D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Kitab Mahal, Bombay. XXXI+186 pp. Price Rs. 4-12-0.

Of all books none has suffered so much from misinterpretation or one-sided interpretation as the Gita and the Brahma-sutras. Both of them are attempts at synthesising the apparently conflicting views of the Upanishads; and so, in commenting, the followers of each school have imposed their own ideas on the text. The present work is an exposition of the Gita from the standpoint of Physiological Psychology, and the author employs the Freudian method of Psychoanalysis. The attempt is quite original and the author deserves our sincere admiration for this novel outlook. But the synthetic nature of the Gita is bound to suffer, if only one of its many sides is brought out.

The very conception that Sri Krishna is a Psychoanalyst, Arjuna, a Neurotic, and the Gita, a treatise dealing with the cure of such a disease, distinctly lowers the level of the Song Celestial and the theme universal to an earthly matter of individual concern, and renders the book fit for a medical shelf.

The conceptions of *Asvattha*, *Uttarayana*, and *Dakshinayana* form the special features of the book. *Asvattha* is supposed to be the physical manifestation of the Absolute in the world of life, which is the Nervous system. *Uttarayana* is the Cerebro-spinal system and *Dakshinayana* stands for the Autonomic nervous system, one controlling the voluntary, the other the involuntary muscles. The supreme spirit is reached by making the Nervous system non-impressionable to surrounding objects. Control of the spinal system is not complete without gaining mastery over the autonomic system, and that is to be achieved by Hatha Yoga.

Now, difficulty arises in explaining the sloka where we are asked to lop off this *Asvattha* in order to attain the goal. By withdrawing the senses from the world we can stop new impressions, but what about the old impressions and desires? Before the ideal is realised they also must be exhausted.

So the idea of nervous control merely does not fit in with the whole. This difficulty can be easily solved if *Asvattha* is interpreted as mind which is a bundle of impressions. According to the Psychological theory of parallelism we admit that every psychosis has its corresponding neurosis. Each mental phenomenon is either received or stimulated by the cerebro-spinal system as an organ. Here the author has confused the organ of receiving impressions with the impressions themselves. It is really mind that stands between the individual and the universal, and when this mind is uprooted, union (Yoga) results. Even in the Kundalini Yoga the different *chakras*, though generally indicated as different points of the Nervous system, in fact refer to the different stages that the mind passes through in the process of spiritualisation and ultimate negation. The whole mental process must have corresponding changes in the body, and if the author means these physical impressions that are only one of the many effects of spiritualisation, the argument of *Asvattha* involves the fallacy of *Hysteron proteron*.

Dr. Rele divides the entire field into three parts, (1) conscious, (2) subconscious and (3) superconscious, corresponding to three aspects of reality, *Chitta*, *Saguna Brahma* and *Nirguna Brahma*. According to the latest psychological theories consciousness may be only a fringe or overtone of subconsciousness, the great within, but it never corresponds to the entire field of *Chitta*, nor does subconsciousness stand for 'Embodied Self' or 'Atman' or 'Saguna Brahma.' According to Hindu psychology mind is a form of refined matter, but *Atman* or *Self* is non-material, so they cannot be one. Again the 'superconscious' has been supposed to be the highest energy and to be the same as Universal Soul or *Nirguna Brahma*. We cannot understand how *Nirguna Brahma* can be a form of energy. There appears to be a good deal of confusion in the use of such terms as *Brshma*, *Atman*, mind, superconscious, subconscious, *prakriti*, *Mula prakriti*, etc. As



for instance: "From this we are led to infer that beyond the unmanifested in the body (Prakriti of Samkhya, or Embodied Soul of the Vedantist, or sub-conscious aspect of the mind in modern psychology) there is another unmanifest which is eternal and is not destroyed in the destruction of all beings . . . (Mulaprakriti of the Samkhya, Universal Soul of the Vedantist, and Super-conscious of modern Psychology)". P. 104.

The author can improve his work by rewriting the metaphysical portion and transferring the meaning of Asvattha from the physical apparatus to the mental functioning. Then the whole book may be accepted as a new interpretation from the Yogi standpoint.

**BODHI DHARMA.** By T. L. Vaswani. Ganesh & Co., Madras. 85 pp. Price As. 12.

In this beautiful booklet, nicely got up and printed, the author pleads for a fresh study of the message of the Enlightened One and seeks to interpret it not as an *ism* but as an attitude, not as a creed but as a viewpoint. He prefaces the study with a pretty long introduction, in course of which he attempts, among other things, a comparison of the teaching of Buddha with Hinduism and shows that Buddhism was not a rebel of Hinduism and that *Nirvana* was interpreted by Buddha in terms of Joy as "the greatest happiness," just as "the Rishis sang in rapturous strains of Ananda,—Love-Joy,—as the Root Reality in union with Which is the fulfilment of life." The book though small will prove an illuminating and interesting study.

