# Prabuddha Bharata

## OR AWAKENED INDIA

* * * *

## AUGUST, 1929

*"In spite of the greatness of the Upanishads, in spite of our boasted ancestry of sages, compared to many other races, I must tell you that we are weak, very weak. First of all, our physical weakness. That physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. First of all, our youngmen must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the Gita. You will understand Gita better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you."—Swami Vivekananda.*


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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

## *AUGUST, 1929*

## CONTENTS



*Notice for change of address should reach us before the 20th of the previous month.—Manager, P. B.*

# Prabuddha Bharata

AUGUST, 1929

Volume XXXIV Number 8

"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।"

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

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## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

### XV

*(To an English Friend)*

Srinagar, Kashmir,
1st October, 1897.

Some people do the best work when *led*. Not every one is *born to lead*. The best leader, however, is one who "leads like the baby". The baby, though apparently depending on every one, is the king of the household. At least, to my thinking, that is the secret. . . . Many feel, but only a few can express. It is the power of expressing one's love and appreciation and sympathy for others, that enables one person to succeed better in spreading the idea, than others. . . .

I shall not try to describe Kashmir to you. Suffice it to say, I never felt sorry to leave any country except this Paradise on earth ; and if I can, am trying my best to influence the Rajah in starting a centre. So much to do here, and the material so hopeful! . . . .

The great difficulty is this: I see persons giving me almost the whole of their love. But I must not give any one the whole of mine in return, for that day the work would be rnined. Yet there are some who will look for such a return, not having the breadth of the impersonal view. It is absolutely necessary to the work that I should have the enthusiastic love of as many as possible, while I myself remain entirely impersonal. Otherwise jealousy and quarrels would break up everything. A leader must be impersonal. I am sure you understand this. I do not mean that one should be a brute, making use of the devotion of others for his own ends, and laughing in his sleeve meanwhile. What I mean is what I am, intensely personal in my love, but having the power to pluck out my own heart with my own hand, if it becomes necessary, "for the good of many, for the welfare of many," as Buddha said. Madness of love, and yet in it no bondage. Matter changed into spirit by the force of love. Nay

that is the gist of our Vedanta. There is but One, seen by the ignorant as matter, by the wise as God. And the history of civilization is the progressive reading of spirit into matter. The ignorant see the person in the non-person. The sage sees the non-person in the person. Through pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, this is the one lesson we are learning.

(*Again to the same*)

Too much sentiment hurts work. "Hard as steel and soft as a flower" is the motto.

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# SRI RAMAKRISHNA ON THE OUTLOOK OF RENUNCIATION

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

## I

It was the evening of 7th September, 1884. A lamp had been lighted in Sri Ramakrishna's room at the Dakshineswar Temple, and incense burnt. Sri Ramakrishna was sitting on his bed thinking of the Divine Mother and repeating Her name. M., Niranjan and Adhar were sitting on the floor.

It was a moon-lit night, and the riverside, trees, temples and pathways were flooded with the silvery light of the moon.

Adhar Chandra Sen was a Deputy Magistrate earning Rs. 300 a month. He had applied for the Vice-Chairmanship of the Calcutta Municipality, which had a monthly salary of Rs. 1000, and in order to secure it, had interviewed many important persons of Calcutta.

Sri Ramakrishna said: "Hazra had asked me to pray to Mother that Adhar might have the job. Adhar also had requested me. I prayed a little saying: 'Mother, he has been coming to You. If You so like, why not let him have the job?' But I also added: 'Mother, what a low outlook! He asks a job of You and not Knowledge and Love!'

"(*To Adhar*) Why did you dance attendance on those low-minded men? —And this after seeing and hearing so much! This has been like asking who was the husband of Sita after reading the entire Ramayana! Mallik is a low-minded man." . . . .

*Adhar*: "To maintain a household, one has to do these things. You also did not forbid me."

*Sri R*: "It is abstaining from worldly desires and affairs, which is good, and not being actively engaged in them. After I had reached the present spiritual state, the Temple manager, as usual, sent for me to sign my name to get my salary. I said: 'I cannot do this. I do not want any pay. You may give it to whomsoever you like.'

"I am the servant of God alone. Whom else shall I serve?

"Seeing that my meal becomes late, Mallik engaged a cook for me. He paid one rupee for one month. I felt ashamed. I had to run to him whenever he sent for me. That was quite different from going of my own accord.

"To worship low-minded men—this is what a householder's life means, besides many things else. . . . .

"Continue with your present service. People are eager for fifty or hundred rupees, but you are earning three hundred rupees. I saw a Deputy Magistrate in our part of the country. His name was Iswar Ghosal. He had a cap on his head and people trembled before him in awe. A Deputy Magistrate is no small thing!

"Do what you are doing now. To serve one man is enough to soil one's mind, what to speak of serving five men!" . . .

*Adhar :* "Should Narendra engage in service?"

[Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) was at that time in very straitened circumstances. His father had died and he had to maintain his mother and brothers. He was, therefore, searching for some employment. In fact he had been engaged for some time as the Head Master of Vidyasagar's Bowbazar School in Calcutta.]

*Sri R :* "Yes, he should. He has to maintain his mother and brothers."

*Adhar :* "Suppose Narendra can manage with fifty rupees a month. Should he try to earn a hundred rupees?"

*Sri R :* "The worldly-minded think too highly of money. They think that there cannot be anything as good as this. Shambhu said : 'It is my wish to offer all my properties at His feet before I die.' Does He want property of us? He wants Knowledge, Love, Discrimination and Dispassion. . . . .

"Sejo Babu (Mathuranath) said that he would make me a gift of a landed property. He and Hriday were talking about it. I heard them from the Kali temple. I came out and said to Sejo Babu : 'Look here, don't think of doing such a thing. This will do me great harm.' "

*Adhar :* "There have been six or seven persons at the utmost in the history of the world, who had such renunciation as yours."

*Sri R :* "Why, there *are* men of renunciation. People come to learn when one renounces a big property. But there are men of renunciation, of whom the world does not know."

*Adhar :* "Yes, I know of one in Calcutta—Devendranath Tagore."

*Sri R:* "What do you say? Who has enjoyed so much of the world as he? When I went with Sejo Babu to his house, I found many children to whom a doctor was prescribing medicine. Who will think of God if not he who has so many sons and daughters? If after enjoying so much worldly prosperity, he had not thought of God, people would have cried fie on him."

*Niranjan :* "He paid off the debts of Dwarakanath Tagore."

*Sri R :* "Away with such talks! Don't you annoy me! Is he a man, if he, having power, does not liquidate the debts of his father? But it is true he is much better than the common run of householders who are totally immersed in worldliness. He will be an example to them.

