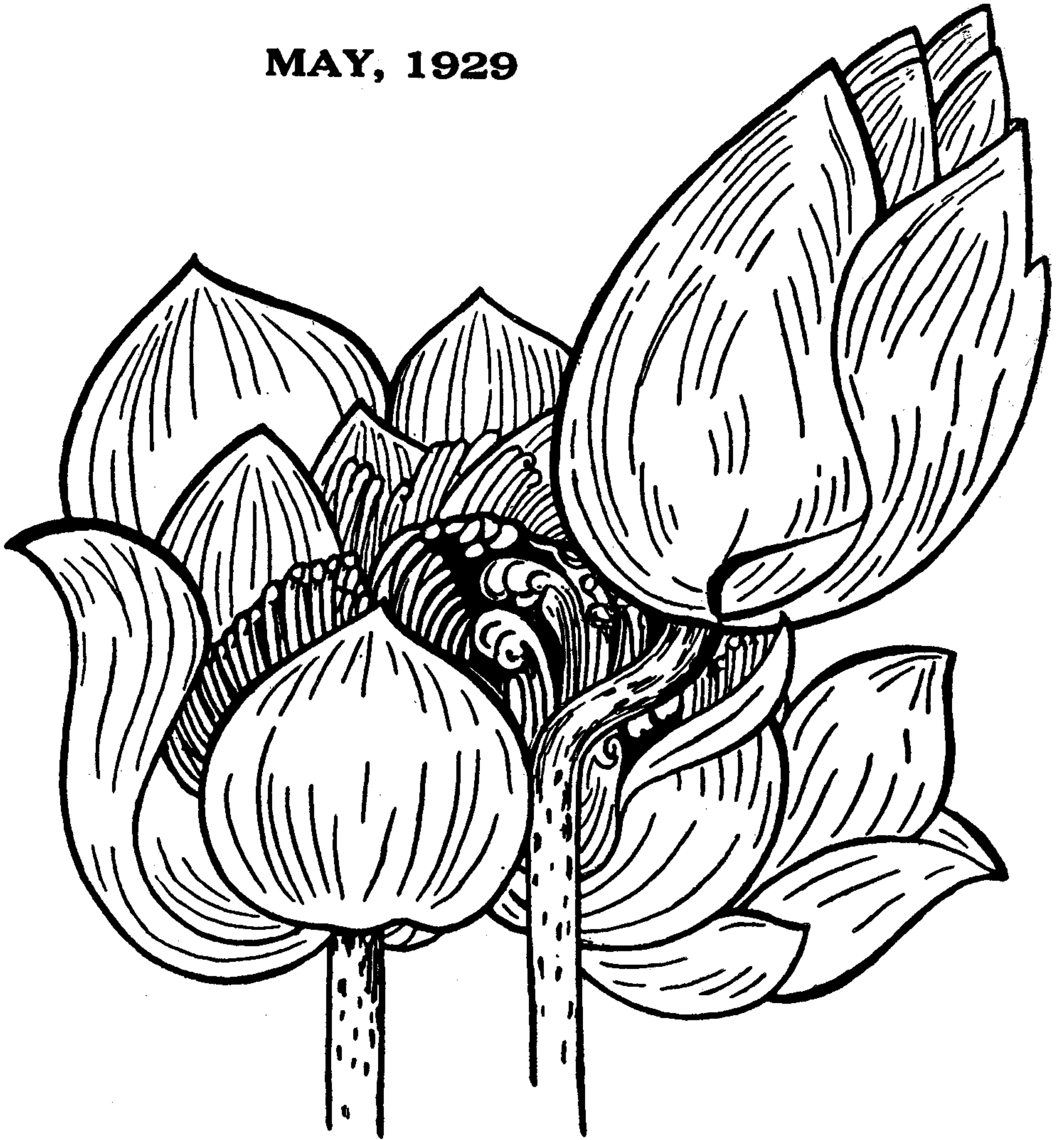


**MAY, 1929**



**Prabuddha Bharata**

**OR AWAKENED INDIA**

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

MAY, 1929

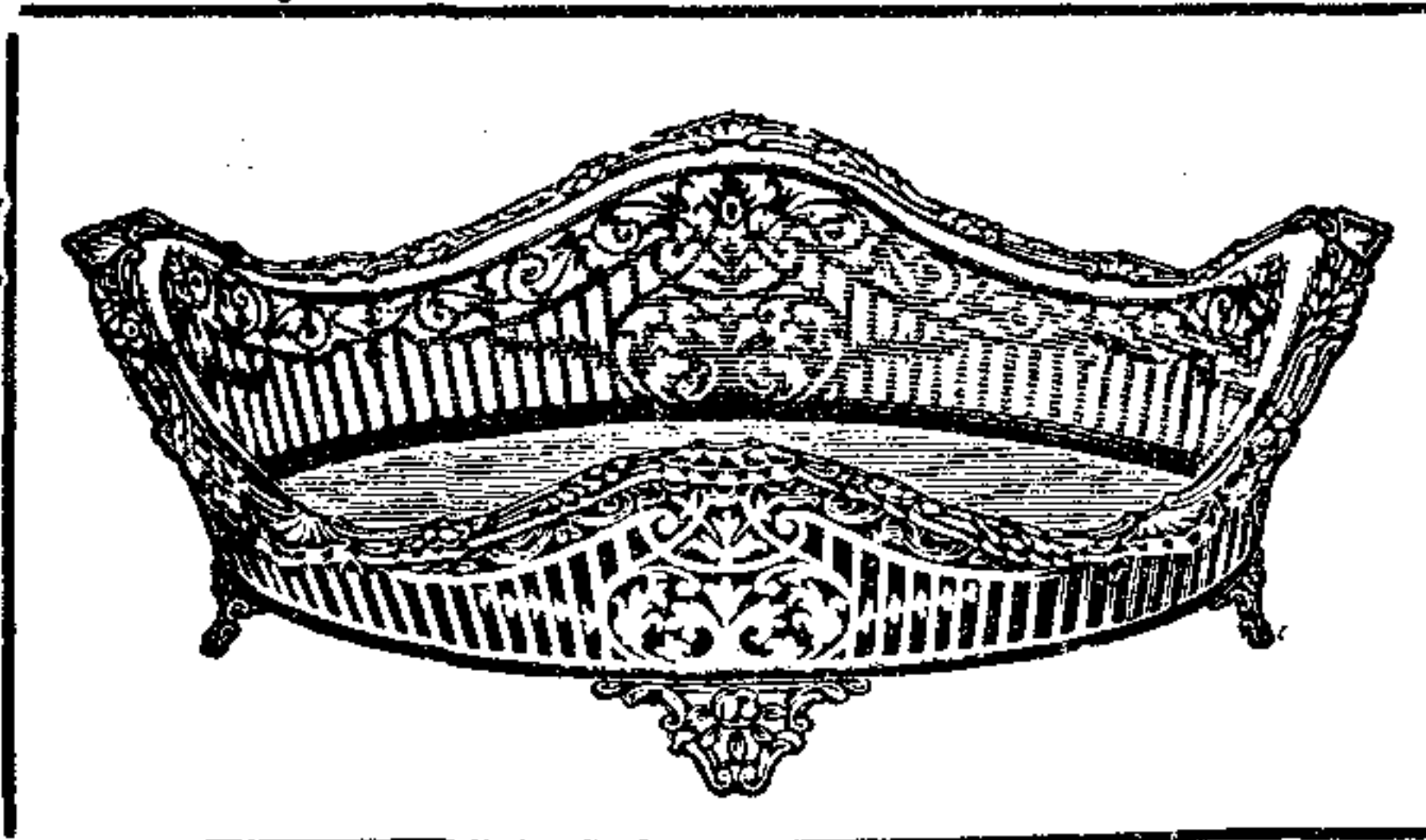
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# Prabuddha Bharata

MAY, 1929

Volume XXXIV



Number 5.

“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

X

(To an English Disciple)

SWITZERLAND,  
8th August, 1896.

\* \* \* \* \* Be at rest. It is unswerving love and perfect unselfishness that conquers everything. We Vedantists in every difficulty ought to ask the subjective questions, “Why do I see this?” “Why can I not conquer this with love?”

\* \* \* \* \* Great work requires great and persistent effort for a long time. Neither need we trouble ourselves if a few fail. It is in the nature of things that many should fall, that troubles should come, that tremendous difficulties should arise, that selfishness and all the other devils in the human heart should struggle hard, when they are about to be driven out by the fire of spirituality. The road to Good is the roughest and steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed, no wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles.

I am much refreshed now. I look out of the window and see the huge glaciers just before me and feel that I am in the Himalayas. I am quite calm. My nerves have regained their accustomed strength; and little vexations like those you write of, do not touch me at all. How shall I be disturbed by this child's play? The whole world is mere child's play—preaching, teaching, and all included. “Know him to be the Sannyasin, who neither hates nor desires.” And what is there to be desired in this little mud-puddle of a world, with its ever-recurring misery, disease and death? “He who has given up all desires, he alone is happy.”

This rest, eternal, peaceful rest, I am catching a glimpse of now in this beautiful spot. “Having once known that the Atman alone, and nothing else, exists, desiring what, or for whose desire, shall you suffer misery about the body?”

I feel as if I had my share of experience, in what they call "work." I am finished, I am longing now to get out. "Out of thousands, but one strives to attain the Goal. And even those who struggle hard, but few attain; for the senses are powerful, they drag men down."

"A good world," "a happy world," and "social progress," are all terms equally intelligible with "hot ice" or "dark light." If it were good, it would not be the world. The soul foolishly thinks of manifesting the Infinite in finite matter, Intelligence through gross particles; but at last it finds out its error and tries to escape. This going-back is the beginning of religion, and its method, destruction of self, that is, love. Not love for wife or child or anybody else, but love for everything else except this little self. Never be deluded by the tall talk, of which you will hear so much in America, about "human progress" and such stuff. There is *no progress* without corresponding digression. In one society there is one set of evils, in another, another. with periods of history. In the Middle Ages, there were more robbers, now more cheats. At one period there is less idea of married life, at another more prostitution. In one, more physical agony, in another, a thousandfold more mental. So with knowledge. Did not gravitation already exist in Nature before it was observed and named? Then what difference does it make to know that it exists? Are you happier than the Red Indians?

The only knowledge that is of any value is to know that all this is humbug. But few, very few, will ever know this. "Know the Atman alone, and give up all other vain words." This is the only knowledge we gain from all this knocking about the universe. This is the only work, to call upon

mankind to "Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached." It is renunciation, *Tyaga*, that is meant by religion, and nothing else.

*Iswara* is the sum total of individuals, yet He Himself also is an individual in the same way as the human body is a unit, of which each cell is an individual. *Samashti*, or the Collective, is God. *Vyashti*, or the component, is the soul or *Jiva*. The existence of *Iswara*, therefore, depends on that of *Jiva*, as the body on the cell, and *vice versa*. *Jiva* and *Iswara* are co-existent beings. As long as the one exists, the other must also. Again, since in all the higher spheres, except on our earth, the amount of good is vastly in excess of the amount of bad, the sum total, or *Iswara*, may be said to be All-good, Almighty, and Omniscient. These are obvious qualities, and need no argument to prove, from the very fact of totality.

*Brahman* is beyond both of these, and is not a *state*. It is the only unit not composed of many units. It is the principle which runs through all, from a cell to God, and without which nothing can exist. Whatever is real, is that principle, or *Brahman*. When I think "I am *Brahman*," then I alone exist. It is so also when you so think, and so on. Each one is the whole of that principle. . . .

A few days ago, I felt a sudden irresistible desire to write to K. Perhaps he was unhappy and thinking of me. So I wrote him a warm letter. To-day from the American news, I see why it was so. I sent him flowers gathered near the glaciers. . . . Love never dies. The love of the father never dies, whatever the children may do or be. He is my child. He has the same or more share in my love and help, now that he is in misery.

## HINDUS AND CHRISTIANS

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Of the different philosophies, the tendency of the Hindu is not to destroy, but to harmonize everything. If any new idea comes into India we do not antagonize it, but simply try to take it in, to harmonize it, because this method was taught first by our prophet, God incarnate on earth, Sri Krishna. The Incarnation of God preached himself first: "I am the God incarnate, I am the inspirer of all books, I am the inspirer of all religions." Thus we do not reject any.

There is one thing which is very dissimilar between us and Christianity, something which we never taught. That is the idea of salvation through Jesus' blood, or cleansing by any man's blood. We had our sacrifices as the Jews had. Our sacrifices mean simply this: Here is some food I am going to eat, and until some portion is offered to God, it is bad; so I offer the food. This is the pure and simple idea. But with the Jew the idea is that his sin be upon the lamb, and let the lamb be sacrificed and he go scot-free. We never developed this beautiful idea in India and I am glad we did not. I, for one, would not come to be saved by such a doctrine. If anybody would come and say: "Be saved by my blood," I would say to him: "My brother, go away; I will go to hell; I am not a coward to take innocent blood to go to heaven; I am ready for hell." So that doctrine never cropped up amongst us, and our prophet says that whenever evil and immorality prevail on earth, He will come down and support His children; and this He is doing from time to time and from place to place. And wherever on earth you see an extraordinary holy man trying to uplift humanity, know that He is in him.

So you see that is the reason why we never fight any religion. We do

not say that ours is the only way to salvation. Perfection can be had by everybody, and what is the proof? Because we see the most holy man in all countries, good men and women everywhere, whether born in our faith or not. Therefore it cannot be held that ours is the only way to salvation. "Like so many rivers flowing from different mountains, all coming and mingling their waters in the sea, all the different religions taking their births from different standpoints of fact, all come unto Thee." This is a part of the child's everyday prayer in India. With such everyday prayers, of course, such ideas as fighting because of differences of religion are simply impossible. So much for the philosophers of India. We have great regard for all these men, especially this prophet, on account of his wonderful catholicity in harmonizing all the preceding revelations.

Then the man who is bowing down before the idol. It is not in the same sense as you have heard of the Babylonian and the Roman idolatry. It is peculiar to the Hindus. The man is before the idol and he shuts his eyes and tries to think: "I am He. I have neither life nor death; I had neither father nor mother; I am not bound by time or space; I am existence infinite, bliss infinite and knowledge infinite; I am He, I am He. I am not bound by books or holy places, or pilgrimages, or anything whatsoever; I am existence absolute, bliss absolute; I am He, I am He." This he repeats and then says: "O Lord, I cannot conceive Thee in myself; I am a poor man." Religion does not depend upon knowledge. It is the soul itself, it is God, not to be attained by simple book-knowledge or powers of speech. You may take the most learned man you have and ask him to think of spirit as spirit,—he cannot. You may imagine

spirit, he may imagine spirit. It is impossible to think of spirit without training. So no matter how much theology you may learn,—you may be a great philosopher and a great theologian,—but the Hindu boy would say: “Well, that has nothing to do with religion.” Can you think of spirit as spirit? Then alone all doubt ceases, and all crookedness of the heart is made straight. Then only all fears vanish and all doubtings are for ever silent when man’s soul and God come face to face.

A man may be wonderfully learned in the Western sense, yet he may not know the A B C of religion. I would tell him that. I would ask him: “Can you think of the spirit as such? Are you advanced in the science of the soul? Have you manifested your own soul above matter?” If he has not, then I say to him: “Religion has not come to you; it is all talk and book and vanity.” But this poor Hindu sits before that idol and tries to think that he is That, and then says: “O Lord, I cannot conceive Thee as spirit, so let me conceive Thee in this form;” and then he opens his eyes and sees this form, and, prostrated, he repeats his prayers. And when his prayer is ended, he says: “O Lord, forgive me for this imperfect worship of Thee.”

You are always being told that the Hindu worships blocks of stone. Now what do you think of this fervent nature of the souls of these people? I am the first to come over to these Western countries,—it is the first time in the history of the world that a Hindu monk has crossed the ocean. But we hear of such criticisms and hear of these talks, and what is the general attitude of my nation towards you? They smile and say: “They are children; they may be great in physical science; they may build huge things; but in religion they are simply children.” That is the attitude of our people.

One thing I would tell you, and I do not mean any unkind criticism. You train and educate and clothe and

pay men to do what? To come over to my country to curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion and everything. They walk near a temple and say: “You idolators, you will go to hell.” But they dare not do that to the Mahomedans of India; the sword would be out. But the Hindu is too mild; he smiles and passes on, and says: “Let the fools talk.” That is the attitude. And then you who train men to abuse and criticise, if I just touch you with the least bit of criticism, with the kindest of purpose, you shrink and cry: “Don’t touch us; we are Americans. We criticise all the people in the world, curse them and abuse them, say anything; but do not touch us; we are sensitive plants.” You may do whatever you please; but at the same time I am going to tell you that we are content to live as we are; and in one thing we are better off—we never teach our children to swallow such horrible stuff, that man alone is vile where everything else is pure. And whenever your ministers criticise us let them remember this: If all India stands up and takes all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean and throws it up against the Western countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us. And what for? Did we ever send one missionary to convert anybody in the world? We say to you: “Welcome to your religion, but allow me leave to have mine.” You call yours an aggressive religion. You are aggressive, but how many have you taken? Every sixth man in the world is a Chinese subject, a Buddhist; then there are Japan, Thibet, and Russia and Siberia, and Burma and Siam; and it may not be palatable, but this Christian morality, the Catholic Church is all derived from them. Well, and how was this done? Without the shedding of one drop of blood! With all your brags and boasting, where has your Christianity succeeded without the sword? Show me one place in the whole world. One, I say, through the

history of the Christian religion—one ; I do not want two. I know how your forefathers were converted. They had to be converted or killed ; that was all. What can you do better than Mahomedanism, with all your bragging? "We are the only one!" And why? "Because we can kill others." The Arabs said that ; they bragged. And where is the Arab now? He is the Bedouin. The Romans used to say that, and where are they now? Blessed are the peacemakers ; they shall enjoy the earth. Such things tumble down ; it is built upon sands ; it cannot remain long. Everything that has selfishness for its basis, competition as its right hand and enjoyment as its goal, must die sooner or later. Such things must die. Let me tell you, brethren, if you want to live, if you really want your nation to live, go back to Christ. You are not Christians. No, as a nation you are not. Go back to Christ. Go back

to him who has nowhere to lay his head. The birds have their nests and the beasts their lairs, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head. Yours is religion preached in the name of luxury. What an irony of fate! Reverse this if you want to live, reverse this. It is all hypocrisy that I have heard in this country. If this nation is going to live, go back to him. You cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. All this prosperity, all this from Christ? Christ would have denied all such heresies. All prosperity which comes with Mammon is transient, is only for a moment. Real permanence is in Him. If you can join these two, this wonderful prosperity with the ideal of Christ, it is well. But if you cannot, better go back to him and give this up. Better be ready to live in rags with Christ than to live in palaces without him.