**NATIONAL ANTHEMS.** Compiled by R. K. Prabhu. Published by the compiler at the Indian National Herald Office, Advocate Building, 21 Dalal Street, Fort, Bombay. 124 pp. Price Re. 1.

The brochure under review presents a bouquet of as many as 117 patriotic songs of at least 33 nations of the world. Besides national songs and anthems, it includes a good many inspiring songs of freedom. Many of the songs and anthems have been produced by eminent patriotic souls. The compilation has been a comprehensive one and offers an interesting study of the psychology and temperament of the different nations of the world. We are not aware of any such compilation, and hope that the perusal of the songs incorporated herein will arouse the sleeping mind of our nation and impel it

to doughty and mighty deeds. The get-up of the book is good.

**SHRI SANTASANGHA PUSTAKMALA,** PART IV. Published by Krishna Jagannath Thaly, Ramsevak Chitralaya, Girgaon, Bombay. 127 pp. Price Rs. 2.

The book under review is the fourth volume of the series of the above name. It will acquaint the reader with as many as fifty Bhaktas and Sadhus of several provinces of India, some of whom are still living. Besides a portrait, a short life-sketch of each of them has been given both in English and in Marathi. The perusal of the lives of so many presumably religious persons will surely prove profitable and interesting. The get-up and printing of the book is good.

I. SPINAL BATH. II. PRANAYAMA. III. MENTAL HEALING. By K. L. Sarma, B. A., B. L. Nature-Cure Publishing House, Pondicherry. 16 pp., 24 pp. and 28 pp. respectively. Price As. 2 each.

These three pamphlets on the Nature-Cure have been brought out by the author under the heading "Better Health Series." In *Spinal Bath* the author recommends spinal bath as of immense benefit to health. He describes several methods of taking the bath and illustrates them with diagrams. Along with spinal bath, two other baths called the Piecemeal Cold Friction-Bath and the Shallow Hip-Bath are also recommended for delicate persons and those having defective digestion. The utility of these baths is of course to be judged by those who will practise them. The second pamphlet, *Pranayama*, describes in some details a process of Pranayama which is recommended as highly beneficial to health, both physical and mental. But it must be remembered that the practice of Pranayama is sometimes attended with danger if not undertaken under expert guidance. In the third pamphlet the author defines mental healing as a healing of the body by the mind, by auto-suggestion, that works as a chief and easy short-cut to the cure of diseases. Besides mentioning the need of mental healing and several other things connected with it, he says that "the philosophy of the Nature-Cure does not stop with the belief that Nature is a healing principle. It teaches that nothing is done in the body, but by the will of this power. It is the builder, the operator, the repairer and the destroyer. Disease is only a small incident in the repairing work. Hence health and disease are equally the gifts of



Nature." The author then concludes by saying that religion forms an integral part of the Nature-Cure and holds forth the non-violent way of Atma-Samarpana (self-surrender) as the natural crown of the Nature-Cure. "To recognise that the evolution of health and happiness in body and mind is the law of God and to be passive to the working of this law is all that is needed. This is Religion and the Nature-Cure in one." In these days of ever-increasing drugs and medicines, a system that claims to treat all kinds of diseases without medicine deserves consideration. It may be interesting to note that Mahatma Gandhi is a believer in this simple and natural method of cure. But this being an age of science, the system must be placed on a scientific basis in order to be accepted by the modern mind. Mr. Sarma's attempts in this direction are no doubt commendable. His present pamphlets will give some practical hints and suggestions on the Nature-Cure.

THURSTON'S PHILOSOPHY OF MARRIAGE. By William R. Thurston. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. 83 pp. Price As. 12.

This little book is somewhat sensational, not so much in the conclusions the author sets forth in it as in the manner in which he states and emphasises them. The author claims to have studied intersexual relations, especially married life, carefully. He has also consulted several hundred doctors. He, therefore, deserves serious attention.

His main conclusions are two :

"1. That Nature never intended a woman to be bound to a man for life, and to be compelled to occupy the same bed or habitation with him, night after night, in pregnancy and out, in order to earn her board and lodging, and to exercise her natural right to bear children.