"There is a great difference between a man of true renunciation (*tyâgi*) and a householder devotee. A true *Sannyâsin,* one who has truly renounced, is like a bee. A bee will not sit on anything else than flowers. It will drink nothing except honey. The householder devotee is like a fly which sits now on a sweetmeat and again on a festering sore. He may remain in a Divine mood for some time, but will again lose himself in *Kâmini* and *Kânchana* (woman and gold).

"The real *tyagi* is like the *châtaka* bird. That bird does not drink any other water than what drops from clouds on the day that the moon is in conjunction with the *Swâti* star. Even though water fills all the seven seas and rivers, it will not drink that water. The *tyagi* will not touch *Kamini* and *Kanchana.* And he will not keep them with him, lest he become attached to them."

## II

*Adhar :* "Chaitanya also enjoyed."

*Sri R :* (*startled*) "What did he enjoy?"

*Adhar :* "He was such a great scholar and so much honoured!"

*Sri R :* "From others' view-point it seemed honour, not from his.

"I tell you truly, it is all same to me whether you respect me or Niranjan respects me. I never think of having a wealthy man in my hands. I was told by Manomohan that Surendra had said I could be prosecuted for keeping Rakhal here. I said : 'Who is

Surendra? He has kept a mat and a pillow here and gives money?' "

*Adhar :* "I think he pays ten rupees a month?"

*Sri R :* "No, ten rupees do for two months. He pays for the service of the devotees who stay here. He is earning religious merit thereby, what does it matter to me? Do I love Narendra and Rakhal for any personal interest?"

*M :* "Your love is like a mother's."

*Sri R :* "A mother, however, often loves her son because he will one day maintain her by his earnings. But I love them, because I actually see, and not merely imagine, that they are Narayana Himself.

"Listen. If you can light a fire, you will not have any lack of moths. If you once realise Him, He will provide you everything, He will not keep you in want. If He reveals Himself in your heart, many will come to serve you.

"A young *Sannyasin* once went to a house to beg alms. He had been a monk from a very young age and was, therefore, quite ignorant of the world. A grown-up girl of the family came out and gave him alms. He asked the girl's mother: 'Has she got boils on her chest?' 'No,' the mother replied, 'God has given her breasts in order that the child that will be born of her womb may suck milk from them.' At this the monk exclaimed: 'Why then should I worry? Why should I beg any more? Even He who has created me, will give me food.'

"The naked one (Tota Puri) spoke of a prince who entertained *Sâdhus* in gold plates and tumblers. I saw an abbot at Benares, who was highly honoured by people. Rich Marwaris stood with folded hands before him to carry out his orders.

"A true *Sadhu,* a real *tyagi,* does not want either gold plates or honour from people. But God does not keep him in want. He provides him whatever is necessary to attain Him.

"You are a Magistrate. What shall I say? Do what you think best. I am but ignorant."

*Adhar :* (*smilingly to the devotees*) "He is testing me."

*Sri R :* (*smiling*) "It is better to abstain from worldly desires and activities. Don't you see, I did not sign. *God alone is real, everything else unreal.*"

[Adhar passed away within about one month of this conversation. The Master wept bitterly on learning this news. On his very first meeting with Adhar in April, 1883, the Master had spoken to him of the transience of life and asked him to devote himself entirely to God.]

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## BEAUTY AND DUTY

By the Editor

### I

We confess that it is with diffidence that we are taking up the present theme. Art and literature are not perhaps within our immediate scope. But since art affects life profoundly, we have been forced to look into it for the sake of life. For we have to do with life. No, we do not deny life, monks though we are. A political leader of Bengal recently gave out that *Sannyâsa* and asceticism meant the denial and extinction of life, and he charged them with the decadence of India. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is best people do not talk of things which they do not know. One plain fact would have shown his error. The most glorious period of Hindu history, the Buddhistic period with the Gupta Empire as its sequel, was also the most brilliant age of

mónasticism. Without the Buddha's monks, where would have been the achievements of that magnificent age? How was the greater India created?

No, we monks do not deny life. What we do is to try to stand on the peak of life and from there visualise the lower strata and find out their proper values and scopes. This high level is not the special privilege of monasticism. It is not peculiar to the yellow-robed. It belongs to the highest humanity everywhere. Whoever wants to realise the true and the highest vision, must climb to the summit of life and from there view the plains. Otherwise his vision will be partial and unbalanced, and he will lack the true standard of measurement. In order to have a full and comprehensive vision, all life and activity should be estimated with a detached outlook. Artists, litterateurs, poets, novelists, politicians, economists, socialists, philosophers, scientists, all must outgrow their sectional outlooks, and view life as a whole. Then only will all things fall into their proper places and harmony emerge.

We have noted with pain that this all-comprehensive vision has been conspicuously lacking in our country for some time. Great minds have again and again over-emphasised their own provinces, overshadowing the higher provinces or smothering the lower ones. Art and literature have not been exceptions. As a result, even third-rate artists and writers have been putting forth audacious claims, wanting to regulate the national and individual lives according to their imperfect and unclean ideas. We have noted this with pain and have seen high ideals dragged down and trampled under foot. How can a nation grow without noble ideals? Where will it draw its strength from? We wish our leaders had spoken with a steady and stern voice. But they have not.

We have tried to find out the cause of this defection. Why do they not stand for the spiritual ideals? Why do they allow the glorification of the flesh to continue unchecked? Why are their affirmations of the Spirit always hesitant? So far as we have understood, the reason is nothing but that they do not *practise* what they believe and profess. They do not try to realise the spiritual ideals. Formerly, every gentleman, whatever his vocation in life, used to devote some time to his spiritual practices. What a difference between an *Âyurvedic* physician and a modern doctor, between a professor of a college and a *Pandit* of a *tol*! The *Kavirâj* and the *Pandit* consider spiritual devotions an important part of their daily life. The doctor and the professor are supremely indifferent about them. Formerly, spiritual practice was considered an integral part of life, now it is the fashion to be ungodly. Our society never forgot that leaders of activities, professions and knowledge exert a tremendous influence on the life of men, and that if they prove faithless to the high ideals of the nation, they will eventually destroy all good. Society, therefore, expected every one to owe heartfelt allegiance to the spirit. That allegiance could not be real without some apprehension of the spirit itself. Hence the urgent need of daily spiritual practice. A glimpse of the spiritual life, however vague and dim, is enough to produce an indelible impression of its reality. With that certitude abiding in our heart, we could not judge wrongly and lead ourselves and others into confusion and eventual ruin. But the moderns do not practise, even when they talk of the spirit. How, then, can they expect to have a balanced view of life and reality? To them, the spirit is only a name, practically non-existent. Their allegiance to the spirit is only lip-deep, not genuine. The inevitable result has followed. Lower ideals have been emphasised and the higher ideals have been insulted in their hands.