---

## AN OPEN LETTER TO HINDU WOMEN

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

DEAR AND HONOURED LADIES,

It was the conviction of Swami Vivekananda that the future of India depended even more on Indian women than on Indian men. And his faith in us all was immense. It was Indian women who went gladly to the burning pyre, in days of old, to burn beside the dead body of the husband, and no hand was strong enough to turn them back. Sita was an Indian woman. So was Savitri. Uma, performing austerities to draw Mahadeva to her side, was the picture of an Indian woman. Was there any task, he argued, to which women such as these could prove unequal?

In all lands, holiness and strength are the treasures which the race places in the hands of woman to preserve, rather than in those of man. A few men here and there become great teachers, but most have to spend their days in toil for the winning of bread. It is in the home that these renew their inspiration and their faith and insight, and the greatness of the home lies in the *Tapasyâ* of the women. You, Indian wives and mothers, do not need to be reminded of how much Rama, Sri Krishna, and Sankaracharya owed to their mothers. The quiet, silent lives of women, living in their homes like *Tapasvinis*, proud only to be faithful, ambitious only to be perfect, have done more to preserve the *Dharma* and cause it to flourish, than any battles that have been fought outside.

To-day our country and her *Dharma* are in a sore plight, and in a special manner he calls on her daughters at this moment to come forward, as those in the ages before, to aid her with a great *Sraddhâ*. How shall this be done? we are all asking. In the first place, let Hindu mothers renew in their sons the thirst for *Brahmacharya*. Without this our nation is shorn of her ancient strength. No country in the world has an ideal of the student's life so high as this, and if it be allowed to die out of India, where shall the world look to restore it? In *Brahmacharya* is this secret of all strength, all greatness. Let every mother determine that her sons shall be great. And secondly, can we not cultivate in our children and ourselves a vast *compassion*? This compassion will make us eager to know the sorrows of all men, the griefs of our land and the dangers to which in these modern days the religion is exposed; and this growing knowledge will produce strong workers, working for work's sake, ready to die, if only they may serve their country and fellow-men. Let us realise all that our country has done for us,—how she has given us birth and food and friends, our beloved ones, and our faith itself. Is she not indeed our *Mother*? Do we not long to see her once more *Mahâbhârata*? Such are a few of the things, beloved mothers and sisters, that I think my Guruji would have said to you in so much better words than I have been able to find.

I beg of you always,—for his sake, who made me his daughter and, therefore, your country-woman,—to think of me and pray for me as your little sister who loves this beautiful and holy land, and who longs only to be shown how to serve you more and more effectively. And may I remind you also of him who stood behind the Swami Vivekananda, his Guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and Kali, the Great Mother, whose power worked through both of these great souls, and will yet work doubtless in any of us who will but lend ourselves to Her influence?

In the name, and in the love of that Great Mother, I commend myself to you as, ladies,

Ever your most loving Sister,  
NIVEDITA  
of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda

---

## WILL THE TWAIN MEET?

BY THE EDITOR

I

We are asking this question in relation to science and religion. It is often said that the future of religion lies in the promulgation of a scientific religion. But what is science and what is religion? And what do we mean by a scientific religion? Two interpretations are possible of this last expression: (1) By scientific religion we may mean a religion the tenets of which are not

merely traditional, conventional and superimposed from outside and do not require to be blindly believed, but are capable of proof and have been demonstrated and rationally explained. We may briefly say that the main tenets of religion are concerned with God, immortal souls and a beatific destiny of those souls realised through communion with God. Are these capable of scientific proof? (2) Science has been accumu-



lating facts about reality through tireless research, which cannot be gainsaid. Science has taught a new kind of attitude towards life and reality. It has evolved a new outlook. And as a result the inherited moral and religious ideas are being given up one by one. New ideas of life and its fulfilment are cropping up. This new passion and new outlook—can they be made into a religion? Or can religion be reconciled with them? In our opinion, the second interpretation is more worthy of consideration than the first. Religion may be rationally placed before mankind, yet men may refuse to have anything to do with it;—the mind may not find itself agreeable to it. It may be that science has so moulded the outlook of thought that it is no longer in a line with religion however rational it may be.

It may be said that if religion is scientifically demonstrable, scientific minds must accept it. But is religion scientifically demonstrable? The basis of scientific proof is observation and experiment. Human mind is full of errors; so are the senses. They cannot be relied on. But dead instruments are faithful. They have no bias; they do not commit errors. So all truth must pass the test of instruments to be truly evidential and convincing. Instruments, therefore, are an essential part of scientific proof. Are religious truths capable of proof through instruments? Of course not. But though it is true that we cannot demonstrate religious truths scientifically, there is another view-point from which religion may be considered as thoroughly proved as any scientific truth. It must be admitted that in a scientific demonstration, not only should there be experiments, but the persons before whom the experiments are shown, should also be in a position to understand their significance. A previous training of their understanding is necessary. Take any physical or chemical experiment. Will a boor understand it? Certainly not. It is,

therefore, wrong to assume, as is often done, that a scientific demonstration has no subjective aspect but is universal and purely objective. The persons to whom the demonstrations are shown must have a requisite training. If that is so, why should we not concede the same necessity in case of religious proof? Let us have the necessary training to understand religious demonstrations, and then we shall know that spiritual truths are also as capable of sure proof as any scientific fact. The spiritually developed can evaluate spiritual phenomena as correctly as scientists do material phenomena. The mind becomes the instrument of test. With the spiritually developed, the mind is not so full of errors and so subjective as with ourselves. Religion is, therefore, challenging all sceptics to undergo the preparatory training and *then* set to spiritual research. But alas, this challenge is scarcely taken up by any one. The reason is obvious. This preparatory training which religion insists on, is a revolutionary one. It consists of a moral upliftment, a change of the outlook of life, and of a sincere and passionate eagerness for the supersensible. That means that we must take for granted the existence of a supersensuous reality, which no sceptic will ever do. If you are a sceptic, you will scarcely attach the required importance to moral observance, and cannot detach your mind from the objective. And if you do not do so, you are scarcely in a condition to undertake spiritual research. You are not prepared. The challenge and self-vindication of religion have, therefore, been scarcely heeded.

There are some who want to vindicate religion by subjecting it to the test of even material instruments. But we do not understand how that can be possible. It is true that our books and traditions speak of physiological changes brought on by spiritual experiences. Those changes are at least partly capable of being tested with material instruments, e.g., through X-ray photo-

graphy. But the facts of the original mental changes can only be inferred. They cannot be photographed. Here comes the necessity of belief or spiritual introspection. And sceptics may naturally refuse to accept our inferences, for those physiological phenomena can be conceivably produced by other causes also than what we infer.

The first interpretation of scientific religion, therefore, has to remain undecided. And perhaps no better proof than a rational explanation of the religious truths is necessary. When there is an inclination towards and faith in the value of religion, no higher proof than this is required. But the crux of the problem is that science has bred an anti-religious mentality. This aspect of the question we often ignore in our appreciation of the rational character of our religion. We must carefully analyse the scientific attitude, find its tendencies and its weakness and strength. Then perhaps we shall be able to know in what relation religion stands to the modern mind and if it can be really reconciled with science.

## II

It was unfortunate that modern science was born in a hostile atmosphere. In fact science was a protest against the theological and religious view that then existed in Europe ; and it had to make its progress through tremendous opposition of religion. One whose upbringing is unhappy can scarcely evince a generous pleasantness in after life. The bitterness of early days tinges even the affluence of later days. Such has been the case with science. During its early days, its struggles against the persecutions of Christianity and the superstitions of the masses had been so keen and bitter that it was compelled to develop a too sceptical and hostile attitude towards the pre-existing knowledge. Scepticism and destruction became the slogan of science. The knowledge acquired through the experiences of people for thousands of years and the

religions and philosophies were all considered erroneous and valueless. Nothing should be believed unless the laboratory instruments passed it as correct. And, therefore, religion must go. Theology should be thrown into the scrap-heap. The social and politico-economical systems are all based on views of life and reality, which are erroneous and, therefore, should be abolished. Such was the attitude that science bred in men. We are not blaming science. Perhaps the prevailing conditions were such that science could not do otherwise.

But there were all this time those enigmas,—the human life and personality. The scientific attitude does not subsume all the ways and aspirations of human life and personality. The ways in which life progresses and fulfils itself are not logical or scientific,—they are alogical. Human personality also is not so definite or rational as the scientific attitude implies. Science represents only a fraction of the nature and workings of the human mind. What did science do with the remaining parts? Science did not accommodate itself to them. On the other hand, it insisted on those parts being adjusted according to its own attitude. That was, however, against nature. Man is three-fourths, if not more, irrational and one-fourth rational. He fulfils himself as much through error as through truth. The Truth towards which man is progressing through the experiences of countless lives, does not fall within the category of what is called scientific truth. The universe is a mixture of lights and shades. And life is benefited as much by light as by shade. Take, for instance, art. Art does not bother about the scientific verity of the subjects it deals with. The passing fancies, the flimsiest shadows, the airy nothings are enough for it. Yet its outlook and standard of evaluation is such that it reveals great spiritual truths and cause great satisfaction to the soul. Art, therefore, comes nearer to life than

science. Science did not and does not recognise this fact. It was and is too aggressive. It wants to exploit the entire mind for its own purpose. The result has been strange. While we talk of being scientific and rational, our life is really a bundle of incongruities. We profess to be sceptical about what have not been proved to us. But almost the whole of our life-activity is based on unproved grounds. No man can be a true sceptic. To be a sceptic is to die. The ordinary argument seems to be this: There is no proof that there is God or soul or immortality; let us, therefore, make much of this life. But has this life been proved? How do they know that this life is really what it appears to be? Why then do they conduct themselves according to appearance? True scepticism is indeed very rare. There are true sceptics only among the spiritually developed. They test the universe and find it shadowy. God alone they find to be real and they renounce the world for ever. Such is true scepticism and not merely a voluble profession of it.

It may be said that without extreme caution and destructive scepticism, the progress of science would have been impossible. It may be so. But it must be clearly understood that progress of science does not *necessarily* mean the destruction of all other knowledge. It was the unhappy conditions of society and culture that prevailed at the beginning of science in Europe and also the opposition of Christianity that made the new knowledge so aggressive and destructive. How did religion grow among mankind? How did philosophy grow? Their progress was not destructive, but assimilative and synthetic. People did not feel a sudden break between the old and the new, but only a gradual widening of vision. We believe that this steady gradual progress would have been possible also in case of science, if the prevailing circumstances in Europe had been favourable. We see it illustrated

in India. We do not find any great difference between the scientific outlook and the outlook of our religion and culture. To us they seem to be mutually corroborative. Of course we must admit that the scientific outlook as it is understood in the West is not the same as we in India understand it to be. This difference in interpretation is highly significant as we shall see later on.

### III

What is the scientific attitude as it is understood in the West? What are its implications? We have already referred to the distinctive method that science follows,—the elimination of subjective elements as far as possible through the use of instruments. This method necessarily limits the horizon of its enquiry. That which is not material and tangible, that which cannot be manipulated by instruments, must necessarily remain outside scientific enquiry. We are thereby at once limited to the merely material. All spiritual aspirations are negated at one stroke. We are made material, our outlook becomes materialistic. We seek to explain everything through matter and its laws. Life has to be explained as merely physiological. Mind also is a material mechanism, only finer. Who knows but life also can be one day produced in the laboratory. The funny thing is that if we so want, there are sufficient justification for viewing vital and mental phenomena as determined and mechanical like material phenomena. Materialists are rapidly gaining further and further confirmatory proof of their attitude. Quite recently a biologist, a professor of pathology in the University of London, drew attention to "quite a number of noteworthy similarities between present-day conceptions of the structure and behaviour of physical atoms, on the one hand, and our conceptions about the structure and behaviour of certain kinds of living organisms, on the other."

It is generally considered that science is only another method of arriving at general laws at which philosophy arrives through speculation. This is not, however, exactly the thing. No doubt science wants to establish laws. But more than that it seeks to know things as they really are. We ordinary men have attached certain fixed values to the things of our common experience. How these values originated, it is difficult to state. But that there is a great deal of difference between our ideas and scientific ideas of things, cannot be denied. To take an example: Surely we do not ever consider a piece of coal and a diamond to be of the same value. Yet in the view of science, both are carbon. Science is thus denuding the universe and life of their conventional values. Its ways of looking at things are not the common man's. And the more science is finding the prevailing ideas of things incorrect, the more cautiously and energetically it is searching into everything. A great part of our knowledge of things consists of the emotional reactions that we make to them. These are mainly, if not entirely, subjective. Science does not and cannot take these subjective elements into account. The universe that emerges from the scientist's laboratory is extremely unlike the universe as we know it. Most of our idealism is based on the apparent universe. The scientific knowledge of the universe, therefore, automatically kills all idealism. It is true we sometimes hear of speculative science. Even in the present days, Prof. Einstein is very urgent about speculative physics. But it cannot be denied that most scientists do not favour speculation and prefer to be realistic, and that the effect of science on the popular mind at least is nothing better than materialistic. Social values have to change, so also moral values. Our conception of our life and duties have to undergo corresponding changes. The relationships between man and man can no longer

subsist on conventional emotional regards. Where is the basis? The social, economical and political ideas have to change automatically. And all these changes have indeed come about. The economic life is changed beyond recognition. Social life has also similarly changed. Human relations have not been spared. The Westerners no longer look upon life and duties in the way they did before. Their visualisation of the future is also from the standpoint of the tangible and the material. The picture that rises before them of their future is not of their inner life, but of external changes consequent on the discovery of nature's secrets and their application to the sensuous purposes of men.

All these have followed from the unfavourable circumstances amidst which science was born and developed and from its peculiar outlook and method.

#### IV

We must understand the significance of these changes clearly. Let us take the case of chastity. Chastity has been considered by all religions as a basic quality of spiritual life. It is also looked upon as one of the principal moral virtues in all civilised communities. But what is its value in the eye of science? We shall not consider here the instances of spiritual persons. But to most men and women, chastity appeals as a moral virtue sanctified by traditions. But suppose the traditions break down. The sanctity that attaches to it will automatically vanish. Science does not bother about the mental effect of anything. In fact to it mind is a vague unknown entity, and it does not consider it except in its effect on the body. Science is scornful of traditions. The idea of sanctity, therefore, vanishes totally. Does chastity conduce to physical well-being? That is the main point to be considered. If it does, let us treasure it. Western doctors are many of them against it in the sense of

complete abstention from sexuality. They consider it abnormal and harmful to the bodily system. But even if chastity is considered helpful to physical life, it is ignored in favour of what is nowadays called *enjoying life*. Life must be enjoyed! For there is nothing except this life. So there is little scope for chastity. No doubt the first stages of the unchaste life of a conventional man or woman will be attended with some bitterness and compunction of conscience. But that is because the hold of traditions and conventions is yet strong on the mind. These conventions are always foolish. They must go with scientific enlightenment. And they go. After the first stages have been covered, it is all smooth sailing. Conscience, that foolish repository of old-world notions, no longer troubles. But of course the body troubles sometimes. But science has also devised means to aid and heal the body.

Thus described it no doubt reads horrible. But it cannot be denied that the picture has some resemblance to realities and that it is mostly due to the scientific outlook. Science has divested life of all conventions, moral or otherwise; it has at least minimised their value. People incline to carnal pleasures for two reasons. There may be an inner hankering for such pleasures. Or higher ideals may be unknown. The present tendencies to physical enjoyment are due to both these reasons, but mainly, we believe, to the second one. A writer thus describes the modern tendencies, as reflected in literature, in an article in *The Forum* (New York): "He (an author) cannot be bothered, except incidentally, with pretensions or disguises or gestures. He wants to get at something that is fundamental and true. He wants to reach what is central and enduring in human experience. He turns, therefore, in this particular era, to the basic elements of human life—to birth and death, to lust, . . . . What else is there for him to do?

Religion, idealism, heroism, romantic love, gentility—he discerns only hypocrisy and self-deception in these. So anxious is the modern author to penetrate below the superstructure of convention and evasion that he probes the darkest recesses of the mind, creating new forms to permit the expression of what he discovers. It is not necessary to assume that contemporary literature has gone Freudian; these writers are following their own experience and not the text books of Vinnese professors. Their consciences, sharpened perhaps by the spirit of scientific inquiry, drive them on in the search for what is real. They are willing to accept anything that is unpleasant so long as they believe it is true. Indeed, they are almost ready to assume that only what is unpleasant can be true, since so much that was comfortable and consoling has turned out to be false." Again: "In such works we have a reflection of what might be called the modern mind—one of the modern minds, at least. Bereft of faith in God and faith in man, self-conscious and cynical with regard to his own pretensions, unable to justify the conviction that the work he is trying to do is somehow significant, the literary artist is in no mood to place high value on ideals and aspirations. He may hope and even believe that there is something in life besides lust, but he is unpleasantly aware that he can be sure of nothing but the animal passions. To these he will cling rather than run the risk of encouraging hypocrisy and becoming the victim of self-deception."