"2. That the daily and nightly juxtaposition of the male and female, which is a result of present marriage laws and customs, leads to unrestrained sexual intercourse, which perverts the natural instincts of both male and female, and makes partial prostitutes of 90% of all married women. This condition arises from the fact that married women have been led to believe that such prostitution of themselves is right and natural because it is legal, and that it is necessary in order to retain the affections of their husbands."

The author then details the evil consequences of unrestrained sexual intercourse; the evil effects on the health of the women; propagation of unwanted numbers of children among the poor; use of contraceptive methods causing both physical and moral ruin; devitalising of the males leading to necessary economic consequences; development of a sense of futility among both men and women, causing ruin to family life; and doing great harm to the child in the womb.

It will be seen that these informations are nothing new. That excessive sexual indulgence produces all these results are not unknown in a country where *Brahmacharya*, both among the married and the unmarried, is so urgently stressed. Yet it cannot be denied that in India also things are sufficiently bad. The causes, so far as India is concerned, are, according to us, her political and economic subjection. Want of healthy activity inevitably leads to all kinds of morbidity, and to India almost all paths of activity are closed. We must confess that the author's statements are sometimes wild, e.g., those about China.

The author's remedies are: an open explanation of the use and abuse of sexual intercourse to children, especially girls; all girls should be taught to be self-supporting; separate sleeping quarters for the wife and the husband; marriage contract should not be for life; and there should be various contracts between the parties before marriage takes place. The only sound items seem to us to be those relating to separate sleeping places of the wife and the husband and the economic efficiency of the wife.

As regards abstinence which the author prescribes and considers quite possible to the ordinary man, he thinks that the sex energy is capable of being transmuted to the desire for achievement. In our opinion, mere desire for achievement is not enough to help abstinence. Both sexual desire and desire for achievement are correlated being both born of *rajas*. The one often leads to the other. Without religious ideals, abstinence can never be real. All who sincerely try to practise continence, know this. A correct upbringing in early life is also indispensable. And of course much depends on sincere effort.

The author's idea that all sufferings of mankind and all decay of civilisation are



traceable to bad marriage laws is fantastic. The author is quite right in passing severe strictures on contraception.

The booklet is quite thought-provoking and is well worth careful perusal by householders.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Activities of the R. K. Ashrama Ootacamund

Since the establishment of the Ashrama in September 1926 by the blessed hand of Swami Shivanandaji this institution, during the short period of nearly two and half years, has grown in popularity and usefulness to the public. As a centre of spiritual culture its main activity has been the spreading of spiritual ideals and religious instruction. For the first six months after its inception, discourses on the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were regularly held on Sundays with an average attendance of twenty-five, besides occasional lectures in the town on the general principles of Hinduism. In 1927 Swami Shashwatananda gave a series of seven discourses on the Bhagavad Gita; Swami Yatishwarananda gave lectures on Sri Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna, and Varnashrama Dharma; Swami Raghavananda visited the place on his return from America and spoke on the influence of Vedanta in the West and also discoursed on Bhakti and Yoga in the newly acquired Panchakshara Hall in the heart of the town. A course of discourses were also given there on Narada Bhakti Sutras and the lives of the Tamil saints. Weekly classes were also begun in the suburban village of Kodappamandu in Tamil with an average attendance of fifteen which has continued since then without a break. In July 1927 regular religious instructions with prayer and meditation were begun in the Badaga Hostel consisting of fifty boys, attached to the local Municipal High School, which continues to this day. Weekly bhajanas also are held by the boys in the Ashrama. Visits were also paid to the surrounding Badaga villages. Preaching work was also extended to the neighbouring districts and mofussil towns such as Mettupalayam, Salem and Tiruppur. Weekly lectures and discourses followed by discussions on topics of public interest are conducted in the Panchakshara Hall where bhajanas are regularly held by the town public on Sundays. The wider public of Ooty and of the distant

villages of the Nilgiris come in contact with and take an active part in the movement on the occasions of the birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda for which lectures in Tamil and English, bhajana, poor-feeding, cloth distribution, etc. are arranged. During the Ooty season the Ashrama is frequented by numerous visitors from all parts of the country. The Ashrama also maintains a library of religious and other literature in English and Tamil, which is being fully made use of by the public. The Government have been recently pleased to sanction a grant of Rs. 200 towards the maintenance of the library. We fully believe that the usefulness and the influence of the Ashrama will be steadily on the increase with the hearty co-operation and the good will of the public, which it has had all along.

### A Lecture at Gorakhpur

A correspondent writes :

Mr. P. P. Mookerjee M.A., B.L., Bar-at-Law of Calcutta delivered a lecture on the "Life of Swami Vivekananda" in the St. Andrew's College, Gorakhpur. Rev. A. C. Pelly, the Principal, presided over the meeting and thanked Mr. Mookerjee for his eloquent and thought-provoking speech on the life of the bold Swami Vivekananda.