We have the province of Bengal

specially in our mind as we write this. But we think our observations have more or less application to other provinces of India as well. In Bengal, just now, all sorts of ideas about life and reality are running riot. Some writers are extremely loud in their glorification of the animal in man. Some of them are good penmen, having earned some reputation. Most of them are novelists and poets,—they cannot deal with sterner stuffs. They could be easily ignored and left to the mercy of time, had they not stood forth in the name of art and life. Their conception of art and life could also be ignored, had not the West stood behind them with its secularism and glorification of the animal. The power that they wield is not really their own. They are only the instruments of a mightier thought-force which is sweeping over the world and seeking to defeat the powers of the spirit. The temptations of the flesh are always strong in men. Our *Samskâras* in regard to them are already powerful. The writings of these animal-worshippers are stimulating them to a degree and consequently devitalising the nation. Some ten or twelve years ago, the newspapers of Calcutta scarcely ever published any notice of the theatrical performances of the city. Attendance at theatres was not considered quite good form and edifying. Now the journals publish columns of dramatic criticism. University men and women are appearing on the stage and even ladies of high respectable families are practising as film-actresses and dancers. We do not mean to taboo amusements. What we want to point out is that Bengalees have become more prone to enjoyment than before. They have become more fond of the sweets of life and effeminacies. They are indulging too much in dance and song and poetry and fiction. The Bengali literature is scarcely producing any noteworthy serious works; only fiction and poetry are being produced abundantly. Are the Bengalees equally prominent in strenuous, manly activities? We regret to say that progress in manly qualities has not been commensurate with the progress in emotional indulgence. The ideals of manly men are in danger of being swamped by the excrescences of the flesh. In this we are proving but foolish imitators of the West. In an evening party in the West, you can point to scores of people who have achieved nobly in the field of life. Enjoyment suits them. For only the hero can claim to enjoy and indeed truly enjoys. But consider a party of our own. Of how many can we say that they have achieved manlike and nobly? What is their credit? Forsooth, some have written a few poems, others a few short stories or novellettes,—mostly anaemic and obnoxious, others again can sing, dance and act. Are we to stand on these feminine achievements in the face of the world? Are these our credentials before the assembly of nations? We may fool ourselves for a time, we may fool time for some years. But neither our true self nor time will for ever stand this nonsense. We shall be called upon to do better and manlier things in order to live and grow on the face of earth, or we shall be brushed off mercilessly into the abyss of oblivion, in spite of all our dance and song.

## II

Strange that what we feel in our heart of hearts to be wrong and debasing become correct and ennobling in the name of art! Does art possess this alchemy? How far can art replace morality in the life of a nation? What is art? Art by its very nature is extremely illusive. This is the main reason why the quarrel between art and morality is difficult to compose, and the claims of art become easily exorbitant. Beauty and joy, again, are apt to delude us, depriving us of critical judgment. Yet, these are the very reasons why

art should be properly understood and its claims and scope critically estimated.

We may begin by considering the case of those who are claiming that art lies in depicting the realities as they are in disregard to social or moral conventions, if need be, in order to show them off as beautiful and enjoyable. This they call realism. Can art deal with *all* subjects? But is realism really art? In so far as realism depicts the true state of things, ugly or beautiful, low or noble, it is scarcely art. It then only supplies material, and no work of art is merely its material. Even such realism, however, is not without its utility. Sometimes conventions grow so strong and rigid that they cramp life. Life decays, but we hold on to the encrustations. That is extremely unwholesome. Then realism truly helps. It reveals the true state of things, to ignore which is sure death. Literature helps by such revelation. But realists necessarily have a serious responsibility on their shoulders. In order that their labours may be beneficial, they must be very careful to stamp their revelations with the marks of their true value. They must not exaggerate or embellish them or change their value. The balance of judgment must be evenly maintained. Those who ignore these responsibilities are neither artists nor realists in any sense. They are merely craftsmen, employing their craft for a base purpose.

But of course our so-called realists claim that they do not merely describe, but that they also beautify. They treat the material in such a way as to produce the sense of beauty and joy. This is the claim of all artists ; and yet some works of art are poisonous and others embrosial. What makes the difference? The difference must be sought in the determination and creation of values. Artists oftentimes delude by creating false values. It is often forgotten that the values of reality cannot be created by artists. The values are independent of individual men, however great. The Creator himself has stamped realities with their respective values. We cannot subvert them. Matter, mind and spirit are the three prominent gradations of reality with their graded values. We experience phenomena as either of these and are impressed with their inherent values. An artist cannot suddenly rise and say that matter is superior to mind and spirit or mind to spirit. If he says so, he deludes, and the moral and spiritual sense of mankind should ostracise him.

But we must remember one point in this connection. Our experience of reality is not ultimate. It is true that so long as our vision of matter persists, its fixed value also persists. But what we now consider as matter, may reveal a finer content to a purer vision. In fact the experience and habit of the common man is not ultimate. In knowing the reality as he does, he has not his fulfilment. He requires to experience reality in other lights. These other lights the artist claims to supply. Art, therefore, consists in revealing higher and finer selves in things apparently low and gross. We look around us, but the inherent beauty and nobility of things do not strike us. Most things seem ugly or indifferent. But to the artist they do not appear as such. He finds beauty and joy in them. This beauty and joy he reveals to us in such a form as to make us also see and feel like him. This is art.

From this it apparently follows that to the artist reality has no objective value. Reality changes its value in his hands. To the average man, the flesh may seem evil, but to the superior vision of the artist, it may appear as heavenly, worthy to be glorified. No doubt art can perform this alchemy. But a close scrutiny will reveal that the standard of value does not change the least. If the vision of the artist be true—we shall see later on what true æsthetic vision consists in—flesh must appear transformed. *That is to say, it must not produce the same reactions in the*

*artist's mind as flesh itself. The reaction must be of a higher and finer reality revealed in and through the flesh.* Here is the crucial test. If the appeal is of the flesh alone, only intensified, it is no art, at least no good art. It has not achieved that transformation of reality which is the essence and basis of all true art. So art in fact does not change the value of reality. It only reveals a higher reality through the lower one. Spiritual experience confirms this artist's vision. Everything to the supreme vision is spiritual. What to us appear as gross, dull and dead, appear to it as embodiments of the Divine itself. There is, therefore, an immense possibility in all things. We have only to acquire the new vision and the world will bare the ineffable beauty hiding in its bosom.

But it is said that art grows out of the feeling of beauty and joy. If a thing gives joy to the artist and appears to him as beautiful, why should he not present it to the world as delectable? This is the artist's privilege, they say, to feel as beautiful and reveal as beautiful, whatever might be the objective value of the subject presented, or whether it has undergone the required transformation or not. This claim is nothing original or dignified. All men have the power to allure and deceive. Such deceptions are going on around us everyday of our life. Simply because one possesses the art of versifying or composing fine phrases, one's practice of deception does not become dignified. The greatness and nobility of the artist lies in charming in order to uplift. To uplift,—this is the distinction of the artist. A prostitute that allures by the beauty of her person, and an artist that lures the mind to the flesh by celebrating its charms,—where is the difference between them?