Science has destroyed moral and spiritual idealism. There are no restraining powers now. Therefore the sanctity of marriage is ridiculed. Faithfulness to the marriage vow is of little consequence. That old-world idea which used to consider even the casting of a lustful eye on a woman as grievously sinful, has no scientific basis. Marriage is for enjoyment, and

progeny if the nation requires it. Why need there be lifelong faithfulness of love and chastity to the same man and woman? The fact is, chastity has its supreme justification in a spiritual consideration. It has been found from long experience that without complete chastity no spiritual progress is possible. There may be worldly prosperity without it. We may even grant, though we do not believe it, that without it social life of a sort of wild socialistic type may also be possible. But no spiritual progress. And can man ever find peace and real happiness without spirituality? But science has nothing to do with spirituality, it does not recognise it. So chastity has lost its value to the modern men and women.

We have specially dwelt on chastity, because it is fundamental. The change in this one case has meant a revolutionary change in the entire life of men and women. Domestic life is breaking. Women are seeking and finding new scopes. Economic and social changes have followed, and also political changes. But apart from its effect on chastity, the scientific attitude has brought about many other far-reaching changes in the individual and collective life of men. It has not only changed old institutions but has also evolved new ones. It has given birth to new feelings and aspirations in which lie its positive value, greatness and high hopes, though may be in potential forms. One of these is an inordinate hankering for *power*.

## V

The above is, as we have understood, the nature of the scientific outlook as it prevails in the West. Says Bertrand Russel: "Science of itself does not offer us any moral ideas at all, and it is doubtful what moral ideas are going to replace those that we owe to tradition." If science is such, what is the chance of its reconciliation with religion? What are the prospects of religion in the present age? We

need not discuss the case of Hinduism. For, we do not feel any conflict between science and religion. We spoke of a difference between our conception of the scientific outlook and the Western conception of it. It is not necessary that the scientific outlook and its influence would be the same everywhere. Much depends on the nature and perfection of the knowledge that existed before science. The different antecedents of the different civilisations will mean a necessary difference in the influence of science. The fact is, God, soul and other spiritual facts are not vague to us Indians. They are so vivid and so real to us that no onslaughts of science can shake our faith in them. They are not mere beliefs with us. There are many who have realised them in our own days. One Sri Ramakrishna is enough to impress a whole epoch of history with the overwhelming sense of their reality. Men are not guided by reason. What things we shall live by depends much on what have impressed our life and mind most. If religion had impressed the Western mind in the way it has the Indian mind, science would not have, in spite of its miraculous achievements and its extreme scepticism, created the havoc it has done in the Western life. *To admit the truth of spiritual realities is to see science at once in a different light.* Many of the emphatic assertions of science would appear unwarranted and unproved. We may mention last year's controversy on the survival of bodily death. Change of attitude means a great change in the evaluation of facts. At least the agnostic attitude towards spiritual verities, which is refused by science, could be maintained, and that would have spared the moral fabric of society. Our intense faith, born out of the experiences of great souls and confirmed by the partial visions at least of innumerable persons, has provided us with other standards of value, and we do not judge either material or immaterial realities in the way the

Westerners do. The problem of the conflict of science and religion, therefore, does not arise with us. It is true that with the propagation of scientific knowledge, many details will have to be changed, but the fundamentals are sound. We shall perhaps adopt alternative nomenclatures and explain in new fashions. But we know that the facts are known and understood well. Our religion is scientific in both senses: Its main tenets and philosophies are quite in accordance with the findings of science and are daily receiving greater and greater confirmation; and its attitude towards life and reality is the complete fulfilment of what science is only very dimly reflecting at present. It has also greatly minimised the mischiefs of science in that, having a true conception of the values of religious truths and of the truths of science, it has succeeded in maintaining a true balance between them without detriment to either of them.

But the case of the West is different. The Westerners cannot put faith in the supra-material realities with the same strength and understanding as we do. In fact, influenced as they are by science, they do not even feel inclined to do so. What are the prospects of religion with them? Can their present attitude be reconciled with the spiritual outlook? We may conceive of several prospects. (1) If the present scientific attitude continues, utter materialism of a very dangerous character will prevail. (2) But there are clear and significant indications that this outlook has already proved unattractive to many. No more reason, no more definiteness, but a mystic vagueness is being eagerly sought after. This is the reason of the growth of many mystic cults in the West at the present day. But that way lies the stultification of science, which will certainly be regrettable. (3) If this dissatisfaction with science and its results grows, it may be that in several centuries all enthusiasm for science will disappear. Through this failure of

science, man may again take to religion. This prospect, though distant, is not quite fantastic. (4) Religion may be so placed before mankind that there will be a strong rational appeal. Even if the spiritual realities are not scientifically demonstrable, they may yet seem quite probable and quite in conformity with proved facts. This way science and religion may be happily reconciled. The rational aptitude of the present age may help a rationally proposed religion prevail more and more among the Western people. (5) But as we have pointed out before, rationality is not the only element in the scientific attitude. Science has created a special attitude towards life, which is intensely realistic. We have described its nature and mentioned that the sense of power is a special characteristic of it. Therefore if there is any religion which can transform this attitude by a gradual fulfilment (and not denial), then that religion is *the* religion for the future, and that religion alone can be truly united with science and redeem it. We believe Vedanta can do it. The conception of man that has gradually evolved in the West through the vicissitudes of scientific influence has two elements in it, individual integrity and infinite powerfulness. And the conception of life and world that has emerged is that of one vast being teeming with potentialities, giving infinite scope to the individual to revel in. We do not know of any other philosophy or religion than Advaita Vedanta, that can easily transform and fulfil these conceptions. The Advaita conception of the individual is the sublimest. "Thou art That!" The God of infinite power, infinite blessedness, infinite joy, immortal and sinless, is man himself. Can there be a more hopeful and glorious conception of man than this? The conception of individual solidarity and the sense of power generated by science is easily transmuted and ennobled by the Vedantic

conception of man. It has been said that Advaita Vedanta preaches the doctrine of Maya and characterises the world as unreal, and that it, therefore, cannot appeal to the Western mind which eagerly believes in the solid reality of the world. Advaita Vedanta would surely be misunderstood if it is thought that it considers the universe unreal in this crude sense. It says: "O man, the world is not what it seems to you now. It is infinitely more glorious, infinitely more real, infinitely more lovable and enjoyable than you take it to be. It is Satchidananda itself. It is eternal, it is all-joy, all-light. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*—'All this is Brahman.' Know and love it as such, and not as you are doing at present." What can be more realistic than this? The scientific mind will avidly grasp at this idea. Let us on and on in our understanding. And the world will at last reveal itself as the embodiment of all that we are consciously and unconsciously seeking for ;

only, at a certain stage of our research, we shall have to change the laboratory instruments for the mental instrument, concentration, and the eternal secret will become patent for ever.

We thus consider Advaita Vedanta to be the hope of the present age. For it alone can successfully transform the dominant tendencies born of science, and through this, rehabilitate morality and religion. We may preach a rational religion. But it will fail to attract unless it has also the power to transmute and fulfil the science-begotten mentality. Advaita Vedanta does that, and it also states religion rationally, in consonance with the discoveries of science. The true reconciliation of science and religion lies in their agreement not only in doctrines but also in the mental attitudes implied. Advaita Vedanta fulfils both these conditions. In it alone lies the future of both science and religion, and if it fails, nothing else will succeed.

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## NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

20TH AUGUST.

*Swami T* : "Meditation begins with the unification of the meditator, the object of meditation and the act of meditation, when the separation between them is obliterated. When *japa* has become automatic, when a portion of the mind ever repeats the Name of itself, one may be said to have advanced a little in *japa*. In all cases the 'I' must be forgotten.

"At one time I felt that even every footstep of mine was through His power and that I had nothing. I clearly felt this. This feeling lasted for some days.

"Never expect anything from any one. But always give. Otherwise a sense of dryness will overtake you. I have seen many *Sadhus* who are dry and who think that because they have

become *Sadhus*, they have nothing to do with others. . . . But you must not give any one your mind. That you must give only to God. That is why you have not married. Pray crying to Him: 'O Lord, may I love Thee with all my heart!' The Master would instruct us to work with the hands but to keep the mind ever with Him.

"God is not partial. His grace is on all, good and evil, just as rains fall equally on all places. Whoever tills the land reaps the harvest. If any one says that he is specially beloved of the Lord, that is his own idea and attitude. He says so from the experience of his own life. But it is not universally true.

"There is another attitude, according to which God binds some and releases others. But who can assume this attitude? Only he who has



realised everything as one and who feels His mercy even amidst great sorrow.

“There is a third attitude: Whatever is good is His, and whatever is bad is the result of our own *Karma*. If we continue this attitude, we may eventually get rid of the ego.”

7TH SEPTEMBER.

*Swami T*: “The *Jnanis* meditate in the head, the *Bhaktas* in the heart. We generally find so. But when as a result of meditation in the heart, spiritual consciousness expands, there is no more any fixed location of meditation.

“The Master had two moods: Sometimes he said that he did not like Divine forms, not even Kali, and his mind would be immersed in the Absolute. At other times, he said that he could not do without Divine forms, and he would say to the Divine Mother that he did not want to see Her formless aspect or have *Brahma-jnana*. He who rejects everything and gets lost in the formless Brahman is one-sided. The *Jnani* is afraid of rebirth lest he be caught in the meshes of Ignorance. But the expert player does not fear anything. Similarly, he who has realised only the forms of God, but not His formless absolute aspect, is also one-sided.

“It is said in the *Puranas* that the Divine forms survive even the dissolution of the entire universe. As the Master said, there are places where the ice does not melt.

“Do not accept any gifts from any one. For the gifts will influence you, they will take away your independence. He alone can accept, who can consume, whose mind will not be affected, who feels them as gifts of God Himself. You may accept gifts only from good men who would not interfere with your independence and seek to control you.

“It is very difficult to truly understand the intricacies of the mind

without being an advanced *Sadhaka*. How many are the ways in which the mind is deluding us! If any one points out the delusions, we find excuses for them! We do not understand how many kinds of self-love fill us. It is no joke to submit to any one,—not outwardly, but in spirit.

“Swami Vivekananda was once reading the Bible. He was in those days a vegetarian. When he read of Jesus’s flesh-eating, he did not like it. But at once he thought: ‘Oh, how proud I have become because I am living on vegetables!’ We read a lot, but can feel, retain and assimilate little. When the Master said to Girish Ch. Ghosh: ‘What are you talking of *Brahma-jnana*? Sukadeva saw and touched the Ocean of Brahman. And Siva drank only three handfuls of Its water and became a *sava* (corpse),’ Girish Ghosh clasped his head and exclaimed: ‘Stop, Sir, say no more. My head is bursting.’

“Formerly my nerves were very fine, and I had great powers of explaining things. Whenever any one put me a question, I could see everything from its ultimate origin to its outer expression,—I could see from what motive he spoke and why. And there was a flood of light in a single word of mine.

“I used to observe absolute silence during the *Navaratri*. I would feel a sort of intoxication and the mind would be one-pointed. I have done what one being born a man should do. My aim was to make my life pure. I used to read a great deal, eight or nine hours daily. I read many *Puranas* and then the Vedanta and my mind settled on the Vedanta. The Master said jokingly to me: ‘Tell me something of the Vedanta. Does not Vedanta say that Brahman is true and world false? Or does it say anything else? Then give up the false and take the true.’ This was a turning-point of my life.”

4TH NOVEMBER.

*Swami T*: “I travelled widely in the early days. I went towards the

Narbada, alone, without a pice with me, and I slept anywhere. I went via Allahabad, Chitrakut, Rewa and Jubbulpore, all on foot. Whenever I travelled I kept a place of pilgrimage in view and found out my way by enquiring of people. I went next to Hardwar, Hrishikesh, Uttarkashi, etc. I thought of not coming down from the mountains. I lived happily in the Gharwal hills, totally forgot the existence of the world and aimed only at God-realisation. I meditated and read a great deal. But Swamiji made me come down. I met him at Meerut. Some seven or eight of us lived together at Delhi. Then Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) spoke of visiting Jawaliji and asked me to accompany him. So I went with him to Jawaliji, Gopinathpur, Baijnath, Pathankot, Multan, Gujranwala, Montgomery and so on. And then we came down to Bombay via Karachi. At Bombay we met Swamiji about to embark for America. He said that the Parliament of Religions at Chicago was all for him, as if he saw the future. He asked me to return to the Math and to allow Maharaj to travel alone.

“I stayed for some time at Mt. Abu. From there I went to Ajmere and Pushkar and then to Brindaban where I stayed for six months. The next six months I passed at Lucknow. Then I went to Ayodhya. At Ayodhya Mahapurush (Swami Shivananda) met me and asked me to come to the Math.

“Though I travelled much, I also studied much all along. At Brindaban I studied a great deal of *Bhakti* scriptures. It is not good to wander much if you do not at the same time continue your *Sadhana*.

“In the Jagannath temple at Puri, suddenly a sound came to my ears and my heart was filled with a great joy so much so that I felt like walking on the air. The sound continued in various strains. My whole mind felt attracted. I then remembered what I had read of

*Anahata Dhvani* and I thought it must be that.

“At Ujjain, I was one night sleeping under a tree. A storm came and suddenly some one touched me on the body. I got up and at once a branch fell where I had slept. . . .

“When I first read the verse in which it is said that life is meant for the realisation of *Jivan-mukti*, I leapt in joy. For that indeed was the purpose of my life. . . .

“‘The first door of *Yoga* is the control of speech, non-acceptance of gifts, non-expectation, desirelessness and love of solitude.’—This verse had a great influence on me. Formerly I used to talk much. When I read it I thought: ‘What! I have not entered even the first door of *Yoga!*’ and I resolved that I would control my speech. I did not talk with any one, lived by myself and acted as I thought best. And I did not utter a single word during the nine days of the *Navaratri*.

“It was Sankara who moulded my life. Before I came to the Master, a single verse of Sankara used to lift me a step up and give me a flood of light. In those days I used to find much new meaning in the verses. What is *parigraha* (acceptance of gifts)? Even if you do not accept anything, there may be *parigraha*. To think of means for the future, that is *parigraha*. Birth and rebirth all follow from *parigraha*. We are already thinking of ways and means for the future. Wherever our mind is, there we also are. If you do not have *parigraha*, where would your mind be? Naturally on the Atman itself. This one practice of *aparigraha* can take you to the highest. . . .

“Once I was sitting alone by the Ganges after my companions had left. I began to meditate and by and by it became 2 o’clock. Then some one suddenly said: ‘Come, let us go home.’ These words seemed to club me on the head. I understood that they had come from my mind itself. There was really no home. But the

mind had been thinking that there was a home where I was to return. I then determined that I would destroy this tendency of the mind. . . .

“Oh, those days are coming to my mind. While I lived at Srinagar Ghat, I used to rise very early and bathe. Then I would sit in meditation and afterwards read. At eleven, I would rise and procure some food in an hour.

Then would again begin meditation and *japa*. And thus every day. It was there that I committed eight Upanishads to memory. I would meditate on every verse I read and what an indescribable joy it was! I used to read the commentary of Sankara and the *Tika* of Jnanananda. And much further light used to come through meditation.” . . .

[ Finis ]

## THE PROMOTION OF WORLD PEACE

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

The greatest characteristic of the phenomenal world is its illusoriness. Our hopes and aspirations, activities and pastimes, achievements and failures, progress and degradation, all are but different facets of a dream, different settings of a magic kaleidoscope. The realisation of Reality alone can convince one that the best and the worst of the universe are all equally dreams. History shows that the world is like a dog's curly tail which can never be made straight. The sum total of misery and happiness is always the same. Evil is like chronic rheumatism which only shifts position but never altogether vanishes. Good and evil proceed *pari passu*. One living in the world of phenomena can never free oneself from the pairs of opposites. This is Maya. The Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, Eternal Peace, Eternal Progress, the Millennium, and such other dreams of the idealists are, therefore, contradiction in terms. The Kingdom of Heaven on earth, for which the Son of God shed his blood, is not nearer to us, by so much as a jot or tittle, after two thousand years. The ideal of non-resistance to evil, preached by Gautama Buddha, is as unrealised to-day as it was twenty-five hundred years ago. Only some individuals realised these ideals and were at peace with the world.

The existence of world-peace is felt only in the heart of the individual.

### I

Three stages may be said to characterise the evolution of men. Firstly, there is the stage of competition. Men look upon one another with extreme suspicion. They scratch one another's eyes like wild vultures. The slogan of this period is, “Let everyone take care of himself and the devil the hindmost.” This is the mentality of the nomadic tribes moving on the high table-lands or steppes. But hard experience gradually teaches man that the spirit of competition cannot be conducive even to individual happiness. Always scenting danger about him, man can never feel secure. Besides, in the age of competition for creature comforts, men find little time and less opportunity for the culture of higher instincts. Peace and security are the *sine qua non* of progress. Then the people of similar minds coalesce together into a nation. Organisation of life and activities among the members gives the nation the requisite peace and security for the development of its culture and the promotion of its happiness. In this stage, the nation-idea crystallises, kingdom grows and state develops. In this stage, again, different states co-

operate with one another for protection against stronger rivals or the exploitation of weaker ones. But there is no real amity between nations. The different nations, though apparently living together in a state of peace, present the spectacle of a battle-field where the belligerents live in camps in a state of war-preparedness. The bond of unity among them is extremely rickety and gives way before the slightest stress of circumstances. Political expediency is a master juggler, which holds in its hands a magic kaleidoscope and takes malicious delight in making and breaking sworn alliances and combinations. This is writ large in the history of Europe and the world. No doubt, during the last many decades, the states of Europe manifested a wonderful spirit of unity. But to what purpose? The pragmatic value of this unity has been the destruction of weaker peoples, the exploitation of the helpless nations, the protection of self-interest and the aggrandisement of national glory. The spirit underlying co-operation is the spirit of the nomadic world. It is the spirit of the great plains and the high seas.

But the next stage in man's evolution is characterised by the spirit of consecration. Then man understands that his real happiness and that of the nation consist more in the conceding of privileges than in exacting them from others. Real bliss comes from renunciation and self-denial. The whole world is like a human body and all the limbs must co-operate with one another in promoting the happiness of the body itself. Any cussedness or truculence on the part of the individual in looking to the interest of the whole cannot but ultimately spell its own ruin. A chain is as weak as its weakest link. The rope by which the slave is dragged also impedes the progress of the master. Nationalism as a god must follow the tribal gods to the limbo. Our true nationality is all mankind. But will this ideal be ever realised?