Mr. Mookerjee in his usual felicitous and brilliant fashion pointed out the fact that Swamiji felt deeply for the poor and inaugurated the services of the "Daridra-Narayana." In this respect Swamiji's power of organisation helped him in making the R. K. Mission a great success. Swamiji preached the catholic and universal doctrines of Vedanta and his tolerance was as broad as the illimitable sky above and as deep as the surging ocean below. Swamiji held that the means of our spiritual liberation lay in serving the poor. Swamiji was like a huge fire of spirituality consuming all impurities wherever he went. It was his great ambition to see the young men of India giving up idleness and exerting to do good and noble deeds for the benefit of humanity.



### **New Extensions of R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Rangoon**

His Excellency the Governor and Lady Innes opened on the evening of the 15th January last two new wards, one for women and the other for children at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, a charitable hospital of which Swami Shyamananda is in charge.

The Governor, speaking on the occasion, pointed out that the Swami had done real service to East Rangoon by organising a hospital whose buildings were of the simplest but at the same time providing adequate shelter for the sick and poor of East Rangoon. His Excellency quoted figures from the latest report to show at what low cost the hospital was being maintained, emphasising that efficiency was not sacrificed to economy. In 1927 more than 1,13,000 patients were treated in the hospital, including 1,600 in-patients, the total expenditure being only Rs. 29,547. He also referred to the amount of honorary service given to the hospital by Doctors of Rangoon at considerable personal inconvenience. He concluded by expressing confidence that the people of Rangoon would not allow the beneficent activities of the hospital to be stunted or circumscribed owing to lack of funds.

### **R. K. Ashrama, Salem, S. India**

A correspondent writes from Salem:

The *Pratistha* or Installation ceremony of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Salem was performed by Swami Nirmalananda, President of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bangalore, assisted by Swamis Yatishwarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore, Madras, Sambhavananda of Sri Sarada Ashrama at Ponnampet, Coorg, and Chitbhavananda of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Ooty, on Wednesday the 14th November, 1928. The ceremony began with *Pooja* and *Bhajana* between 7 and 10 A.M., in the presence of a large assembly of ladies and gentlemen. After this was over, the feeding of the poor who numbered about 2,000 men, women and children took place at noon. There was a meeting of the public at the Ashrama in the afternoon at 5 P.M., when lectures were delivered on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. One lecture in Tamil by Swami Chitbhavananda and another in English by Swami Yatishwarananda, which, learned and highly inspiring and instructive as they were, made a deep impression on the audience. Then Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer who was once a prominent

figure in the public life of the Madras Presidency and who is now leading a quiet retired life, explained the circumstances which led to the establishment of the present Ashrama at Salem, the liberal and catholic spirit in which the Ramakrishna Ashramas are conducted and the responsibility of the Salem public to maintain and develop the work of the Ashrama. The proceedings came to a close with a few remarks of Swami Nirmalananda who thanked all who helped in bringing the Ashrama into existence and kindly responded to his invitation to attend the ceremony, and wished them all happiness and prosperity.

The idea of establishing a Ramakrishna Ashrama at Salem originated with a few young men of the place about ten years ago and received the encouragement of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order. The major portion of the land, measuring about one and a half acres, in which the Ashrama stands, is situated in the Siva Swamipuram Extension and was given by Mr. B. V. Namagiri Iyer and another bit by Mr. Lakshminarasimha Chettiar. The Ashrama, a solid and substantial building, contains a terraced hall measuring 46' x 32' with four rooms at the four corners and with a shrine room on the southern side, the whole being supported by masonry pillars and arches. It is proposed to put up another set of rooms on the terraces corresponding to the lower rooms as funds are available and to have the shrine room in the upper storey. The Ashrama is surrounded by Shevaroy and other hills on all sides, which add to the picturesqueness and beauty of the place. It owes its existence to the help and support given by various generous persons in and out of Salem.

### **Vivekananda Pratisthan, Bankura, Bengal**

We have gone through the latest report of this small institution. Its activity consists in conducting (i) a night school in which 15 boys are receiving education, (ii) a free library and reading room which has a collection of 500 English and Bengali books and several weeklies and monthlies, (iii) a gymnasium, and (iv) weekly religious discourses. The total receipts during the year were Rs. 222-1-6 and the total expenditure was Rs. 201-11-9 leaving a balance of Rs. 20-5-9.

We hope the authorities of the institution would put forth their best energies to increase its scope and usefulness.