But what is this feeling of beauty and joy, which the artist emphasises so much? Is it so transcendental and ineffable as to be incapable of determination? Is there no standard by which we can judge between joy and joy and beauty and beauty? Yes, there is. *It is life itself.* There are innumerable levels of life and perception. Every man has his normal level. It depends on his *Samskaras* (mental tendencies). These are the forces which give shape and direction to his perceptions, desires and activities. We enjoy what are nearest and most akin to our *Samskaras.* They appear most important, real and delectable to us. All other realities seem distant, shadowy, unattractive. We cannot enjoy them or dwell long on them. We have drawn a circle around us with the *Samskaras* as its radii along which we move and feel. Every man moves within his circle. Those who have strong sensuous tendencies will naturally dwell mainly on the sense-plane, glorying in sense-objects and finding them beautiful and delectable. If they happen to possess artistic powers, they will naturally consider the sensuous vision as the highest and present it as such. The materials they will deal with will be sensuous, and the treatment of those materials will also be sensuous. Higher realities will be beyond their reach and comprehension. But there are others who possess nobler and purer *Samskaras.* They live on the higher planes of life. They will easily find the world of their experience to be beautiful and blissful and not the world of the senses. If they are artists, they will reveal to the world the glory of those higher realities. That is not all. They will take up the lower realities also. But they will treat them in such a way that they will reveal undreamt of beauties in their being, nobler and finer, and react upliftingly on the human mind.

It is these individual worlds in which we live because of our different *Samskaras* that determine our different standards of beauty and joy. It is not necessary to dwell at length on the existence of such different standards. What, however, is being disputed is that there cannot be any gradations of

those standards. Morality and social conventions speak of gradations. Our pseudo-artists deny them. How to judge what is higher and what is lower? The answer is in our own heart, in our own personality. However loudly we may repudiate the spiritual ideals, human history and experience cannot be gainsaid. It is said one cannot commit fallacy knowingly. The past experience of mankind has deeply impressed its mind with the truth that the higher a man, the intenser and wider is his feeling of reality and the greater is his perception of unity with the world. We feel a deep infinite being in our soul. We feel ourselves as wide as the infinite universe itself. A sense of cosmic power pulsates in our being. The little things of life and world do not affect us. So long as we have fear, so long as we feel awed before the majesty of the universe, we have to admit that the experience of one feeling oneself above the turmoils of the universe and as its master, is infinitely superior to our puny experiences. We may talk high-sounding philosophies in repudiation of this fact; but the knowledge of the superiority of the spiritual experience is indelibly impressed on our mind and we have to bow down our heads before it. Let artists come forward and stand before such an ineffable experience; they will at once know their true place. To-day they may talk loud and defy, but to-morrow they will be nowhere.

It is this sense of being and personality that determines the true value of our artistic vision. The wider and deeper our being, the more spiritual we are, the more real and noble is our vision of the beautiful. It is quite true that all spiritual persons are not artists, nor are all artists of the same spiritual experience equally great as artists. Artistic genius is a thing apart. Poets are not made but born. But this is also true that without great spiritual vision, no artists, however great, can create noble works. His genius will be cramped and distorted. He may have the form, but he will lack substance. This is the test: When we feel a thing to be beautiful, do we also experience a widening of being, an intense consciousness of the reality, and an uplifting of the mind beyond the trammels of the body and the pettinesses of life? Then this is a higher vision. If, on the other hand, our perception of beauty draws us more and more to the lower grades of reality, we are indeed caught in the lower vision. The sense of the beautiful is judged by the personality behind. Personality is judged by the sense of inherent power and sense of being and reality. Power and sense of being are estimated by mental exaltation and widening of consciousness, by unity with the Universal Being and by the renunciation of the lower self. All art must submit to this test. Both the creators and enjoyers of art have to judge art by this standard. It is no arbitrary standard. It is the standard inherent in the constitution of life and reality themselves.

## III

And here morality joins issue with art. Morality propounds certain ideals of feeling and conduct and condemns their opposites. Nowadays men are not wanting, who consider morality as merely born of use and make light of it. They do not know. There *is* an Eternal Being, who is the soul of our soul. Our fulfilment lies in knowing and identifying ourselves with him. By thus realising him, we also realise the universe as true, beautiful and good. That is the *summum bonum.* All realisations are states of consciousness. The realisation of the Divinity also implies the expansion and transmutation of consciousness. The moral qualities in their full development are nothing but aspects of that cosmic consciousness. Truthfulness, selflessness, chastity, kindness, all follow from this. For all these are implied by the unity of the individual being with the

Eternal, Universal Being. How, then, can we say that morality is merely conventional? And if morality is not conventional, can it be set aside in favour of æsthetic enjoyment? But we need not assume a necessary conflict between art and morality. If what we have said above of art is true, it can never lead us astray. It will also produce the same exaltation and expansion of spirit, which is the vocation of morality. The methods may be different. But art will in essence be always faithful to morality. Morality is not a mere formal observance of certain rules of conduct. It is more of the mind than of behaviour. Both art and morality must be faithful to life, if they are not to be false and unreal.

But the conflict becomes apparent and sometimes real in the realm of conduct. Morality implies certain modes of conduct. In this aspect, it is strengthened and confirmed by social usages and conventions. Society has built up, through its experience of ages, a set of traditions and conventions which it thinks will prove beneficial and helpful to its members and protect and safeguard them from disintegrating and decaying. By its very nature, dealing as it does with numberless persons with diverse inclinations and temperaments, it cannot look always into their interior ;—it emphasises more the form than the meaning. In a sense, social laws are deliberately more concerned with the forms of conduct than with their meaning. They are pragmatic in their outlook. They necessarily tend to become fixed and inexorable. Art thus finds itself in conflict with them. Laws of social conduct are promulgated often with the outlooks of the average men in view. For most members are of the average mentality. It is for the good of those common men that the society mainly exists, though thereby the presence of idealism in social laws is not denied. Now the common mind has attached a fixed value to everything. If the genius of an artist seeks to subvert that value, it feels upset. Until it has been taught greater refinement of feeling and perception, the artist will fail to convince and benefit it. Of course realism of the kind we have described above, will avail it. So also artistic productions which only clarify and beautify what is already within the orbit of its movements, and which deal with elemental notions of life and experience such as we find in epic poems. But any art that seems to upset the fixed values, will prove bewildering. Should art be allowed to do so? We know that art, if it is true, will ultimately prove helpful to life. It will not degrade it. *But what about the confusion meanwhile?* In our opinion, where there is a conflict between social morality and art, art should not be allowed to subvert social morality.