## II

Individually speaking, there are always found some men who sincerely want peace. Realising the evanescence of the world, they gradually learn to discover peace and happiness in their own self. But the sincerity of the people in general, asking for permanent peace, must be taken *cum grano salis*. Oftentimes this general hankering for peace follows a great war causing enormous expenses, blood-curdling horrors, terrible brutality and the wholesale disturbance of the tranquillity of life. People for the time being become overwhelmed by the colossal proportions the miseries of a war assume; and weariness and disgust follow. But weariness and disgust, horror and pity, even the realisation of the practical fact of the dislocation of the normal life and harm and extravagance do not become permanent. Human nature recuperates itself and rekindles the instincts that were temporarily subdued. War is followed by peace, a long or a short one. But ultimately peace comes to an end under the stress of human passions.

The history of the last few centuries shows occasional outbursts of humane sentiments for the establishment of peace in the world. But history shows again the lamentable failure of all such attempts. The generality of mankind still looks upon war as a biological necessity. Its psychological necessity lurks deep in human nature. Let us swiftly glance at the different attempts that have been made from time to time for establishing good-will and brotherhood among mankind. The motive behind the campaign of Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon was, perhaps, the establishment of a world kingdom in which people will live amicably, under an emperor, like good brothers. But the dream of these potentates proved, perhaps, more ephemeral than even our flimsiest dream of the night. People hugged to their bosom various ideas, such as the Court of Arbitration, the Concert of Europe, the Balance of

Power, the growth of democracy, the extension of commerce and the progress of science, as potent means to bring all wars to an end. Believing that wars are generally the outcome of the ugly passions of greedy kings and statesmen, they thought that the increased participation of the people in the administration of the state would stop the mad orgies of the Armageddon in the world. It was expected that different countries having extensive commercial relations with one another would discard warfare for fear of jeopardising their commercial interests. And it was also thought that nations equipped with up-to-date instruments of destruction, dangerous and cruel, through the progress of science, would not dare to draw sword against one another for fear of perishing with it. But the last great war as well as a few preceding it, has utterly demonstrated the utter hollowness of such expectations. Even while the head of the state hesitated to throw up the gauntlet, the rabble, the 'demos' goaded him to take part in the terrible holocaust with their wild hurrah. Scientists with their labour and researches only helped to make the destruction complete. Commercial interests supplied the sop to Cerberus.

It is contended that many good-hearted people took part in the last war hoping confidently that that war would end all future wars. But what was the feeling prevailing at Versailles at the time of signing the peace treaty? The Big Three with their fingers still red with tepid human gore drafted the terms of peace. "The world had to be made safe for democracy," said President Wilson. But M. Clemenceau expressed by his attitude that it was talking like Jesus Christ. No, the world had to be made safe for Paris. The defeated nations had to satisfy the revengeful thirsts of the victorious allies. The great powers wildly participated in the general loot. They followed the old annexation policy under very thin camouflage. The noble ideal of 'self-

determination' was thrown to the scrap-heap. The geographical and ethnological boundaries were superseded by man-made boundaries.

For the time being President Wilson focussed the attention of the entire world upon his pet scheme of the League of Nations, which he declared would be the substantial realisation of peace. But this homunculus in a bottle, which, it was hoped, might become at last the Man ruling the earth, this League of Nations, was not a league of people at all; it was a federation of states, dominions and colonies. It failed to achieve its much-advertised purpose, and no better result can be conceivably the outcome of an organisation which is mainly guided and wirepulled by diplomats and statesmen who promise only to betray, and flatter only to ruin; and however they may occasionally bind themselves by oaths and treaties, their conscience, obsequious to their interests, always releases them from inconvenient obligations. The League of Nations emphasises nationality. It defers to sovereignty. But the world perishes unless sovereignty is merged and nationality subordinated.

Thus the peace-attempts after the great war have passed away like a burst of laughter in a tavern. The face of Europe, artificially rejuvenated, shows now the flush of a wasting fever. And it is but natural. While a saner section of people in every land is anxious for peace, the diplomats and militarists everywhere are hatching plans for making the next war more horrible and murderous. They want to get on with their armaments to keep ahead. It is necessary to develop new arms. The nation which does so would have a great advantage in the next war. In addition to the tank, the armies must use caterpillar wheels for mechanical transports, and these wheels must advance in open order on a broad front carrying guns, munitions, supplies, men and other accessories of war—and incidentally ploughing up and destroying hedges,

ditches, fields and cultivations, leaving nothing behind but blood-streaked mud. Flying destroyers must play an important part. Bombs must be dropped not merely on the army lines, but also where stores are being manufactured and troops trained. The Government should place more trust on its own right hand and in its own stretched-out arm than in any organisations like the League of Nations. War is war and its only law is the maximum destruction of the enemy forces with the minimum efforts. This being the predominant feeling, how can one expect for permanent world peace, when an influential section of people does not know what it is to live in love and sympathy with others as some dirty, poor, ill-treated and fierce-souled creature, born and bred amidst the cruel and dingy surroundings of a London or Paris back street does not know what it is to bathe everyday, always to be beautifully clad and to meet agreeable and well-mannered people or do beautiful things?

The crimson colour in the Western horizon of to-day is not the precursive hint of a glorious dawn. It is the wild scarlet of the licking flames of a terrible sepulchre. The writers, thinkers and preachers are only adding to the fury by their shrieks and howls. Europe is placed on the crater of a smouldering volcano. It is growing too enormous and soon it will be buried under the weight of its own enormity. This mad cry of nationalism is like a huge frankenstein which ultimately devours its own author. People are moving in a breakneck speed. New excitements are being invented daily to invigorate their over-wrought nerves. Passions are running high everywhere. The European states have lost all ideals of broad outlook. Each state maintains its own educational system, teaches a partial and lying history and instils a poisonous national conceit. Europe has no world politicians, no broad-minded leaders but only narrow-minded statesmen, tariff-sustained business-magnates,

newspapers with limited outlook, state-supported teachers and national universities.

But the unseen hand has already written the fatal words on the wall of the European Courts. A generation is rising from the ruins of the old world who will not stand any such nonsense. The persecuted and the tortured are slowly raising their heads. There is a tremendous awakening in China, Turkey and the Asiatic Muslim states. Nationalism that dominates Europe to-day is like a drunken shouting bully who lords it over and deafens everyone in a room, until he is suddenly flung out and everyone is incredulous that he was ever tolerated.

We have seen the political forces that have hitherto fostered the spirit of enmity and strife among men. There are other aspects also. Another class of people thinks that the cultural contact between different nations through the study of ethnology, sociology, history and theology goes a great way towards bridging the gulf that exists between race and race. But unfortunately the result of the contact between two cultures has hitherto proved disastrous to the realisation of such an ideal. The intellectual sections of powerful nations, professing to live above the *sturm und drang* of the political turmoil, have rather helped to accentuate the differences between nation and nation. Whenever European culture protected by the serried phalanx of armed forces came in contact with other cultures, physically but not culturally weak, it generally exterminated the latter or imposed upon the latter its own ideal of civilisation. Only in Indian history does one find the healthy process of cultural assimilation which attitude the free and virile India took towards her invaders. Therefore we in India possess a grand composite culture containing the best elements of outside civilisations. The protagonists of cultural unity in Europe with their obsession of superiority-complex have failed to bring

about the much desired unification of the world on a cultural basis.

And last of all, come to the field the religious preachers. Christ preached the religion of love. Buddha enjoined upon all to follow the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, saying that hatred ceases not at any time by hatred but by love alone. Love has been prescribed by all great prophets of humanity as the greatest factor in changing the animal propensities of men and raising them high to the throne of God. But unfortunately the world is witnessing to-day the strange spectacle of the followers of Christ and Buddha most cruelly murdering not only the followers of other religions but also the members of their own faiths. The same baser passions are at work here too. Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men are nice principles so far as they are written in the book. But at crucial times these ideals are not found worth the paper on which they are written. Religious bigotry is responsible for the shedding of more blood in the world than any mundane reason. Religious preachers and religious organisations have been sowing everywhere the seeds of dissension and strife. Instead of holding out the olive-branch, they throw before the world the apple of discord. Instead of following the ideals of our prophets, we are prompted to actions by the malicious propensities of our own animal passions. There has been a distinct slipping-off from the ancient ideal and a real de-spiritualisation of religion. Some inevitable obsessions are always associated with all historical religions. Believing in the Divinity of a single man, the followers of such religions soon degenerate into bigots and fanatics and set out to convert the world either by sword or other unfair means and send the non-believers to hell to be eternally tortured and barbecued. The prophets are not to blame ; but we, the followers, misunderstand them and are responsible for the untold miseries that exist in the world to-day.

### III

Most of the religions have hitherto only preached the brotherhood of men, refusing in theory and practice to recognise men of other faiths as brothers. But this relationship is also a fragile bond which breaks up under the pressure of our animal instincts. Brother stabs in the back of brother or hits below the belt to ensure his own happiness. Here the Hindu Philosophy—I mean the Vedanta, sounds a deeper note. It preaches the philosophy of Atman or Self. Everything in the world is to be loved for the sake of the Self. We love children, wife, wealth and everything that exists only for the sake of this Self. But because we forget the real nature of this Self and look upon the gross forms as conducive to our happiness, the bliss that we derive from the enjoyment of the earthly objects is extremely transient and fugitive in nature. The Self of the Vedanta Philosophy is Brahman, eternal, unborn and undying. It is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. In the same breath the Vedanta declares that I am that Brahman. All my ideas of weakness and limitations are due to the ignorance of my real nature. It is only through ignorance that I see difference, by creating multiplicity in the universe. In fact there is no separate existence which I should love or hate or for which I am called upon to make sacrifice. By loving others I only love my own self. By hating and injuring others I only hate and injure myself. Hence the Vedantist does not at all consider that he foregoes a portion of his own pleasure by showing solicitude for the happiness of others. This philosophy alone gives us the *rationale* of love and sacrifice, the two great factors for bringing peace to the world.

The Vedanta declares that real happiness consists in the realisation of the Spirit and renunciation of earthly possessions. It declares the glory of Atman before whose magnitude, the sun, the moon, the whole creation, appear

like a drop in the ocean and before whose glory, the whole space melts into nothingness. The real strength of a man is the strength of the Self and the consciousness of the unity with Existence itself. All fear is the outcome of duality. This is Maya and therefore unreal. The war preparations of the strong nations are due to this idea of duality and separation and betray the psychology of weakness. Europe lives to-day in armed camps so that it may not be caught unawares. Man thinks himself hopelessly dependent upon inert and lifeless matter for securing his happiness. Life is intolerable without beer and skittles, without the trinkets and gew-gaws of modern civilisation. When man realises himself as the One Being without a second, he is not afraid of anybody else. When he feels within the glory of the Atman he does not go to worthless matter for peace and happiness. So long as the strong nations of Europe do not realise the glory of the Self and the evanescence of the world, peace and happiness will ever recede from before them like the proverbial cup of Tantalus. In the domain of theology the grandest contribution of the Vedanta philosophy is that it does not disturb anybody's faith, however crude and gross the latter may be. It recognises all the prophets and scriptures of the world as manifesting different aspects of Truth. As the howlings of jackals are hushed at the roaring of the lion, so all quarrels and screechings cease when the Lion of Vedanta roars.

#### IV

The world adopted various measures for the promotion of peace. But all these have proved abortive. But the experiment of the realisation of Unity underlying the universe, through Vedanta, has not yet been tried and we commend it to the rational world, at least for the novelty of the thing. Science and philosophy have discovered unity in the realms of matter and mind.

Let men on the religious plane realise and proclaim this unity of Spirit. Let people be taught that the world is a cosmic whole; and love and hatred shown to any one part ultimately react upon the entire body. Let all the activities in the various spheres of life be attuned to this one ideal. Let this ideal of unity be preached from the altar, pulpit and platform. Let this ideal be taught in schools, colleges, in the high ways and byways of life. It is an auspicious time. A sane section of people, in every country, has been demanding peace. Blind materialists and wily diplomats cannot be expected to understand the utter bankruptcy of the present-day world. A limit must be imposed upon military operations and political exploitations. Things cannot go on in this fashion *ad infinitum*. No people after the terrible experience of the last war should want any more to stand such warfare as the militarists contemplate, not even the men on the winning side. Imperialism has no longer any persuasive power. It goes on for sheer want of wits to leave off. The war that lies ahead will not be encouraged by the masses. It will be certainly a more disorderly but less intensive war.

At the present moment it is the bounden duty of everyone to proclaim the message of peace. Let the historians, archæologists, ethnologists, philologists, educationists and the like, undertake the task of creative analysis which the scientific men of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries did for the materials and mechanism of human life. The latter perhaps, unconsciously helped to discover telegraphy, swift transit on land and sea and a thousand impossible things. Let the former, too, consciously do greater things in more urgent human affairs. Let economic organisers exploit all material wealth and every fresh possibility that science reveals, for the common good of the world. Private enterpriser will be a servant—a useful,



valued and well-rewarded servant—and no longer the robber master of the Government. Let currency be safeguarded against the contrivances and the manipulations of clever and dishonest men. Let the philosophy of State be totally revolutionised. The loftiest idealism of yesterday seems but sheer commonsense to-day. Let the states be free from all obsessions of an aggressive foreign policy. All subject nations must be freed. A permanent world peace can never be effected without the independence of the Asiatic nations. The principle of self-determination by the people should be the guiding policy of all states. It must not be obscured by the thin camouflage of trusteeship, guardianship and mandatari-ship. The words, thoughts and actions that are patriotic and laudable in England must not be considered seditious in India, China or Egypt and therefore ruthlessly suppressed. Let America show to other peoples of the world the same lofty idealism which her earlier statesmen, Washington, Franklin and Lincoln, expressed for their own people. Tyranny in all spheres of life must be banished once for all. The present bar of the white people against the coloured races must be removed. Army, navy and air forces must play a subordinate part in the state organisation. Different states with their respective national ideals must have the international outlook. Man must learn to see things beyond the tip of his nose. Indentured and forced labour of all kinds must be abolished. The capitalist should no longer treat the labourer as the beast of burden to be perpetually exploited, but treat him courteously and respectfully as co-partner with him in the production of wealth. No one must enjoy too much of cakes unless everyone has got bread. The guiding principle of economic adjustments should be equitable distribution of wealth. Education must be open to the whole race, not simply to the classes and peoples. If the rich and the advanced people

require the light of education, it is all the more necessary for the poor and the depressed. Knowledge is the common property of all. The altar of learning is the only place before which all people can assemble together and offer their united worship. It is education alone, based upon broad and sound basis, which can accelerate the process of mutual understanding and respect.

Education and religion are the two greatest factors in the evolution of a culture. They are interrelated. The separation of education and religion is the greatest tragedy of the present age. As its consequence, international politics has reverted to a brutal nationalism and this is responsible for the drift of industrial and business life towards harsh, selfish and uncreative profit-seeking. The aim of education is to draw men of alien races and discrete traditions into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service. Education is the preparation of the individual to be the worker for world-welfare and his religious training is the core of that preparation. The religious ideal must be as broad as the sky and as deep as the ocean. Various denominational religions must learn to feel that all creeds express the same truth in more or less varying degrees. If one religion is true, then other religions must be equally so. All religions lead their votaries to the same goal, namely, the realisation of eternal peace and happiness. Rituals, ceremonies and mythologies are but the different paths, suited to different temperaments, to realise the same goal. These are as necessary for the beginners as the philosophy for the adepts. A class of intellectual people is eager to do away with the ceremonials of religion and formulate a universal religion based upon eclecticism and syncretism. This cannot solve the problem of religious bigotry but will only add, we are afraid, to the existing number of fanatical creeds. Uninspired intellect and unpurified reasonings occupy a very low

position in spiritual affairs. Intellectual giants are often found to be mere spiritual babies. There should be a genuine effort by the sincere soul to understand not only his own religion, but those of others as well. A real lover of Christ cannot but be a worshipper of Muhammad, Buddha, and the Indian sages. Different religious paths must remain; the realisation of the unity in diversity is the consummation of spiritual life.

### V

Like other idealists, I also cherish faith in the near approach of the Millennium. But, perhaps, my idea of the Millennium will differ from that of many others. In my conception of the Satya-Yuga or the Millennium, many things will be possible which we cannot possibly dream of or desire in this present age of exhaustion. But anyhow in my Kingdom of Heaven on earth, men and his activities will not be reduced to a state of sameness and uniformity. There must remain as many thoughts as there will be minds. Variety must continue to exist. It is the law of creation. Perfect balance or perfect harmony means dissolution. Creation is possible only when the balance is disturbed or lost. So I do not conceive that in my ideal Millennium all people will think the same thought and be like the Egyptian mummies staring at one another's face with a blank gaze having no thoughts to think. In the ideal world, different nations will retain their national characteristics. The form of Government and the shape of social structure will be moulded after the evolved instincts of the race. The ideal world-society, world-law and world-culture will teach every individual to understand the higher meanings of

life. The drift of life and activities will always be Godward. In the Millennium, the army and the navy will not altogether vanish nor evil be totally eradicated. People with *Sattvika*, *Rajasika*, and *Tamasika* propensities will continue to remain. But virtue will triumph. There will be sin even in the ideal age. But people will be ashamed of it; they will not worship and glorify it as they do at present. Excitements and enjoyments will remain. But people will derive greater pleasure from exploring new and wonderful things of spiritual life and enjoying spiritual felicity. And lastly, the culture and training of the Millennium will teach mankind to disregard all material possessions as impediments to the realisation of Truth. People will learn that real happiness consists more in the purification of the internal propensities than in any adjustment of outside nature. Social organisations and social laws will enable men to transcend the society, go beyond the bondage of matter and enter into the ineffable region of the Beyond wherein alone abides happiness in its pristine glory and excellence. The ideal world will consciously afford greatest opportunities to individual souls to realise this state, and such realisation by the greatest number of people will enable the generality of mankind to approach the highest verity of life.