The common men are not guided by the sense of the beautiful in their daily life. Their guide and background are essentially moral and social ideals. They control, and satisfy their desires, know and act mainly in reference to those ideals. Art plays only an insignificant part in their life. If any art, therefore, impair those ideals, it takes away from the people's strength and unsettle their basic conceptions. People lose their way and are confused. The overwhelming majority of men are progressing towards life's fulfilment through allegiance to moral and social ideals. Very few there are, who are essentially worshippers of beauty and love. These few can easily ignore social conventions. For they have another guide in their fine perception of beauty and love. Society is, therefore, justified in eschewing art when it conflicts with its cherished ideals and its essential codes and conventions. This does not mean that art suffers ignominy thereby, but only that all art is not for all.

## IV

Unfortunately, the modern facilities and freedom of publication and circula-

tion do not make any regulation of art possible. All things reach all people and do both harm and good. No doubt there may be constituted bodies of experts, who may give lead to the people by their wise criticism of art-productions. But that means that the judges should not only be masters of the arts, but should also be faithful spokesmen of the spiritual ideals of the nation. For artistic judgment is essentially a judgment through emotional appreciation. But how to know to what level of life and being the evoked emotions belong? Emotions engulf the mind, absorb the self for the time being; and make us forgetful of its bearings on the larger aspects of life and reality. And we cannot know of any defect in our appreciation unless we are also masters of the highest experiences. A combination of spiritual vision and artistic appreciation, however, is rare in all ages.

But this combination would not have been necessary if there were no danger to national ideals from artists. Unfortunately, poets, novelists, story-writers, all have taken upon themselves to reform society and to guide mankind. The claim is at once ludicrous and mischievous. They are doing a great harm to people. In Bengal, things are undoubtedly extremely unhappy. There the need to protect social morals and conventions against the pseudo-artists is indeed urgent. It is our opinion that the power to check this evil and assign its proper place to art and harmonise it with life, does not lie in art and literature themselves. It lies in that which is most intimately concerned with life and reality, *noble living and action*. We have already mentioned that most persons are moral in temperament and only a few are æsthetic. So most men must be guided throngh moral and spiritual effort. Social laws are framed after the pattern of moral laws. The majority of mankind, therefore, must find inspiration in and through religion. When religion has been made a living power in their life, they will live on a plane of consciousness, where no ignoble things will ever succeed in deceiving them. This higher mentality has to be developed among our countrymen. And then let the artists do their worst. If they are fake artists, they will at once be found out, and spurned to oblivion. If there is any true work of art, it will be appreciated by the people,—by the few, if it is of an unusual merit, and by many, if it is based on the general conceptions of life and reality. Such art-productions will always prove helpful to life, for they will always uplift.

We know this will not necessarily purify art. Every level of life will ask for artists to celebrate its possessions and visions. They will not create and uplift, but they will contribute to the enjoyment of the already achieved. There is no great harm in that. Only let them not claim to have revealed the highest when they are only celebrating the gross and the low. Let them not claim to lead. True art reveals and is, as such, spiritual in its effect. Bnt a correct estimation of art is not possible unless the sense of the higher reality is awake in us. Hence morality and religion must precede art.

We are not unaware that the average life when it is given essentially to religion and morality ,has the danger of becoming dry and conventional, and of stifling the sense of reality. We know this. But in India at least, religion has never slept over this danger. Whenever life has ebbed away, it has brought an influx of power from its perennial source and made life flow vigorously again. But in spite of that, art is certainly a check to the devastating effects of formal religion. When life becomes conventional and unreal, when social morals become rigid, art reveals their absurdity. It sympathetically brings to the surface all the agonies and injustices which the rigors of morality and religion are inflicting on the submerged classes, and glowingly paints

the hopes that are waiting unfulfilled. It gives voice to our imprisoned powers and foreshadows the bright future yet unrealised. Then art makes social conventions change and re-orientate themselves, morality find new expressions and religion reinterpretation.

But never never for a moment let us forget that art by itself cannot lead and save. The power that saves cannot come by the worship of the beautiful, for the worship of a weak person will really be only an insult. Only the strong can enjoy. Let us first become strong. Let us be conscious of our spiritual being. In India at least, the time is not yet when we can take to art for art's sake. Only the art that will be the handmaiden of national and spiritual aspirations can be of any help now. The art that glorifies the already achieved is not for us. What shall it celebrate? A nation of weaklings and slaves, millions and millions of whom do not know what it is to enjoy a full meal, cannot afford to debilitate itself by songs and dances now. Let us first win the battle of life. Let us be men first and then gods themselves will sing their celestial songs in our court.

To-day we want men of action, manly men by thousands and millions, and leaders who have scaled the highest peak of reality and yet whose hearts throb in unison with every phase of being. Such indeed can lead and fulfil, and inspire all truly and harmoniously.

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## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

8TH MAY, 1912.

Swami Premananda, one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, was in charge of the Belur Monastery. The Swami was a very attractive personality and seemed almost to exude purity and love.

After the noonday meal, he began to speak enthusiastically of Sri Ramakrishna to the assembled monks and devotees. He said:

"Seeing that the Master liked lemon much, Yogin (Swami Yogananda) used to bring him a lemon every day. One day the Master said to him: 'Wherefrom did you get the lemon yesterday? I could not take it.' Yogin knew that the Master could not eat things brought from low and impure persons. But he had brought the lemon from the same plant from which he had brought the other lemons. Why was it, then, that the Master could not take it? Yogin felt much perturbed and began to search for the cause. After a careful enquiry he came to know that the orchard from which he used to bring the fruits had changed hands on the day previous to the incident,—the lease had expired. Yogin received permission to get the fruits from the former lessee. On that particular day, therefore, that permission did not avail, and it was really a theft, though unconscious.

"The Master could see the very mind of the donor in the things given him. He could not take a food which had been in contact with the least sin. How wonderful was his purity! He could not tolerate the touch and nearness of any impurity. Therefore, if you want to realise him, you must make your heart absolutely pure. All the passions will have to be conquered. Whoever will come here must become ideal. You must remember that you are his children. But do not let this make you proud. Pride must be given up once for all. Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) says that sometimes he feels as if he is not of this world. The Master also said: 'With whom shall I speak if Naren and Rakhal are not by me? They are of very pure substance,—they are Narayana Himself; I feel my lips burning if I talk with worldly persons.'

What purity! You must be all as pure as he."

At night, after the night service in the shrine, the Swami sat downstairs in the main building. The Disciple asked him: "Kindly tell me how I can see the lotus-feet of the Master."*

*Swami:* "You have seen the Holy Mother and have touched her sacred feet. Why should you worry?"

*Disciple:* "But, Maharaj, I cannot at all make my mind calm. Please tell me how I can make it calm."

*Swami:* "This is not a sweet in the hand of a child that you will coax it out of him. But don't worry. The Master said: 'I see an ocean in a drop.' If we proceed towards him a single step, he will approach us by a thousand steps. Take refuge in him and repeat his name. By and by you will realise."

*Disciple:* "Maharaj, I am told that without renouncing the world, one cannot earn his grace."

*Swami:* (*sternly*) "What have you, which you can renounce? Remain in whatever condition and wherever He keeps you. You cannot realise Him by doing anything. Through His grace everything is possible. Many practise hard *tapasyâ* and yet do not realise His grace. Others very easily get it."

6TH JUNE, 1912.

In the afternoon the Disciple was sitting with S. by the side of the Ganges, when Swami Premananda came there. S. was a sweet man and naturally attracted the love of the Swami. The Swami began to tell him of the love the Master bore towards them. He said: "My mother would not allow me to stay at my village home even during holidays, for fear I would mix with bad boys and spoil myself. But she would cry when I returned to Calcutta. The Master also used to cry when I returned from Dakshineswar to Calcutta. Oh, how can I explain to you how he used to love us! He used to go to Calcutta in a carriage in order to feed Purna. He would wait near the school where Purna read, send someone to bring him and then feed him seating him near himself. He would say: 'What is this that has happened to me? You have not even a mat on which you can welcome me. Yet I am restless to see you!' One day he was found near Balaram Babu's house where I used to stay. Balaram Babu was not at home. The Master did not enter the house for fear of rebuke. He had come to see me! Afterwards someone called him in. His love knew no bounds and a drop of it could fill us to capacity. Everyone thus thought that he was the most beloved of the Master. He said: 'I can stand everything except egotism.' That is why when he wanted to meet any one, he sent Hriday beforehand, to see if the man was proud. He has left a mould for us. We shall now knead the clay of the mind, eliminating all stones and rubbish from it. And then we shall cast it in the mould; and a nice form will easily emerge. He came for the whole world." . . .

*Disciple:* "Please tell us of your experience when you first met the Master."

*Swami:* "On the night of my first visit to Dakshineswar, I was sleeping with another devotee. I could not sleep well because of the shoutings of the night watchmen. At last I had a little sleep. But just then the Master came to us, nude, with his cloth rolled under his arm. He woke us up and said: 'Do you know Narendra? He is a very good boy and lives in Simla. He is well up in music, study and everything. Ask him to see me once. I very much want to see him. Tell him to come tomorrow in a carriage,—the hire shall be paid from here.' So saying he left us and we lay down again. We were about to fall asleep when he came again and said: 'Do tell him to come once. My inside is being clawed like the earth being clawed by a cat. Ask him to

* The disciple looked upon Sri Ramakrishna as identical with God.

come to-morrow itself. Will you?' When he went away, I thought within myself: 'How deeply he loves him! And the boy does not come to see him! How cruel and wicked of him!' Very soon the Master came again and began to entreat us to tell Narendra to come and praised him highly. Thus the whole night passed.

"Another night I was sleeping in the Master's room. At dead of night I woke up and found the Master going from one end of his room to the other, saying: 'Mother, I do not want this. Do not bring me honour from men. Don't, Mother, don't. I spit on it.' He said this and ran about madlike in the room. I was filled with great wonder. I thought: 'How strange! People are so anxious for honour, and he is entreating the Mother not to give it to him! Why is this happening before me? Is it for my personal edification?' "

29TH OCTOBER, 1912.

A young man who had lately entered the Order was finding it inconvenient to continue his *Sâdhanâ* at the Belur Math on account of its being crowded. He wanted to go to Benares and had gone to Calcutta to beg his train-fare. Swami Premananda did not like this. When the new monk returned from Calcutta, the Swami said to him:

"Are you not ashamed to beg—you a young man? You are a *Sâdhu*,—walk all the way to Benares. You think you will go comfortably to Benares and repeat the Lord's name a few times and the Lord will hasten to you? God cannot be realised so easily. 'O my mind, dost thon think thou wilt attain the Divine Mother with thy hypocritical love? She is not a sweet in the hand of a child that thou wilt coax it out of him!' Boys have now a fancy to give up work, as if they have all become Sukadeva. This is the result of reading *Kathâmrita* (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by M.). M.'s books record the conversations of a few days only. 'Call on the Lord in solitude!' That is very well. But who weeps for Him? Who can weep for Him? *Sattva* and *tamas* both look alike. *Tamas* begets sleep, laziness and aversion for work. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) said: 'The country is immersed in *tamas*. Like a delirious patient, it is thinking that it is all right and does not want to take any medicine. I have found the remedy. It is now necessary to apply it. Poison is the remedy for delirium, *rajas* is the cure for *tamas*. We must bring *rajas* into the country in order to free it from *tamas*.' *Vairâgya* (dispassion) and *tamas* are quite different things.

"Go and study. We shall bear your expenses. . . . You must have the knowledge of the *Shâstras*, if you want to realise God. Though the Master did not know how to read and write, yet he heard many books read to him. And he remembered everything. At the Cossipore Garden, Sashi Maharaj was once reading to him the *Adhyâtma Râmâyanam* in the original Sanskrit. Swamiji asked him: 'Sir, you do not know reading and writing. Do you understand anything of this Sanskrit reading?' The Master replied: 'Though I have not read myself, I have heard many things. And I know the meaning of every word.' Everything about him was unique. One day Dr. Mahendra Sarkar came to the Master at Shyampukur at about 10 in the morning and left at about 3 or 4 in the afternoon. On seeing this Mani Mallik said: 'Sir, one day there was music at Kristodas Pal's. All the big people of Calcutta came to the party. Dr. Sarkar also came but rose to leave after some five minutes. On being requested to stay a little longer, he said: "No, I cannot, I have much work to do, I cannot stay more." That same Mahendra Sarkar spent to-day five or six hours apparently for nothing!—This is certainly strange!' "

# ART AND LIFE

By Romain Rolland

Tolstoy's letter to me on Art dates back to 1887,—a time when he had not yet written any of his large works on Art or rather against Art which he considered in its sum total as a vast system of corruption, a cult of pleasure, an interested superstition of the European *élite* in their selfish enjoyment.

But though in 1887 neither the *Sonate à Kreutzer,* nor *What is Art?* had appeared, Tolstoy's strong aversion to modern art had not any the less penetrated all through his writings.

I deeply loved—as I have never ceased to love—Tolstoy. For two or three years, I was living in the atmosphere of his thought ; I was certainly more familiar with his works : *War and Peace, Anna Karenina* and *The Death of Ivan Iliitch,* than with any of the great French works. The goodness, the intelligence and the absolute sincerity of this great man made him for me the surest guide amidst the moral chaos of our time.