The ideal of perfect peace and happiness shall ever remain an ideal for humanity as a whole and only may be realised by a greater or smaller number of individuals through individual efforts according to the prevailing tendencies of the age. The more humanity learns to proceed consciously towards this ideal, the greater is the possibility of strifes and wars coming to an end and peace and happiness adorning the fair face of God's creation.

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“ . . . upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, “Help and not Fight,” “Assimilation and not Destruction,” “Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.”—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

# THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF GODHEAD

BY WAHED HOSAIN

## VI

The Muslim philosophers do not regard the pure Divine Essence as entirely devoid of any quality. They hold that the Divine Essence has certain inherent qualities which are the qualities of the essence, as distinct from the attributes of action. They are in the essence and not separate from it.

The *Nahj-ul-Balaghat* quotes the opinion of Imam Jafar-us-Sadiq to the effect that "God is Omniscient, because Knowledge is His essence; Mighty, because Power is His Essence; Loving, because Love is His Essence . . . not because these are attributes apart from His Essence."

The *Sifatias* (lit. Attributists) who claimed to be the direct representatives of the ancient primitive Muslims (*Salaf*) also held similar views. According to Shahrastani, these followers of the *Salaf* "maintained that certain eternal attributes pertain to God, viz., knowledge, power, life, will, hearing, sight, speech, majesty, magnanimity, bounty, beneficence, glory, and greatness—making no distinction between qualities of essence and attributes of action. They also assert certain descriptive attributes (*Sifat-i-Khabria*); as for example, hands and face, without any other explanation than to say that these attributes enter into the revealed representation of the Deity, and that accordingly, they had given them the name of descriptive attributes." (*The Spirit of Islam*, P. 382). The opinion of the *Sifatias* is not accepted in its entirety.

On the other hand, according to Shahrastani the *Muta'zilas* declare that "Eternity is the distinguishing attribute of the Divine Being; that God is Eternal, for Eternity is the peculiar property of His Essence. They un-

animously deny the existence of eternal (Divine) qualities (*Sifat-ul-qadamia*) as distinct from His being, and maintain that He is Omniscient as to His being; Living as to His being; Almighty as to His being; but not through any knowledge, power, or life existing in Him as eternal attributes; for knowledge, power, and life are part of His Essence; otherwise, if they are to be looked upon as eternal attributes of the Deity (separate from His Essence) it would lend to the affirmation of a multiplicity of eternal entities." (*The Spirit of Islam*, P. 385). Such is the view of the *Muta'zilas*. The followers of Imam 'Ashary and the *Mutakallimin* (schoolmen) belonging to the *Sunni* school of thought hold that there are eight qualities appertaining to the Divine Being, which are the qualities of the Essence. These qualities are called *Sifat-i-haqiqia* or *Sifat-i-thabulia* i.e., the true and positive qualities of the Divine Essence. These qualities are: (1) *Hiyat*—self-existence i.e., subsisting and ever living from the eternity without beginning (*azal*) to the eternity without end (*abad*); (2) *'Ilm*—knowledge and consciousness, i.e., possessing knowledge of what is hidden and what is manifest, and conscious not only of His own existence but of all existences and events of the past, present and future; (3) *Takwin*—the power of initiative i.e., the Divine Essence is not a passive mass of consciousness, but possesses creative energy; (4) *Mashiyat-i-Irada*—the Divine will giving rise to the activity of desires; (5) *Qudrat*—innate power and strength; (6) *Kalam*—power of speech; (7) *Sama'*—clairvoyance. These eight qualities are said to be the qualities of the Essence. There are besides them, other attributes which are regarded as

attributes of action. It appears that there has been some divergence of opinion between the different schools of thought regarding the nature of the Divine attributes. According to one school of philosophers (*Mutakallimin*) the attributes are not of the Essence. According to the *Muta'zilite* school, they are not distinct from the Divine Essence ; and according to the *Asharyan* school, they are neither of the Essence nor distinct from it. Imam 'Ashary describes them by saying *la'ayna wa la ghaira i.e.*, neither of the Essence, nor separate from it. The disputation regarding the nature of the Divine attributes between the *Muta'zilites* and the *Asharyans* throw a flood of light on the subject. The *Mutakallimin* belonging to the *Sunni* school of thought generally agree with Imam 'Ashary. The *Sufi* fraternities as well as the *Sunni Mutakallimin* hold that the eight qualities, as enumerated above, are of the Essence, that other Divine attributes are neither of the Essence, nor distinct from it. The following instances may be cited in illustration of their views : The flower and its scent. The flower is not the scent, nor the scent is the flower ; but they do not exist separately. A thing and its colour. The thing is not the colour, nor the colour is the thing, but one is not distinct from the other. Sugar and its sweetness. The one is not the other, yet they do not exist separately. The Absolute Being is not, according to this conception, a luminous mass of consciousness—an incomprehensible absolute intellectual blank with excess of light—a rigid, frigid, passive Entity without the power of initiative and control, and regardless of human sufferings and entreaties. Such an attributeless and qualityless Being is considered worse than useless. Nobody has a need of such a powerless and helpless Absolute One who cannot do anything for himself, or for anybody else. The Muslim philosophers and *Mohaddisins* as well as *Ahl-i-Tasawuf* have, therefore, discarded

this sort of idea regarding the Absolute One. According to them the Absolute One is not an intellectual void, or a luminous nothing but a mere consciousness. Such an idea of absoluteness seems to be "a finished example of learned error." It is, therefore, maintained that the Divine Essence has certain qualities which are in the Essence itself. These qualities do not in the least affect the absolute nature of the Essence. If the Absolute Entity can be conceived as consisting of consciousness and luminosity, which do not affect its absolute nature, then some more qualities may similarly be attributed as appertaining to the absolute Essence without affecting its nature. Consequently the Supreme Being in the state of absoluteness, is conceived of as the Divine Essence full of splendour and perfection, creative energy and power of control, active will and comprehensive knowledge, inherent power of vision, and audibility.

The Islamic idea of the Absolute Being differs materially from that of the Neo-Platonists and some ancient Greek philosophers on the one hand, and the Absolute of Sankara on the other, according to whom the Supreme Being is a mere intellectual abstraction totally lacking in initiative. But it corresponds to a great extent with Ramanuja's theism with the exceptions of his theory of *Karma*, and *Janma* and *Avatara*, i.e. laws of action, cycle of birth and Incarnation. I quote here one passage from *Indian Philosophy*, which will throw some light on the topic :

"The nirguna Brahman which stares at us with frozen eyes regardless of our selfless devotion and silent suffering is not the God of religious insight. Sankara's method, according to Ramanuja, leads him to void which he tries to conceal by a futile play of concepts. His nirguna Brahman is a blank suggesting to us the famous mare of Orlando which had every perfection except the one small defect of being dead. Such a Brahman cannot be

known by any means of perception, inference or scripture. If the sources of knowledge are all relative, they cannot tell us of something which transcends experience ; if the scriptures are unreal even so is the Brahman of which they relate. . . . The qualities of being (sat), consciousness (chit), and bliss (ananda) give to Brahman a character and personality. . . . God is a perfect personality, since he contains all experience within himself and is dependent on nothing external to him. The differences necessary for personality are contained within himself. The most prominent qualities of God are knowledge, power and love (karuna). Out of his love God has created the world, established laws and helps constantly all who seek to attain perfection. While each quality by itself is different from the others, they all belong to one identity and do not divide its integrity of being. The Lord's connection with them is natural (svabhavika) and eternal (sanatana). These attributes are said to be abstract, as distinct from matter and souls which are also called the attributes of God." (*Indian Philosophy*, P. 683, by Dr. Radhakrishnan, M.A., D. Litt.).

In the above extract we find that Ramanuja's conception of the Supreme Being is almost identical with the Islamic conception of theism, with this difference that according to the Muslim philosophers in general, matter and souls are not the attributes of God, and that according to the *Sufis* in particular, they are the manifestations of the Divine attributes. But the Muslim philosophers differ materially from the views of Sankara on the same grounds as Ramanuja does, and for certain other reasons. The points of difference have been very lucidly explained by Professor Radhakrishnan in the ninth chapter of *Indian Philosophy*. He observes :

"Philosophy has its root in man's practical need. If a system of thought cannot justify fundamental human

instincts and interpret the deeper spirit of religion, it cannot meet with general acceptance. The speculation of philosophers which do not comfort us in our stress and sufferings are mere intellectual diversion and are not serious thinking. The Absolute of Samkara, rigid, motionless, and totally lacking in initiative or influence cannot call forth our worship. Like the Tajmahal, which is unconscious of the admiration it arouses, the Absolute remains indifferent to the fear and love of its worshippers, and for all those who regard the goal of religion as the goal of philosophy—to know God is to know the real—Samkara's view seems to be a finished example of learned error. They feel that it is as unsatisfactory to natural instincts as to trained intelligence. The world is said to be an appearance and God a bloodless Absolute dark with the excess of light. The obvious fact of experience that when weak and erring human beings call from the depths the helping hand of grace is stretched out from the unknown, is ignored. Samkara does not deal justly with the living sense of companionship which the devotees have in their difficult lives. He declares that to save oneself is to lose oneself in the sea of the unknown. Personal values are subordinated to impersonal ones, but the theist protests that truth, beauty, and goodness have no reality as self-existent abstractions. An experience that is not owned by a subject is a contradiction in terms. Truth, beauty and perfection speak to us of primal mind in whose experience they are eternally realised. God himself is the highest reality as well as supreme value. Moreover, the innermost being of God is not solely the realisation of eternal truth or the enjoyment of perfect beauty, but is perfect love which expands itself for others. The value of the finite world to the Spirit of the Universe lies in the spirits to whom he has given the capacity to make themselves in his own image. The spirits themselves possess

a value in the sight of God, and not merely their degrees of intelligence or virtue, abstractly considered, which they happen to realise. It follows that they are not made simply to be broken up and cast aside."

Such has also been the trend of arguments of the Muslim philosophers (*Mutakallimin*).

## VII

I now pass on to another topic. The charming description in *Al-Quran* of the all-pervading presence of the Supreme Being (*'ala kul-i-shayin mohit*), of the nearness of man to His gracious Personality (*agrabiya*) and of the fellowship of a loving invisible companion (*ma'iyat*) has an attraction of its own. Such description creates an impression of a personal God whose help and kindness, support and sympathy, the fervent soul may count upon amidst its trials and tribulations. "Remember Me and I shall remember you" is a very sympathetic response which produces balmy effect on the troubled soul. The conviction of the devotee that he is living in the presence of the Supreme Being who is near at hand and hears his supplications, strengthens his faith and gives a peculiar zest to his devotional communion. "Call Me and I shall hear your call" is the soothing assurance given in the *Quran*. The impression that the Deity whose Union he seeks is his true Darling (*janan-i-haqiqi*) augments the intensity of his desire for the realisation of His fellowship. In soft and inaudible voice the Merciful comforts the earnest seeker by saying "We are nearer to him than his jacular vein". Such voice draws him nearer to the Deity whom he worships in humility and earnestness. When an earnest soul intends drawing near to God, He assures him in the words of a *Hadith* by saying "When a man draws near to Me by one pace, I go nearer to him by ten paces," and points out how to realise Him. "Worship your Lord as if you are

seeing Him, but if you cannot see Him, then think that He is seeing you" (*Hadith*). Such tender solicitude leads the earnest devotee to the path of realisation.

Further, such friendly communion with the Deity and His sympathetic response cannot fail to establish a personal relationship with the Supreme Being. It is, therefore, said that *Allah* is a personal God in Islam. The conception of a personal God has given rise to the idea and practice of rendering personal services to God and working out one's own salvation. Salvation through an intercessor is not at all countenanced. The doctrine of the Original Sin and Atonement is discarded in toto. Every man is held directly responsible and accountable to God for his action. The whole responsibility lies on his shoulder alone. The *Quran* points out that "he who purifies himself, the purification does good to none else, but to himself; he who exerts in the cause of truth, exerts for himself only; he who does good deeds, does so for his own good." Thus neither priesthood nor intercession through an intermediary has any place in Islam. Even the Prophet was directed to say: "Preach it unto those who fear that they shall be assembled before their Lord: they shall have no patron nor intercessor except Him." The *Quran* further says: "We have not appointed thee (*i.e.*, the Prophet) a keeper over them, neither art thou a guardian over them" (*Sura VI*).

## VIII

In this connection it should be pointed out that Islam sets its face squarely against any anthropomorphic conception of the Supreme Being. The *Quran* repeatedly asserts that "there is nothing which can be likened unto Him." He is regarded as formless and colourless. But there are certain passages in *Al-Quran*, which apparently lend some colour to the anthropopathic

description of the Deity. For example, the texts which say :

“Your God is one in person.”

“Wherever you turn your face, there is the face of God.”

“Everlasting is the personality of thy Lord who is exalted and compassionate.”

“Thou exalteth whomsoever Thou desireth, Thou degradeth whomsoever Thou willeth. In Thy hand is goodness.”

“The words of thy Lord are perfect in truth and justice ; there is none who can change them ; He both heareth and knoweth.”

In such passages it is maintained that the description of the Deity is figurative or metaphorical. The reference to the Divine person, face, hand, eye, ear, etc., is for the purpose of easy understanding by metaphors and similes. It only gives an idea of concrete monism. It is explained by saying that the Divine person and face convey the idea of the beauty and omnipresence of the Supreme Being ; Its hand has reference to its power of action ; Its eyes to Its omniscience ; Its ears to Its innate power to clairaudience ; and so forth. Such being the predominant ideas, any fictitious figure of the Deity is not permitted to be set up and worshipped. Islam declares that no figure, form, shape, or likeness of the formless Being is conceivable or possible. Hazrat 'Ali, the fourth *Caliph*, condemned in emphatic language all anthropomorphic and anthropopathic conceptions of the Supreme Being. He declared :

“God is not like any object that the human mind can conceive ; no attributes can be ascribed to Him, which bear the least resemblance to any quality of which human beings have conception from their knowledge of material objects. The perfection of piety consists in knowing God ; the perfection of knowledge is the affirmation of His verity ; the perfection of verity is to acknowledge His unity in all sincerity ; and the perfection of sincerity is to deny all

attributes to the Deity. He who refers an attribute to God believes the attribute to be God, and he who so believes an attribute to be God, regards God as two or part of one. He who asks where God is, assimilates Him with some object. God is the creator, not because He Himself is created ; God is existent, not because He was non-existent ; He is with every object, not from resemblance or nearness ; He is outside of everything, not from separation. He is the Primary Cause (*fa'il*), not in the meaning of motion or action ; He is the Seer, but no sight can see Him. He has no relation to place, time, or measure.”

## IX

The spirit in which the Supreme Being is conceived of is responsible for the diverse devotional moods and mental states for approaching and realising God. He is generally approached :

(1) In the mood and spirit of *'Ubudiat i.e.*, rendering active service to God in the spirit of the master and servant or the creator and his creature. In this mood the spirit of serfdom is the predominant feature of devotion. It corresponds to the idea of the Liege-lord and Serf in Christianity and the *Dasya* mood of the Vaishnavite sect.

(2) In the mood and spirit of *Taslim i.e.*, performing devotion in humility and tranquillity of the mind with the spirit of entire resignation to the will of God, and patiently seeking His grace and pleasure without a murmur in adversity, or elation in prosperity. It resembles the mood of *Santa-bhakti* of the Vaishnavites.

(3) In the mood and spirit of *Yari i.e.*, as a loving friend or True Darling (*janan-i-Haqiqi*). This is the mood in which the *Sufis* try to be in fellowship with God or to draw near to Him through their devotion. It corresponds to the *Sakhya* form of *Bhakti*.

(4) In the mood and spirit of *Ishq* or *Muhabbat i.e.*, approaching God through impersonal love as the Lover





## MAYA

By M. B. C.

A little boy made a paper boat and sailed it in a shallow tin tub. Then he made some little tiny dolls to ride in it. Then he made himself tiny too and got into the boat. He was tired and went to sleep.

His mother came, and just in fun stirred up a storm in the tub and blew on the boat. His companions woke him saying, "Master, we perish."\*

He stood up and said, "Please stop, Mother, they are frightened," and the storm ceased.

By and by he resumed his own size. A little later still he made his doll friends like himself. Then they laughed at their fears in the boat.

In the evening twilight the mother put all of them to bed, and they slept without dreaming.

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## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

By ANANDA

ON THE THRESHOLD

For a long time yet, we have to play the double game. It is not to be understood that even when one has overcome *tamas* and acquired fineness of perception or is unselfish and serviceful, one can give up all worldly quests and devote oneself solely to religious life. Alas, alas, it is too difficult a life to be so easily accessible. A serious practice of religion must in most cases be begun along with worldly life. That is to say, we must not give up external activities all on a sudden. The mind will stubbornly refuse to embrace religion at once and completely. So it is necessary that we gradually wean the mind from its accustomed conditions.

On the threshold of religious life, we have to be very cautious about two points: (1) whether our desire for religion is genuine or only a "false hunger"; and (2) if we shall be able to continue our religious pursuit with undimmed enthusiasm to the last.

The desire for religion can be conveniently called *Vairāgya*. Without *Vairāgya* there can be no religion. What is *Vairāgya*? It is the detachment from worldly things and joys and desire for the spiritual. Not only should our mind not wish for earthly things, it must also conceive an instinctive dislike for them. And there must at the same time be a hankering for God. Of course in the beginning, that hankering may not be quite explicit and the object of that hankering quite definite. But there must be a dissatisfaction and an uneasiness. Existing conditions must prove uncomfortable and distasteful. This is the sign. This nausea may come suddenly or may come imperceptibly. Those who are regular and sincere in the observances of ritualistic religion and daily prayers, will find themselves, some of them, gradually being led to the borders of finer

\* The Bible, *Luke*, 8.24.

regions attended with a higher consciousness and joy. And the mind having glimpsed them from afar will be filled with a nostalgic fervour for those higher states. With them the desire will grow slowly and steadily. But the higher consciousness may also come suddenly.