But, on the other hand, I passionately loved the fine arts ; from my childhood onwards, I was fed on the arts and particularly on music ; I never should have been able to dispense with it ; I may say that music appeared to my life as indispensable as bread. Thus, I was greatly agitated when I read the violent invectives delivered against the immorality of art by the man whom I had come to respect and believe.

I felt strongly, nevertheless, that nothing was more trustworthy than the influence emanating from a great artist. From a symphony of Beethoven or a picture of Rembrandt, we draw not only the effacement of egoism but also the force of intelligence and goodness gushing forth from these great hearts. Tolstoy spoke of the corruption of art which depraves and isolates men. Where indeed had I felt better invigorated and better experienced brotherliness with men, than in the common emotions of an "Œdipus-King" or of the "Symphony avec Chœurs"? But I distrusted myself, and I felt a great anguish when I thought that I was perhaps wasting my life when my desire was to make it useful to others.

I wrote to Tolstoy. He replied to me on the 4th October, 1887. His letter needs no commentary. It reflects the tranquil and limpid light of his soul which is pervaded by reason and charity. It is written with the apostolic simplicity of the artist, careless of style, solely concerned with making himself understood, never fearing to reiterate his thought till it is well rooted in the mind. We hear his familiar utterance : he does not write, he holds converse.

I am only desirous of saying how much to-day—much more than at the time when I received the letter—I feel myself in complete agreement with his thought. If I regret that Tolstoy is often mistaken in his appreciation of this or that great man, like Beethoven or Wagner, that he was wrong in judging them without understanding them (or at least without understanding them sufficiently),—if I regret also that he has judged French art after a handful of ridiculous decadents (with almost very rare exceptions), to be accounted for, be it added, by the fact that he felt bored by their pretentious poems and unwholesome journals, yet I find his general judgment on art absolutely true.

Yes, *the products of true science and true art are the products of sacrifice and not of material advantages.* And

it is not only in the interests of ethics but in the interests of art itself that the latter should not remain any longer the preserve of any privileged social caste. Artist as I am, I shall be the first to invoke with my prayers the time when art will have gone back to the masses, stripped of its privileges, allowances, decorations and official glory. I demand it in the name of the dignity of art, which has been soiled by thousands of parasites who live disgracefully at its expense. Art should not be a career but should be a vocation. *The vocation could be known and proved only by the sacrifice which the savant and the artist make of his repose and his comfort, in order to pursue his vocation.* Now in the present civilization, the truly great artists alone make real sacrifices ; they are the only ones who knock against rude obstacles, because they alone refuse to sell their thought and to debase themselves for the pleasure of a corrupt clientele which remunerates its purveyors of intellectual debauchery. By suppressing the privileges of art and by increasing the difficulties of its accessibility, there is no need, therefore, to fear that the true artists will be put to greater suffering ; we shall only be removing the multitude of *faineants* who make themselves intellectuals for keeping aloof from the people and for avoiding more tiresome labour.

The world has no need of the ten thousand works of art (or those claimed as such) of the Paris salons, its hundreds of plays and thousands of novels. It has need of three or four geniuses in the course of centuries, and of a people imbued with reason, goodness and the sense of the beautiful, and trained to have a healthy heart, healthy intellect and healthy observation, able to see, feel and understand all that there is of the beautiful and the good in the world, and to strive for the embellishment of the life thereof.

It would not be displeasing to me, I confess, if the artists were all forced to accept the life of the masses and if the sum of all the manual labour necessary for sustaining and supporting the social edifice, were to be divided among all men without exception. Divided amongst all, it would not be so cramping as to prevent true artists from pursuing their vocation by superaddition ; but it would be sufficient to remove from all false artists the desire to draw on their leisure for abandoning themselves to an intellectual occupation. And how much would art gain in health thereby !

Goethe has said somewhere : *By constantly writing or reading books, one becomes a book oneself.* The artificial, morbid and emaciated character of our present-day art is due to the fact that it has ceased to strike roots in the life of the earth ; it is no more the work of living men, but of human phantoms, of shadowy beings and of maggots nourished on words, portrait-tints, sounds of musical instruments and extracts of sensations. How many true artists have been obliged to live on a different intellectual profession, just for the sake of avoiding the sale of their art ! And how much more embarrassing is this intellectual profession for the creative imagination, than manual labour which tires out the body but leaves the mind all the more free !

But will not the beauty of artistic work suffer thereby ? Is not art exclusive ? Does it not claim the devotion of the artist during every minute of his life ? But let me put this question to every sincere artist : "Who produces more, he who is free all the day, or he who is free for only two hours every day ?" Constraint is not without use to the spirit. Overmuch of liberty produces but poor inspiration ; it leads thought to apathy and indifference. Man has need of stimulants. If his life were not so short, he would not be in a hurry to live so intensively. If he finds himself hedged in within the narrow limit of a few hours, he will work with all the greater

passion. Genius desires obstacles, and obstacles make genius. As for talent, we have only too much of it. Our civilization reeks of talents which, moreover, are perfectly useless and even positively pernicious. If the majority of these "talented" persons were to disappear, and if we had fewer painters, musicians, writers, critics, pianists, strolling mountebanks and journalists, it would not be an evil, but a source of very great happiness. And even if art were to suffer thereby in accuracy, style and technical perfection, I would feel no concern, provided art gained in energy and health. There are days when I feel no indignation over the burning of the library of Alexandria. Of what use to us is the dead past which overbears us, and of what avail is the cumbrous structure of sciences, arts and civilizations lumbered on to life? Who shall free us from them?

*The foremost science in the world is the science of living in such wise as to produce the minimum evil and the maximum good possible. The foremost art in the world is the art of knowing how to avoid evil and to produce good with the least effort possible.**

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# A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

WITH PASSING REFERENCES TO SANKHYA AND VEDANTA

BY KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

Just seven months after the publication of my article entitled "Evolution with special reference to the Living and Non-Living from the Standpoint of Maya-vada" in *The Calcutta Review* of June, 1928, I read with much pleasure the confirmation of my criticism of the theory of Sir J. C. Bose in the columns of *The Times Literary Supplement,* January 24, 1929. Says the Reviewer: "Sir Jagadis, notwithstanding the refinement of his methods and apparatus, is an almost exaggerated example of the type so resolute in seeking resemblances that it tends to neglect even fundamental differences. Many years ago he made remarkable investigations into the properties of metallic springs. He found that in certain circumstances they showed a decreasing reaction to compression, but that after a period of rest they might "recover." Here there was a rough analogy with the results of the electrical stimulation of muscle and nerve, and with an almost poetic license he applied the word "fatigue" to the metallic phenomena. As he well knew, the similarity was of the most superficial kind and the generalisation suggested by the application of a word with organic connotations to another set of phenomena was misleading. More recently and by profounder and longer investigations he has worked at the physiology of plants, in particular their reactions to electrical and other stimulations. It is common knowledge that the living substance of animals and plants is composed of "protoplasm" and that protoplasm, wherever it is found, has sufficient common properties to justify a common name. But it is not the name of a single substance, like mercury or sodium chloride or benzenhexa-carboxylic acid. It is a group name, covering a multitude of differences in composition and structure. The tissues of animals and plants differ not only in the composition and structure of the protoplasm of their cells, but still more