Here we have to be very careful. The sudden desire for religion may be also adventitious merely, occasioned by a bereavement, disappointment or disease. It may be that a dear one has died. The mind may react violently and may conceive the world to be unreal. It often happens that under such circumstances, people take to religion and sometimes put on the ochre cloth and become mendicants. Not that such steps are absolutely wrong. Sometimes it happens that some emotional shock rends asunder our bondage and does us permanent spiritual good. But more often we only yield to the momentary feeling. That religion and renunciation would only be false. And after some wandering, we shall return home and surrender ourselves to the joys of the flesh with a redoubled vigour. It is then a simple waste of time and energy. We must not, under those extraordinary conditions, take any decisive measures. We must stick to the forms of the old life. That does not mean that we are to crush and starve out the religious fervour that we may then feel. By all means we should feed it. We should certainly become as much religious in thought and practice as possible, but we must not take any extreme step. For religion, cultivated under any circumstances, for any length of time, must prove beneficial. But extreme measures are not good. They will mean, when the reaction sets in, also an extreme revulsion of feeling.

So far about Vairagya due to bereavement. But the Vairagya caused by worldly failure or disease, is still more despicable. You meet with such

people in real life. The best thing they can do is to try their utmost in their natural lines. They must strive more vigorously for wealth and position and not run after God. And if they are diseased, the physician should be their foremost God.

When, therefore, one feels inclined to devote oneself to religion, one must carefully enquire into one's motive. The mind is a great deceiver and it can very cleverly camouflage the most sordid motives with golden tints. We must find out the real conditions after long and careful observation. If we find that our Vairagya is genuine, we may hopefully take to the next steps. But if our enquiry reveals a suspicious state of things, the best course for us would be to continue the old life, till all dross has been eventually eliminated. It is extremely dangerous to build the spiritual life on doubtful foundations. *We shall have to pay very dearly afterwards.* The basis must be very well laid without any weakness anywhere. On that alone the spiritual life may be really built.

When we have found our spiritual hankering to be genuine, our next step should be to judge the strength of that hankering. Much depends on a correct determination of this. For according to the strength of our hankering, the mode of our life will have to be chosen. If it is expected to last through life, the best course for us would be to formally renounce the world. But if we are not sure of such permanency, we must not so renounce. We must continue in the world, tasting its sweets and bitters, till our mind has become sufficiently pure.

One mistake is often made by the young. The young have a comparatively pure mind. Naturally when the first ebullition of spiritual enthusiasm comes, they give up their daily routine work and avidly surrender themselves to it. The students neglect their study. Others, again, their household duties. At first this derelict-

tion does not seem harmful. But in the long run, in most cases, the result is decidedly bad. Students especially should be very careful. So long as the mind is fresh, spiritual emotions seem to be all in all ; and the use and need of intellectual culture seem too much mundane. But when they enter the world, face its stern realities and receive their cruel buffets, they feel extremely weak in the mind and find that they have wasted their student days. Repentance follows. Life then does not seem helpful enough. We have seen many bright student lives being thus wasted. When they feel any hankering for spiritual truths, students should in all cases try to harmonise it with their regular duties. They must never allow their emotions to run riot and upset the even course of their life. Such discipline, though apparently a check to enthusiasm, will in fact strengthen our desire for spirituality and heighten our emotions. May be we shall renounce the world after our student days. Intellectual discipline and knowledge will prove very useful even in the pure life of religion. It at least teaches us rigorous habits without which spiritual life is a mockery. And if perchance we enter the world, the knowledge and efficiency acquired will prove an asset, and there will not be any break between the life of the world and our spiritual life.

One point we must very clearly and deeply impress on our mind: Spiritual life is a very slow uphill work, it is a cruel grinding, and is for eternity. Somehow most of us have the idea, though maybe subconscious, that spirituality is something to be acquired

in a brief space of time and then a long holiday with leisured enjoyment. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Spiritual life is for all eternity, that is to say, there is no such holiday as we contemplate. The same high tone of mind has to be eternally maintained. It can never be relaxed. The same watchfulness, the same caution, and the same rigours. So we have to prepare ourselves as one facing capital punishment,—there will not be any revocation and return. That grim calmness is a *sine qua non*. If we remember this fact, we shall not allow our mind to be content only with the pleasurable action or emotion. We shall feel that the training of mind to regular habits is more urgent in spiritual life than indulgence in superfine emotions. Young people should carefully remember this and guard themselves accordingly.

Naturally it will be found that not all who feel spiritual longings are fit or destined to renounce the world or devote themselves exclusively to religion. Most of them will have to continue the culture of spirituality along with worldly avocations. They will have to play the double game. They will have to so perform their worldly duties that they may not prove antagonistic to their spiritual life and may, on the other hand, prove helpful. Of course this problem and its solution will be different with different sets of people. The problem of the married will be of a different kind to that of the unmarried. The solution also will be different in each case. We shall discuss these points in a future article.

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## THE BAULS AND THEIR CULT OF MAN

BY KSHITIMOHAN SEN

Báül means madcap, from *báyu* (Skt. Váyu) in its sense of nerve-current, and has become the appellation of a set of people who do not conform to

established social usage. Some try to derive the name Báül from *báyu* in its other meaning of air-current, on the supposition that in the cult of the



which the scriptures are written in letters of Life. But few care to read them; they turn a deaf ear to the message of the heart.

Most Indian sects adopt some distinct way of keeping the hairs of head and face as a sign of their sect or order. Therefore, so as to avoid being dragged into any such distinctions, the Báüls allow hair and beard and moustache to grow freely. Thus do we remain simple, they say. The similar practice of the Sikhs in this matter is to be noted. Neither do the Báüls believe that lack of clothing or bareness of body conduce to religious merit. According to them the whole body should be kept decently covered. Hence their long robe, for which if they cannot afford a new piece of cloth, they gather rags and make it of patches. In this they are different from the ascetic *sansyásins*, but resemble rather the Buddhist monks.

The Báüls do not believe in aloofness from, or renunciation of, any person or thing; their central idea is *yoga*, attachment to and communion with the divine and its manifestations, as the means of realisation. We fail to recognise the temple of God in the bodily life of man, they explain, because its lamp is not alight. The true vision must be attained in which this temple will become manifest in each and every human body, whereupon mutual communion and worship will spontaneously arise. Truth cannot be communicated to those on whom you look down. You must be able to see the divine light that shines within them, for it is your own lack of vision that makes all seem dark.

Kabir says the same thing:

In every abode the light doth shine: it is you who are blind that cannot see. When by dint of looking and looking you at length can discern it, the veils of this world will be torn asunder (II—33). It is because the devotee is not in communion that he says the goal is far away (II—34).

Many such similarities are to be observed between the saying of the Báüls and those of the Upper Indian devotees

of the Middle Ages, but unlike the case of the followers of the latter, the Báüls did not become crystallised into any particular order or religious organisation. So, in the Báüls of Bengal, there is to be found a freedom and independence of mind and spirit that resists all attempt at definition. Their songs have given expression to the very heart of rural Bengal. With no claims to erudition or prestige of tradition, the spiritual heights attained by these social outcasts are yet rare even in the highest of religious orders. Their songs are unique in courage and felicity of expression. But under modern conditions, they are becoming extinct or at best holding on to external features bereft of their original speciality. It would be a great pity if no record of their achievements should be kept before their culture is lost to the world.

Though the Báüls count amongst their following a variety of sects and castes, both Hindu and Moslem, chiefly coming from the lower social ranks, they refuse to give any other account of themselves to the questioner than that they are Báüls. They acknowledge none of the social or religious formalities, but delight in the ever-changing play of life, which cannot be expressed in mere words, but of which something may be captured in song, through the ineffable medium of rhythm and tune.

Their songs are passed on from Master to disciple, the latter when competent adding others of his own, but, as already mentioned, they are never recorded in book form. Their replies to questions are usually given by singing appropriate selections from these songs. If asked the reason why, they say: "We are like birds. We do not walk on our legs, but fly with our wings."

There was a Brahmin of Bikrampur, known as Chhaku Thákur, who was the disciple of a Báül of the Namasudra caste (accounted one of the lowest) and hence had lost his place in his own community. When admonished to be





The Vaishnavas, the wandering sects of whom have a superficial resemblance to the Báüls, have not been able to attain to their catholicity of spirit, their power of making every religion their own, and therefore despise them as lacking in proper restraint and self-respect. The latter, in turn, look down on the former as people to be pitied. "Had these Vaishnavas the understanding, they would have known better," say the Báüls. "Chandidás, Vidyapati and others were good Vaishnava poets simply because they had glimpses of *Sahaj* ideas,—but are their followers competent to understand their message? They took the idea of Rádhá from us, but have dragged her down to the level of their low desires. Devoid of the realisation of the simple, their minds, obsessed with the complexities of their literature, fail to do justice to the wealth they had inherited. At best they make an attempt at simplicity and naturalness in their songs and festivals, but in their lives, their temples, their religious observances, they are unable to get free of the shackles of their scriptures. They have made a jumble of love and desire, the workings of the spirit and the inclinations of the senses. They have not the courage to realise that Jagannáth, the Lord of the World, is everywhere, and that His class-destroying festival is for ever being held. So they cannot live up to the height of the words they use."

Having no faith in scriptures, the followers of the *Sahaj* cult believe only in living religious experiences. Truth, according to them, has two aspects, inert and living. Confined to itself truth has no value for man. It becomes priceless when embodied in a living personality. The conversion of the inert into living truth by the devotee, they compare to the conversion into milk by the cow of its fodder, or the conversion by the tree of dead matter into fruit. He who has this power of making truth living, is the *Guru* or Master. Such *Gurus*

they hold in special reverence, for the eternal and all-pervading truth can only be brought to man's door by passing through his life.

The *Guru* is the past, the disciple the future, and the initiation the present, according to the Báüls. Past, present and future are thus synthesised in the communion of Master and disciple. The Master as well as the disciple have likewise two aspects. The one is spiritual (*chinmaya*), the other earthly or worldly (*mrinmaya*). The true initiation takes place when their spiritual aspects come into mutual communion. The mere physical proximity of their worldly aspects produces no result. The woman devotee, Khema, says:

If for years and years you hold on to the earthy part (of your *Guru*) leaving out the spirit, you will gain neither faith, nor reverence, nor wisdom.

In the Indian religious cults only one *Guru* is ordinarily presupposed. The Tantrics acknowledge two, who give respectively intellectual and spiritual initiation. But in the *Sahaj* view such limitation of the number of *Gurus* results in narrowness of realisation. Dádu indicates this in a verse of salutation:

Dádu first salutes the colourless  
 Supreme Person,  
 Next, as the means of understanding Him,  
 he salutes his *Guru* as divine.  
 And then he transcends the bounds of  
 salutation, by offering reverence to  
 all devotees.

In the *Chaitanya Charitámrita* the salutations are to *gurus* in the plural. The author, Krishnadas, makes his initial obeisance to his six *gurus*. This *Sahaj* idea finds expression in the Tantras:

As the bee in quest of honey flits from  
 flower to flower,  
 So do thou gather wisdom by going  
 from *guru* to *guru*.

The Báül puts it thus:  
 By what path comest thou, O *Guru*,  
 the mystery I cannot solve,  
 So it passeth my understanding where  
 to leave my obeisance.



According to the Báüls, initiation is a life-long process, to be gained little by little, from all kinds of *gurus*. On the occasion of one of their festivals a friend of mine happened to ask a Báül about his *guru*, to which he received this characteristic reply :

Wouldst thou make obeisance to thy *guru*, my heart?

He is there at every step, on each side of thy path,—for numberless are thy *gurus*.

To which of them, then, wouldst thou make obeisance, my heart?

The welcome offered to thee is thy *guru*, the agony inflicted on thee is thy *guru*,

Every wrench at thy heart-strings is thy *guru*, that maketh the tears to flow.

My baffled friend tried again by asking the same Báül from whom he first received initiation. Then came the song :

The day I was born I received my first initiation,

With one-syllabled mantram I begged my mother's grace.

The tears of a mother, the milk of a mother, my life from my mother, And withal my mother's training I received.

Not a breath have I drawn but I gained initiation,—that's my firm conviction.

The conclusion to which they come is that the *guru* is within.

The *guru* who is the fount of wisdom resides in thine own home.

A great mistake hast thou made by giving heed to the teachings of all the world.

And again :

The voice from the depths tells thee that the *guru* is in the lotus of the heart.

O distraught! Cease from thy turmoil,—there the darkness-killing light doth shine.

So also Kabir :

The Supreme Self, the *Guru*, abideth near to thee

Awake, awake, O my heart. (II, 20).

Not that the Báüls do not admit any outward *guru*, but he is a danger to be feared, they feel, as well as a help to be sought ; for, if he imposes himself

on his disciple, he kills the latter's own spirit,—a murder worse than the killing of the body.

The lamp gives light from afar, still further away the sun.

The *guru* gives light without heat who sits aloof in the truth.

So, say the Báüls, the *guru* should minister to his disciple from his distance :

The bird fosters its young under its wing, the fish keeps its fry at its side,

But the turtle hatches its eggs in the sand from afar,—this the wise *Guru* well knows.

The Báüls also call the *guru*, *sûnya* (lit. nothing, emptiness) not implying the absence of substance, but the spaciousness of freedom. The luminous expanse of the sky above means more to the sprouting seed than the material of the ground below. That *Sûnya* is not used in its negative meaning is clearly evident by its being also applied by them to the Supreme Being.

Dádu has the same conception :

What name can be given to Him who is Nothing?

Whatever name we use is less than the Truth.

And again :

In *Sunya* doth Brahm, the formless, the colourless, abide.

And Dádu has beheld, bewildered, the dazzling light that is there.

Sundardás has used the term *Sûnya* in the sense of the Supreme Peace in which the devotee loses himself.

The Báüls say that emptiness of time and space is required for a playground. That is why God has preserved an emptiness in the heart of man, for the sake of His own play of Love. Therefore the *guru* who is *sûnya* "fosters but pesters not." So far for the mystic theory. In practice, as we have seen, the Báüls pay high reverence to their *gurus*.

Our wise and learned ones were content with finding in Brahma the *tat* (lit. that,—the ultimate substance). The *Báüls*, not being Pandits, do not

profess to understand all this to-do about *thatness*, they want a Person. So their God is the Man of the Heart (*manêr mânush*) sometimes simply the Man (*purush*). This Man of the Heart is ever and anon lost in the turmoil of things. Whilst He is revealed within, no worldly pleasures can give satisfaction. Their sole anxiety is the finding of this Man. The Báül sings :

Ah, where am I to find him, the Man of my Heart

Alas, since I lost Him, I wander in search of Him, thro' lands near and far.

The agony of separation from Him cannot be mitigated for them by learning or philosophy :

Oh these words and words, my mind would none of them,

The Supreme Man it must and shall discover!

So long as Him I do not see, these mists slake not my thirst.

\*

Mad am I, for lack of that Man I madly run about,

For his sake the world I've left; for Bishá naught else will serve.

This Bishá was a *bhuiñ-máli* by caste, disciple of Balá, the *Kaivarta*.

This cult of the Man is only to be found in the Vedas hidden away in the Purusha-sukta (A.V.19.6). It is more freely expressed by the Upper Indian devotees of the Middle Ages. It is all in all with the Báüls. The God whom these illiterate outcasts seek so simply and naturally in their lives, is obscured by the accredited Religious Leaders in philosophical systems and terminology, in priestcraft and ceremonial, in institutions and temples. Hence their lament :

Thy path, O Lord, is hidden by mosque and temple.

Thy call I hear, but priest and *guru* stop the way.

What gives peace to my heart, sets but the world ablaze,

The cult of the One dies in the conflict of the many,—

Its door closed by the locks of Koran, Puran and rosary.

Even the way of renunciation is full of tribulation, wherefore weeps Madan in despair.

Kabir has the following observations on this point :

You refuse the pure water that is before you,

Waiting to drink until you have dug a reservoir!

\*

The Smriti, daughter of the Vedas, has come to bind you in unbreakable shackles.

\*

The hedge that you put round the fields is itself exhausting their soil.

\*

Those who know all the rest have their heaven and hell,

Those who know God have neither.

Dádu thus extols the followers of the simple way :

They trouble not about Life and Death, they hide not in the forest,

They shirk not the touch of water or wind, with Him they ever abide.

Neither confined to the home, nor wandering abroad,

They torture not the body, but are attuned to the wise *guru's* mind.

Not satisfied with the *avatárs* (incarnations of God) mentioned in the scriptures, the Báül sings :

As we look on every creature, we find each to be His *avatar*.

What can you teach us of His ways?— in ever-new play He wondrously revels.

And Kabir also tells us :

All see the Eternal One, but only the devotee, in his solitude, recognises Him.

A friend of mine was once much impressed by the reply of a Báül who was asked why his robe was not tinted with ascetic ochre :

Can the colour show outside, unless the inside is first tintured?

Can the fruit attain ripe sweetness by the painting of its skin?

This aversion of the Báül from outward marks of distinction is also shared by the Upper Indian devotees, as we have elsewhere noticed.

(To be continued)

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं तथा ज्ञाता त्रितयं नास्ति वास्तवम् ।

अज्ञानाद्वाति यत्रेदं सोऽहमस्मि निरञ्जनः ॥ १५ ॥

ज्ञानं Knowledge ज्ञेयं knowable तथा as well as ज्ञाता knower त्रितयं triad वास्तवम् in reality न not अस्ति is यत्र where इदं this ( त्रितयं triad ) अज्ञानात् through ignorance वाति appears निरञ्जनः stainless सः that अहं I अस्मि am.

15. Knowledge,<sup>1</sup> knower and knowable—these three do not in reality exist. I am that stainless<sup>2</sup> (Self) in which this triad appears through ignorance.

[1 *Knowledge etc.*—The universe from the epistemological standpoint consists of these three elements—the knower, the object of knowledge and the act of knowledge. We consider ourselves through *maya* or ignorance as the first of these three,—the knower. In reality we are above all these three. We are not a factor of this triad, but That itself on which this triad rests,—the Brahman. Supreme realisation consists in breaking the tangle of this triad and going beyond it.

2 *Stainless*—Because all stain—bondage and limitation—arises out of relative knowledge and I am really beyond all relative knowledge.]

द्वैतमूलमहो दुःखं नान्यत्तस्यास्ति भेषजम् ।

दृश्यमेतन्मृषा सर्वं एकोऽहं चिद्रसोऽमलः ॥ १६ ॥

अहो Oh दुःखं misery द्वैतमूलं having duality as root ( अस्ति is ) अहं I एकः one चित् intelligence रसः bliss अमलः pure ( अस्मि am ) एतत् this सर्वं all दृश्यं visible object मृषा unreal ( भवति is इति बोधात् except this knowledge ) तस्य of that ( दुःखस्य of misery ) अन्यत् other भेषजं remedy न not अस्ति is.

16. Oh, duality<sup>1</sup> is the root of misery. There is no other remedy for it except the realisation that all objects of experience are false and that I am one and pure, intelligence and bliss.

[1 *Duality etc.*—All miseries of men can be classified under three heads, viz., those that pertain to body and mind, those that are caused by animate and inanimate objects, and those that are occasioned by supernatural powers.

These causes of misery exist only so long as I consider that I am limited and there are other existences beside me. The moment I feel myself as the One, these vanish. Hence the consciousness of duality has been called the root of all misery. In fact the so-called objective existences are unreal. Only so long as I consider myself the knower, the object of knowledge exists. But when I realise myself as the Absolute, I am no longer the knower and there is no more any knowable.]

बोधमात्रोऽहमज्ञानादुपाधिः कल्पितो मया ।

एवं विमृशतो नित्यं निर्विकल्पे स्थितिर्मम ॥ १७ ॥

अहं I बोधमात्रः knowledge itself ( अस्मि am ) मया by me उपाधिः limitation अज्ञानात् from ignorance कल्पितः imagined एवं in this way नित्यं constantly विमृशतः reflecting मम my निर्विकल्पे in the undifferentiated स्थितिः abiding ( प्रजाता has been ).

17. I am pure intelligence. Through ignorance I have imposed limitation<sup>1</sup> (upon myself). Constantly reflecting in this way, I am abiding in the Absolute.<sup>2</sup>

[1 *Limitation*—viz., egoism, mind, body, etc.

2 *Absolute*—where duality vanishes and the Self shines in its pristine glory.]

न मे बन्धोऽस्ति मोक्षो वा भ्रान्तिः शान्ता निराश्रया ।

अहो मयि स्थितं विश्वं वस्तुतो न मयि स्थितम् ॥ १८ ॥

मे My बन्धः bondage न not अस्ति is मोक्षः liberation वा or ( न not अस्ति is ) भ्रान्तिः illusion निराश्रया without support ( सति being ) शान्ता has ceased अहो O मयि in me स्थितं existing विश्वं universe वस्तुतः in reality मयि in me न not स्थितम् existing.

18. I have neither<sup>1</sup> bondage nor freedom. The illusion<sup>2</sup> having lost its support has ceased. Oh, the universe,<sup>3</sup> though existing in me, does not in reality so exist.

[1 *Neither etc.*—The Atman is eternally free. It is never *really* bound, it only *appears* to be so.

2 *Illusion etc.*—We think ourselves bound and seek liberation. This is only an illusion which has its basis in the ignorance of our true nature. When by constantly reflecting on the pure nature of the Self this ignorance is destroyed, the illusion loses its support and vanishes.

3 *Universe etc.*—When from the relative standpoint the universe is considered to exist, it has its basis in *me* who am Brahman itself. But from the absolute standpoint, there is no universe. I alone am.]

सशरीरमिदं विश्वं न किञ्चिदिति निश्चितम् ।

शुद्धचिन्मात्र आत्मा च तत्कस्मिन् कल्पनाधुना ॥ १९ ॥

इदं This सशरीरं with the body विश्वं universe न not किञ्चित् anything आत्मा Atman शुद्धचिन्मात्रः pure intelligence alone च and ( भवति is ) इति this ( मया by me ) निश्चितं known for certain तत् so अधुना now कस्मिन् on which कल्पना superimposition ( स्यात् can be).

19. I have known for certain that the body and the universe are nothing and that the Atman is only pure intelligence. So on which now<sup>1</sup> can superimposition<sup>2</sup> be possible?

[1 *Now*—When ignorance has been destroyed.

2 *Superimposition*—i.e., of the universe and the body.]

शरीरं स्वर्गनरकौ बन्धमोक्षौ भयं तथा ।

कल्पनामात्रमेवेतत् किं मे कार्यं चिदात्मनः ॥ २० ॥

शरीरं Body स्वर्गनरकौ heaven and hell बन्धमोक्षौ bondage and freedom तथा as also भयं fear एतत् this ( सर्वं all ) कल्पनामात्रं mere imagination एव surely ( भवति is ) चिदात्मनः whose nature is intelligence मम my ( एतेन सर्वैक with all these ) किं what कार्यम् to be done.

20. Body, heaven and hell, bondage and freedom, as also fear, all these are mere imagination. What have I to do with all these—I whose nature is *Chit*?

[The idea is: So long as we consider body, heaven, hell, etc. to be real, we are impelled to act in relations to them. But the nature of the Self is absolute knowledge; and only within relative knowledge the ideas of heaven, hell, etc. are possible. Therefore these have no reality to one who has attained Self-knowledge; and such an one has nothing to do by them.]

अहो जनसमूहेऽपि न द्वैतं पश्यतो मम ।

अरण्यमिव संवृत्तं क्व रतिं करवाण्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

अहो O द्वैतं duality न not पश्यतः seeing मम my जनसमूहे in the multitude of human beings अपि even अरण्यं wilderness इव as if संवृत्तं become अहं I क्व where रतिं attachment करवाणि should do.

21. O, I do not find any duality. Even the multitude of human beings, therefore, has become like a wilderness.<sup>1</sup> What<sup>2</sup> should I attach myself to?

[1 *Wilderness*—In the wilderness we feel absolutely alone. The consciousness of aloneness comes to one who has reached the Advaita state. Though apparently there may be a crowd of men, *really* he is conscious only of the One.

2 *What etc.*—Janaka has now nothing to do not only with heaven, hell, etc. but also with this world, society, etc.]

नाहं देहो न मे देहो जीवो नाहमहं हि चित् ।

अयमेव हि मे बन्ध आसीत् या जीविते स्पृहा ॥ २२ ॥

अहं I देहः body न not मे my देहः body न not अहं I जीवः finite self न not अहं I हि surely चित् intelligence जीविते to life या that स्पृहा desire ( आसीत् was ) अयं this एव alone हि surely मे my बन्धः bondage आसीत् was.

22. Neither am I this body, nor is this body mine. I am not *Jiva*,<sup>1</sup> I am *Chit*. This indeed was my bondage<sup>2</sup> that I had thirst for life.

[1 *Jiva*—refers to finite self. The Self identifying itself with egoism etc. is designated as *Jiva*.

2 *Bondage etc.*—The Self is *Chit* and therefore beyond birth and death. Hence to desire to live is to deny our real nature. This ignorance is bondage.]

अहो भुवनकल्लोलैर्विचित्रैर्द्राक् समुत्थितम् ।

मय्यनन्तमहाम्भोधौ चित्तवाते समुद्यते ॥ २३ ॥

अहो O अनन्तमहाम्भोधौ in the limitless ocean मयि in me चित्तवाते the wind of the mind समुद्यते rising ( सति being ) विचित्रैः diverse भुवनकल्लोलैः waves of worlds द्राक् immediately समुत्थितम् are produced.

23. Oh, in me, the limitless ocean, diverse waves of worlds are produced forthwith on the rising of the wind of the mind.

[The Self has been likened to a limitless ocean where waves are produced when there is wind. There is no creation in the infinite Self. It is only when through ignorance egoism etc. come into existence that the manifold universe seems to present itself.

The material of all worlds is the Self itself, just as the waters that make the waves are the ocean itself. The wind creates forms; similarly it is mind that gives form to the formless *Chit*.]

मय्यनन्तमहाम्भोधौ चित्तवाते प्रशाम्यति ।

अभाग्याज्जीववणिजो जगत्पोतो विनश्वरः ॥ २४ ॥

अनन्तमहाम्भोधौ In the limitless ocean मयि in me चित्तवाते the wind of the mind प्रशाम्यति ceasing जीववणिजः of the embodied self, the trader जगत्पोतः the ark of the universe अभाग्यात् through misfortune विनश्वरः apt to be destroyed ( भवति becomes ).

24. With the calming of the wind of the mind in the infinite ocean of myself, the ark of the universe of Jiva<sup>1</sup> the trader, unfortunately meets<sup>2</sup> destruction.

[1 *Jiva etc.*—Jiva is a trader; his *karmas* are his commerce; and good and bad fruits are his profit and loss. The world is his merchantman in which he carries on his trade.

2 *Meets destruction*—vanishes. The universe and the Jiva manifest themselves with the manifestation of the mind. With the destruction of the latter, the former are also destroyed.]

मय्यनन्तमहाम्भोधावाश्चर्यं जीववीचयः ।

उद्यन्ति घ्नन्ति खेलन्ति प्रविशन्ति स्वभावतः ॥ २५ ॥

आश्चर्यं Wonderful अनन्तमहाम्भोधी in the limitless ocean मयि in me जीववीचयः the waves of individual selves स्वभावतः according to their nature उद्यन्ति rise घ्नन्ति strike खेलन्ति play प्रविशन्ति enter ( च and ).

25. How wonderful! In me, the shoreless ocean, the waves of individual selves rise, strike (each other), play (for a time) and disappear,<sup>1</sup> each according<sup>2</sup> to its nature.

[1 *Disappear*—When ignorance is destroyed and *Karma* is worked out.

2 *According etc.*—according to the state of the ignorance and *karmas* of the Jivas.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

### In This Number.

This month's instalment of *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* sounds a warning against the modern tendency to fuse God and the world. The core of all religions is the longing to realise That by attaining which man wants nothing else. Wherever there is a desire, conscious or unconscious, to hold the world in a line with God, we may be sure that there is hidden materialism. Only when the mind hankers after God alone, in complete forgetfulness of the world, does the world appear as divine. The moment you pay ever so slight an attention to the world, you lose God. This paradox is a fundamental of all religions; but the modern mind scarcely heeds it. A few passages of the letter have been already published. But we have retained them in order to present our readers with the complete letter (as far as permissible). . . . *Hindus and Christians* is a rather imperfect report of a lecture delivered by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA at

Detroit (U. S. A.) on the 21st February, 1894. This is published in *Prabuddha Bharata* for the first time and is not included in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* except for a few sentences in the middle. . . . *An Open Letter to Hindu Women* was written by SISTER NIVEDITA towards the end of 1902, a few months after the passing of Swami Vivekananda. Her appeal to Indian women has been the same all through her life. . . . Our article, *Will the Twain Meet?* is an attempt at discussing a generally neglected aspect of the relation of science and religion. Enough if it stimulates thought. It is our belief that if the modern spirit is to be led naturally to the spiritual vision, religion must meet science in some such way as we have described. . . . *Notes of Conversations with Swami Turiyananda* ends with this issue. The present instalment will perhaps be found most interesting by our readers, replete as it is with profound spiritual observations and interest-

ing reminiscences of the Swami's early life. We hope to begin publishing another disciple's Diary from the next issue. In that the disciple has recorded interesting conversations with many direct disciples and followers of Sri Ramakrishna, which, we are sure, will not prove less attractive than any that has been published before. . . .

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA who contributes *The Promotion of World-Peace* to this issue, is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. The Swami presented a short paper on the same subject before the Parliament of Religions organised by the Brahma Samaj at Calcutta towards the end of January last. The Swami suggests the preaching of Vedanta as a remedy for world-dissensions. But only individuals will really benefit, he thinks, the world itself remaining ever the same dog's curly tail. . . . This issue concludes WAHED HOSAIN'S *The Islamic Conception of Godhead*. We have no doubt that our non-Islamic readers have read the essay with great profit and interest. We are, however, constrained to remark that the writer has not succeeded in understanding the spirit of Advaita Vedanta. Truth is truth, however unpalatable it may be ; and uncompromising reason, all fair thinkers will admit, cannot stop short of the Absolute. It is scarcely serious criticism to say that the Absolute is irresponsive to worship and that It does not extend the helping hand of grace to weak and erring human beings. For, there are different kinds of worship and there are well-recognised modes of Advaitic worship also, and Advaita Vedanta teaches man to find succour in other ways than through the grace of God,—it teaches him to stand on his own legs and call forth the infinite power and joy lying hidden within himself. All the advantages that accrue to the devotees through dualistic worship are secured also by monists (and they secure something more),—only their stand-points, methods and explanations are different. . . . *Maya* by M. B. C. is a

little sparkling allegory. India's wisdom has reflected on a Biblical episode to reveal a deeper meaning in its heart. The writer is a Western Christian. . . . In the present instalment of *Practice of Religion*, ANANDA sounds a warning against self-deception in religion and mentions several ways in which deception may come. . . . We express our indebtedness to *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly for The Bauls and their Cult of Man* by KSHITIMOHAN SEN. Mr. Sen is a professor at the Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan and is the greatest authority on the subject he has written on. In this article, our non-Bengali, especially Western, readers will meet with an indigenous creed of Bengal, which, though circumscribed chiefly within the so-called lower and unlettered classes, professes yet some of the highest truths of spiritual life. This will give one an inkling of what deep spirituality pervades all classes of Hindu society. This spiritual permeation indeed is the strength and hope of India. . . . *Ashtavakra Samhita* by SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA continues as inspiring as ever. A perusal of the verses in the present issue will show how the Advaitist looks at life and reality and defies all weakness and helplessness through the realisation of the Absolute as his own self. A more rational, strengthening and solace-giving system of thought the world has not produced.

### India's Opportunity

Our dear Miss Katherine Mayo has brought out another book on India, this time in the form of stories, depicting the miserable plight of the Hindu widows and such other detectable things. We remember to have read one of her stories, which she contributed to the *Cosmopolitan* of New York and also, we think, to a popular English magazine. The story was extremely pathetic. It narrated the terrible sufferings of the Bengali widow at the hands of cruel males ; and possibly it rent the soft hearts and drew bucketfuls of tears from the eyes of our

Western sisters and brothers. We fear that as a result of the perusal of these pathetic stories, there have been some cases of heart-failure among the readers. Only *Reuter* with its convenient carelessness has failed to let us know of them. We were told that when *Mother India* was published in England, some of the greatest personages of that island lost their sleep and peace of mind and were filled with righteous indignation, so terribly affected were they by its revelations. But this time we are afraid nothing less than heart-failure could do. What is civilisation? It is unselfishness, altruism. It is thinking of others instead of oneself. So the Western nations are always thinking of the unhappy races of the East. Their responsibilities regarding them are already too heavy. Why is Miss Mayo so cruel as to add to them?

For ourselves, we look upon Miss Mayo as a heaven-sent angel. Seriously speaking, she has done great good to India. In these days, foreign propaganda is a necessary duty of all nations, especially of those which are politically and economically subject. India has not the resources to carry on such wide propaganda as the circulation of *Mother India* has been. What has been the result of Miss Mayo's propaganda? Wherever her book has gone,—and it has gone almost everywhere in Europe and America,—people have been compelled to think about India. No doubt this book spread many mischievous stories. But they were so palpably grotesque that intelligent readers everywhere felt that things were not what they seemed,—there was another side of the picture. It is reported that when Miss Mayo went to the Vassar College (one of the premier colleges for women in America) to speak on India, she only succeeded in evoking strong protests against herself from the student-audience. The girl-students in their weekly organ severely castigated the college authorities for inviting such crude persons to speak before them.

Besides, India's greatness has been vaguely known more or less in every country. *Mother India* indirectly made them know it more definitely and in details. There has been earnest enquiries about India from many countries. And as a result, good books about India have since been written. India also has not slept. Several able answers have been given. Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji's little book, *A Son of Mother India Answers*, has done very good propaganda in America. It ran into many editions; and as Mr. Mukerji enjoys considerable reputation as a writer and speaker in America, his book created a good impression wherever it reached. But the best reply has been undoubtedly *Unhappy India* by the lion-hearted Lajpat Rai whose passing at this juncture of our history we still mourn. *Unhappy India* is indeed a crushing reply. Our brothers and sisters of the other side, after having read this book, now talk a little more carefully about India and have given up their erstwhile self-righteous attitude. In fact, it may be quite correctly said that India has triumphed gloriously in this contest. Now even worse calumnies against her will not hold water. It may be that the unthinking masses have been and will be prejudiced against India. What does it matter what fools think? India surely does not wait on the pleasure of the ignorant masses of any country for her salvation. The opinions of the thinking men and women she surely values, and these she has decidedly won in her favour.

It has been suggested that the Government of India should proscribe Miss Mayo's new book. Though no doubt, if this is done, it will show the Government's respect for India's feelings, yet we do not think that it is either necessary or desirable. Government has lately forbidden the entrance of R. J. Minney's *Shiva, or the Future of India* into India. We do not know if it is in consideration of India's feelings. In any case, it is our opinion that we



should fully know what others think of us. To know is to be warned. We are not so hypocritical as to think that we are perfect. We Hindus have been politically subject for the last one thousand years, and it is well-known that political subjection crushes all manly and noble qualities. It is a miracle that we are yet so great and so noble. For, we say emphatically that in point of greatness and nobility we can stand comparison with the greatest nations on earth. We are undoubtedly the most moral and most spiritual nation in the world. But a thousand year's slavery cannot but leave its effect on us. In many things we are broken. We are poor and dispirited, and we suffer from all evils that poverty and despair engender. These evils were not so evident during the Muhammadan rule as they are now. For, in a sense, the Muhammadan rule was not foreign rule to the Hindus. But since then things have changed considerably. Our social and economic systems have broken down. That is why our outside looks so gloomy and lifeless. We lack health and activity. We are insanitary. Our people cannot work with proper energy. We are slow to eradicate evils and adjust ourselves to changed circumstances. All thinking minds will agree that these are adventitious faults and not innate in the Hindu nature, and that Hindus have, on the other hand, shown remarkable power and greatness of spirit and achievement. Yet, we admit that whatever the reasons, we have our faults, though they are neither greater than nor different from those of other nations. And we must remedy them. Our foreign critics help us in this. They accelerate our progress. At home the revival is quickened. There are already signs of this quickening as a result of Miss Mayo's insult. And India's enemies may thank themselves that they have overdone it.

And abroad? We have said how interest in India has grown. We Hindus have an urgent duty to perform in this

respect. The whole world, especially the West, requires to be flooded with India's ideas and ideals and the story of India's achievements. This is the opportunity. People are ready to listen. We must go out—the best of us—and speak with truth and understanding. We must publish books, well-written and authoritative. And we must show lives in which the ideals have become at least partially real. This is urgent. India requires all-round activity. Our struggle should be both at home and abroad. And of our foreign work, the spreading of the knowledge of India's ideals and attainments is surely the most urgent.

### A Sad Example

We request our readers to read in connection with our article this month the following extract from Prof. S. Radhakrishnan's latest book, *Kalki or the Future of Civilization*. In the passage quoted, the learned Professor dwells mainly on the conditions of family life as they prevail in the West to-day. We make no apology for the length of this quotation. The Professor is a thinker of international reputation. And he is not only deeply versed in Western and Indian philosophy, but has also great insight into the thoughts and events of the present day. It hardly needs to be added that his utterances are always sober and results of calm thinking.

“A number of factors, such as the disorganization brought about by the last war, economic conditions favouring late marriages, the passion for self-expression, weakened parental control, inadequate sex-education, Freudian psychology, and the knowledge of the methods of birth-control which saves us from the fear of natural consequences have brought about a laxity in standards. Women are rightly refusing to be bound by a code different from that which applies to men. The old ideals of a fundamental distinction between masculine and feminine natures or

male or female minds are given up. The ideal of virginity which the men persuaded the women to accept has largely lost its hold. Women as much as men, we are told, are wayward creatures full of roving passions who prefer romance to routine. They are insisting with great force and much success on being not our superiors or inferiors but our equals in constancy as well as in inconstancy. Sexual license is an old habit, as old as the human race, but we justify it by giving it a new name, self-expression. Looseness is commended in good fiction and accepted in high society. . . . Since social rules happen to be favourable to men and unfavourable to women, most of the latter do not want to be bound by them. However lax, partial, and therefore unjust, they may be, they are difficult and dangerous to assail. Economic independence with freedom from the ties of marriage and the responsibilities of motherhood is the ambition of many a young woman of the growing "smart set". Divorces are increasing in numbers and children are pushed back and forth between the parents whose only communications with each other are through their solicitors.

"Four different attitudes reveal themselves in this connection. The fundamentalists reassert conventional views and declare solemnly that if marriage without love is tragic, love without marriage is hell on earth. Unhallowed union even when redeemed by love is a crime, while any kind of marriage, even when it is utterly devoid of love, is a virtue.

"The social idealists tell us that a fixed code for a changing world is an impossibility. It is no use dwelling too long on the heights of idealism. If we descend to the plane of the practical, we shall see the contrast between high-sounding principles and laxity of action. Our conventional views do not give large numbers of women a satisfying sexlife. In a country like Great Britain, for example, we have two million more

women than men. The decreasing faith in religious life is reducing the chances of religious Orders absorbing the surplus of women. If, in these conditions, we insist on the ideal of monogamy, we are condemning large numbers of women to a life of celibacy. But compulsory celibacy is a contradiction. . . . While polygamy is illegal, its practice is real. By fostering vulgarity, deceit, and disease, practical polygamy degrades all concerned. Besides, it is senseless to make young people promise that they will cling to each other till death parts them. Love is safe only in the absence of a contract of perpetual obligation. "Trial marriages" seem to be the only solution of the problems of social unrest.

"The sceptics are sure that we cannot revert to the past, but the present makes their hearts sink. When they see how Divorce Courts are continually dissolving families into their units, setting them free to enter into new combinations, while children are drafted hither and thither into new homes where parental authority and wholesome example are lacking, they hold up their hands in despair. They do not know how they can help the situation, and so surrender themselves to the inevitable. They are drifting and not advancing, waiting for something to turn up.

"The bolder spirits declare that life is the end of life. The timid who are afraid to live are to be pitied, for they miss the excitement and the joy of life. They are content to shuffle through life without ever facing it with open eyes. The heroic "sin" with rare delight. Passion is its own excuse for being. Innocent joys of the body are not pollutions of the soul. There is nothing wrong in seeking physical understanding with those with whom we have intellectual affinities and spiritual kinship. Men may hold some things right and some things wrong, but nature holds all things fair. Adopting an attitude of naturalistic atheism, they

contend that the mechanical forces which have momentarily met together so as to form an agreeable human frame may some day separate themselves with the same indifference with which they came together, and while yet the chance is open, it is best to grasp it. If we want to live completely, beautifully, adventurously, we must taste deeply of the cup of life before death snatches it away. With the members of this class, it is no more a sign of good manners to veil one's appetites. There is no need for repression and concealment. Life is an adventure. Exercise of energy is the only good. Those who uphold conventional morality suffer from a low blood-count and are unable to understand why other normal people yield to stimuli to which their nature does not

respond. These advocates of rampant individualism are impatient of any curb on their own desires and resentful of any claim that will interfere with the free course of their life. They dismiss moral restraint as antiquated humbug and piety as mere superstition. Adultery is only the outward sign of inner freedom. Established institutions happen to be the most powerful enemies of life and so they must be turned down before we can build a better social order."

Readers will note that the mentality described as underlying the last three attitudes is essentially naturalistic and unmoral. We consider that the growth, or rather the imperfect growth, of science is mainly responsible for this mentality.

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## REVIEW

RAMANUJA'S IDEA OF THE FINITE SELF. By P. N. Srinivasachari, M.A. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 6, Old Court House Street, Calcutta. XII+125 pp. Price Rs. 3.

The book under review puts in a clear and easy style the fundamental basis of Ramanuja's system of thought—the doctrine of prakâra. The author develops the meaning of prakâra as applied to the finite self from the logical, ethical and religious viewpoints. "Thought is impelled by the love of unity and tries to seize the totality of things. It employs the category of causality, substance and subject, and deduces therefrom the logical relation between Brahman and Chit." From the logical standpoint the finite self is inseparably related to the infinite, and derives its substantiality from it. The author finds in this doctrine of co-ordination the only logically adequate relation between the absolute and the finite self. It steers clear of the abstract absolutism of Samkara and the logical contradiction of the Bhedâbhedavâda. Ramanuja in recognising the inseparable unity of matter, spirit and God is more synthetic in philosophic construction than any of the absolutists. The concrete absolutism of Ramanuja has, according to the author, all the value of a

synthetic philosophy without the defect of allied systems of thought either in the East or in the West. Ramanuja has not the venture of Bosanquet to synthesise the absolute of metaphysics with the God of religion. The same thought of essential unity and organic fellowship in the sphere of ethics and religion has been carried out. God is a constant associate to Jiva in love, and in a state of release from the touch of the body, the self realises the cosmic consciousness in its widest expansion and utmost commonalty. It acquires the Brahma-bhâva in which the intellect and the senses swoon away, and it is lost in the eternal enjoyment disdaining the glory of heaven. This spiritual expansion marks out the true meaning of the finite self as belonging to Brahman who is its very self (Page 92). The cosmic experience rises out of the consciousness of God as the prakârin or self of all.

This is identity of connotation between the finite and the infinite, though there is a difference between the finite and the infinite in respect of denotation.

We congratulate the author on his lucid explanation of theistic Vedanta in an easy and graceful style. There is no confusion anywhere about the author's meaning. Though we have no intention to undervalue

the exposition of Ramanuja's philosophy, still we cannot help thinking that his philosophy has lost sight of the absolute of metaphysics, and in this aspect it is defective. The author has quoted texts from the Sruti in favour of Ramanuja's theory, but he cannot be assuredly ignorant of the absolute monistic texts of the Upanishads. Professor S. Kuppaswami Sastriyar truly hinted in his introduction that the Visistâdvaita School mainly evolved out of the upâshanâ texts of the Sruti, and unless the absolute monistic texts can be explained away, we cannot see how Ramanuja's theory can be regarded as the only correct and fitting explanation of the Upanishads.

Conformity to the texts apart, Ramanuja's system cannot explain the deep abyss of spiritual life as felt by the mystics, which is clearly hinted in the Sruti texts. Emancipated consciousness is not only a feeling of cosmic consciousness but a feeling of transcendent consciousness in which all distinctions dissolve away. This promise of mystic life cannot be found in God-consciousness.

The finite self can never be freed from finitude and the aspiration for cosmic consciousness may be eternal, but its attainment can never be so. This is a serious defect,—the finite background of personal life is sought to be retained in the cosmic consciousness in God-realisation. The author of the *Srutaprakâsika* points out that the finite self has the attribute of expansion and contraction native to it, but since its being remains atomic, the expansion, however embracing, cannot be a permanent state so long there is the opposite process of contraction. This defeats the ideal of love and devotion. This inherent defect has been sought to be removed by the intervention of Grace, but in this theory of Grace philosophy changes place with theology.

Then there is the standing difficulty of directly relating the world of nature to God. In the eagerness of synthesis Ramanuja has lost sight of the impossibility of direct relation between nature and God. These and other difficulties which it is not possible to exhaust in this short review, have led us to ask if the doctrine of prakâra has given the final satisfaction in the search after truth.

**A CENTURY OF SERVICE: A SURVEY OF THE SERVICES RENDERED BY THE BRAHMA SAMAJ IN FIRST HUNDRED**

**YEARS.** By *Upendranath Ball, M.A.* Published by the Centenary Committee of the Punjab Brahma Samaj, Lahore. 109 pp. Price 6 as.

The Brahma Samaj in the last century represented the advanced section of people in the country, at least in Bengal. It was the Samaj which stood as a bulwark against the tidal wave of Christianity which seemed for a time to threaten the Hindu Society. Till recently there was no movement conducive to the welfare of the country, with which the Brahma Samaj was not directly or indirectly connected. Some of the leaders lived exemplary lives, and because of their great regard for truth, courage of conviction and sincerity of purpose, they will ever inspire all who study them with high ideals. For all these the country cannot forget the services of the Brahma Samaj to it.

The present book is a laudable attempt to take account of the works of the Brahma Samaj during the last hundred years, now that its centenary is being celebrated. The book describes the religion and history of the Brahma Samaj and its services to the country in matters of religious and social reform, female emancipation, educational development, etc. In it we find many interesting facts—how the zenana education scheme was started as early as 1862, how a Missionary was sent to the Khasi Hills of Assam in 1889 to reclaim the hill tribes, and how the "Society for the Improvement of Backward Classes, Bengal and Assam," started under the auspices of the Brahma Samaj, has organised 406 schools with 16,389 children on the rolls, etc.

The Brahma movement was eminently a reform movement; but as it lacked the necessary sympathy and imagination for that, it could not touch the heart of the country and was limited to an isolated group. According to the author, Ram Mohun Roy "suggested that one community should approach another in a spirit of sympathy and fellowship, but at the same time an attempt should be made to find out the fundamentals, and not to worry about the non-essentials." As this has not been uniformly followed in practice there have been now and then occasions for strong feelings against the Samaj. In the opinion of the author "religion was freed from the shackles of age-long idolatry" (by the Brahma Samaj). But the fact should not be

ignored that during the latter half of the last century while idolatry was being vehemently denounced from Brahma pulpits and platforms in the city of Calcutta, five miles away there was an unlettered idolatrous priest in the service of a temple, whose realisations in spiritual life afterwards proved blessings to thousands of thirsty souls hankering after spirituality.

According to the author the two principles of the Samaj, viz. the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man supply a basis for the unification of the nation as no other religious organisation does. For the Arya Samaj "comes short of the regulating idea of the national movement," because of its "spirit of intolerance" and the Theosophical Society though it "came in as a uniting bond" is more an intellectual fraternity than a spiritual brotherhood. About the Ramakrishna Mission the writer says, "As an agency for social service it has made its influence felt all over the country. . . . . But this movement also is not sufficiently comprehensive. The deep religious philosophy of Ramakrishna Paramahansa is not fully at work in the Society. External things receive greater attention than the soul of truth." This remark, we are afraid, proceeds from ignorance.

**SATYAGRAHA IN CHAMPARAN.** By Babu Rajendra Prasad. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. 282 pp. Price Rs. 2-8.

The oppressions of the indigo-planters in Bengal in the last century are still a by-word in villages. The system of carrying on indigo-plantation was a "system of bloodshed" and "Not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood." The tyranny continued in Bengal till Babu Harish Chandra Mukherjee and some Christian Missionaries took up the cause of the helpless tenants. In Bihar, however, the indigo-planters received no check in their acts of oppression and tyranny till as late as 1917 when Mahatma Gandhi stood in vindication of the rights of the people in Champaran. The present volume "gives the story of the liberation, by the use of Satyagraha of the ryots of Champaran from that hopeless economic thralldom to the planter, which had made the ryots worse than drum-driven cattle." As we peruse the book, we find ourselves in an oppressed atmosphere filled with the wails and groanings of a suffering people, and there is a great relief in the end because a tool was at last found to fight the tyranny and things were remedied. The book, though an English translation of a Hindi volume from the pen of the author, has got the freshness of an original writing and the reader is kept spell-bound throughout the reading.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math

It is highly gratifying that the most pleasant function of laying the foundation stone of the Temple of Sri Ramakrishna in the grounds of the Belur Math at last came off in the beautiful morning of the 13th March last. Swami Vivekananda himself, the worthiest son of the Master, had in his lifetime conceived the idea of a large Temple to be established to his Master's memory at the Belur Math and even selected the spot on which this monument was to be erected. Shrines would be dedicated in it to all the prophets of the world. In front there would be a big hall where a thousand devotees, irrespective of caste and creed, would be able to assemble together and offer their prayers. In short the Swami

desired to make it the Temple of the Universal Spirit. It is a great pleasure that the grand conception of the great Swami is on its way to being realised. The erection of the proposed Temple, however, will entail enormous expenses. But may we not hope that we shall be able to see it completed in early future?

The auspicious day fixed for the happy function was the blessed birthday of the Master. Besides hundreds of devotees, many direct disciples, both monastic and lay, were present. The worship of the Master was performed with due ceremonies. In the presence of all, Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Order, prayerfully laid the foundation stone with his blessed hands. A copper plate with English and Bengali inscriptions enclosed in a stone box was

placed in the foundation. A Sanskrit inscription also will be placed later on. We present to our readers a copy of the English inscription below. We are glad to record that on that blessed day seventeen members of the Order were initiated into *Sannyasa* and twenty-one into *Brahmacharya*. Does this final ceremony hold forth the ideal of renunciation and service that this Temple is destined to fulfil?

[THE INSCRIPTION]

IN MEMORY OF BHAGABAN SREE  
SREE RAMAKRISHNA DEVA,

And in the foundation of the sacred Temple to be raised in his honour in the Belur Math premises on the spot marked out by his noble disciple, Sree Swami Vivekananda,

This incised copper-plate  
Is well and truly laid,

By Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and a humble disciple of the lord in flesh.

In the presence of the Lord's monastic disciples in the flesh—and of others, monastic devotees and lay brethren, who have flocked under the Master's spiritual banner.

On this the 13th day of March, 1929, being the 94th birth-day anniversary of our Lord, Sree Sree Ramakrishna Deva—on whose name be peace!

Vedanta Society, New York

The sixty-sixth Birthday Anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the New York Vedanta Society with due eclat on the 20th January last. The programme consisted of two services in the Society auditorium and banquet in the Ceylon India Inn.

The Society Chapel was gracefully decorated to suit the occasion and a big portrait of the Swami was placed in a prominent place amidst flowers and evergreen. A big tray of choicest apples was offered before the altar of Sri Ramakrishna and incense smell filled the whole place with an atmosphere of holiness.

At 11 A.M. Swami Bodhananda most feelingly related to the eager audience the story of his own experience with his master,

the great Swami Vivekananda. *Prasada* was distributed among the devotees after the service.

At 3 P.M. Swami Gnaneswarananda spoke on the life and message of the Swami and flowers were distributed amongst the audience as a token of *Ashirvada* or blessings from the great Master, which everybody appreciated.

The banquet at the Ceylon India Inn marked the unique success of the occasion. Two big pictures of the Swami were tastefully decorated in the banquet hall and incense burnt. The hall was filled before the appointed hour and provision had to be made for an extra room to seat the overflowing guests. The India-America Friendship Dinner began at 7 P.M. and it consisted of a vegetable menu cooked in the Hindu fashion. The dinner began with the chanting of *Brahmārpanam* during which all the guests stood up in spontaneous reverence. An American artist admirer of the Swami made a respectful gift of a beautiful picture of the Swami to each guest, which everybody appreciated.

The programme of the banquet consisted of Hindu music, vocal and instrumental, by Swami Gnaneswarananda and Mrs. Kamala Mukherjee, recitations from the Swami's poems by Victor Junker, an American youth, and speeches by Swami Bodhananda who presided over the functions and by Swami Yogananda of the Yogoda Satsanga, Srijut Dhangopal Mukerjee, the famous author and lecturer, Srijut Basanta Kumar Roy, humanist, and Srijut Boshiswar Sen, an eminent scientist and also by two American friends of Swami Vivekananda—Mr. Hager and Mr. Goodyear who used to know him during his stay in New York. The speeches which were no less enjoyable than music were interspersed with many more songs and music. Although the function was declared closed at 11 o'clock at night, many of the guests were eager to hear more music and were not willing to go home. So musical recitals had to be continued till 1 o'clock in the morning. There was indeed an atmosphere of pure and serene joy and happiness during the entire programme and all were highly gratified.