* Translated from the original French by L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar, M.A., B.L.

in the fashion in which these cells are arranged to form working groups. The use of common names for the phenomena of animals and plants may mislead rather than supply instances of useful synthesis. Sir Jagadis, for example, knows that when a muscle is said to "contract," the cells do not in fact contract but only change their shape. On the other hand, when as in the sensitive plant the sudden contraction of a group of cells causes the leaf to drop, there is almost certainly a change of size as well as of shape in the individual cells, due to the absorption or discharge of fluid. Still more, when the words 'nerve' or 'nervous systems' are applied to plants, profound differences are obscured and very slight analogies may be taken for much more than they are worth. It is impossible to acquit Sir Jagadis of overstatement ; but we must congratulate him on the valuable work he has done."[1]

A very neat estimate this from a specialist's hand. In my article in *The Calcutta Review* I did not say anything about the plants beyond that they are living. I confined myself strictly to the citicism of Sir J. C. Bose's statement that there is no such thing as non-living and that there is no discontinuity. *The Times Literary Supplement* reviewer has supplemented my observations by showing the profound difference between plants and animals and has earned the gratitude of hundreds of thousands by dispelling a staggering confusion of ideas. I am also indebted to the writer of the leading article in *Nature,* January 19, 1929, entitled "What is Life?" for insisting that life is unique. He says : "Although chemistry and physics have helped greatly in the interpretation and understanding of the mechanisms of living organisms, they have not yet succeeded in explaining life. . . There appears to be no trustworthy evidence that life can arise except from living matter. Science still has far to travel before even the humblest bacillus can be produced at will."[2]

As for the *consciousness of plants* Sir J. C. Bose's own admission is enough. Says Sir J. C. Bose : "It is not true that I urged on the acceptance of the doctrine of consciousness of plants[3] which after all is a matter of sympathy and personal belief."—(*The Statesman* of Calcutta, 9th October, 1928, dâk edition). Note very well that Sir J. C. Bose does *not* claim that he has proved that the plant has mind. It may be a matter of personal belief with him as it is with old Manu but Science has nothing to do with unfounded beliefs. This will be a bitter disappointment, no doubt, to our good friends, the pan-psychists in general and Leibnitzians in particular. But fact is fact.

How then does the world stand today ? A discontinuous world, or in the words of Vedanta परिच्छिन्न जगत् —deep chasms, unbridgeable gulfs between three sets of phenomena—Non-Living, Living and Conscious, not to speak of many other discontinuities known to the modern physicist. The comfortable philosophy of continuity is doomed. *It is a multiverse—not a universe.* The faint resemblances are negligible not only for all practical purposes but also for the sake of religious life. A Vedantist must distinguish. Otherwise

1 These views have been since confirmed by *The Scientific American,* May, 1929, in its leading article reviewing Sir J. C. Bose's *Plant Autographs and their Revelations,* and also by the foremost scientific journal, *Nature,* in its issue of May 4, 1929, while reviewing Sir J. C. Bose's *The Motor Mechanism of Plants.*

2 If this fact or the principle of biogenesis had been known to our Sankara, then he would have been spared the necessity of taking so much trouble to overthrow the Sankhyas, for the Sankhyas start with *achetana pradhâna.* That Sankara did not know this appears from the example of insects springing from the cow-dung given in his interpretation of 2-1-6 of the *Brahma-Sutras.* This explains the contradiction between this illustration and *Brahma-Sutra* 2-4-4.

3 Life can exist without mind but mind cannot exist without life. (*Chhandogya Upanishad,* 5-1-11).

he is not a Vedantist. It is very easy to speak of "variety in unity" and "unity in variety" but very difficult to prove the truth of the dicta.[1] Where unity is, I shall show in the concluding paragraph. The Vedantist's unity is neither immanent nor transcendent (अनन्तरमबाह्यम्).[2] This truth should be very well borne in mind or else our Vedantists will commit the greatest blunder of their life. The Unity of Vedanta should be sharply distinguished from the unity of the so-called Monists and Pantheists[3] of the West. We alone can meet the challenge of New Realism and Pluralism before whose heavy tread the comfortable philosophy of the Pantheists and so-called Monists of Europe and America and their modern Indian imitators shakes in its shoes ; for "many realists are prepared cheerfully to renounce the notion that there is a whole of which a coherent account can be given : there may be only an aggregate, the universe being a gigantic box with a number of different contents, and the philosophy of an aggregate will be a catalogue of items rather than a systematic doctrine deducible from one general principle."

Do you speak of Uniformity? Hear what Sir Oliver Lodge says: "The present tendency admittedly is to feel that there is something in the universe of a different order—something not calculable by any of the rules of physical science, that *the power of prediction is limited not only by our capacity but by the nature of things and that the uniformity of physical nature can be interfered with by the real agency of self-determination and free-will.*" (Sir Oliver Lodge's discourse on Modern Scientific Ideas).

Is this not the defeat of Science and triumph of Spirit? Is not the news welcome to the Vedantist?

With the disappearance of uniformity vanishes the Reign of Law. Hear the words of Bertrand Russel: "In the present condition of human knowledge, therefore, either to assert or to deny the universal reign of law is a mark of prejudice ; the rational man will regard the question as open." (Introduction to Lange's *History of Materialism*, p. xvi).

Hear also what William James thinks on the subject :

"Scientific laws are not in reality laws at all. A scientific law *prima facie* claims to embrace not only all the phenomena that have occurred in the past, but all the phenomena of the same type which can possibly occur in the future. But since the future is unknown, we cannot tell that a scientific law, however well it has worked in the past, will necessarily hold good in the future: hence the so-called laws of

1 When Swami Vivekananda speaks of unity in variety he speaks only for बुद्धारोह or facility of understanding.

2 The term 'immanent' (सर्वगत, अन्तर्यामी) means the world-soul within. The term 'transcendent' means God without. Both the terms imply 'something else'. If you say both 'immanent' and 'transcendent' (panentheism) then also 'something else' remains. Now, 'something else' and Brahman or the Absolute are contradictory ideas. Vedanta does not recognise the creed of identity in contradiction of Hegelian dialectic nor does it recognise dualism in any form, be it of the East or of the West. All that it says is that such philosophies including the emanistic pantheism of our country, Plotinus and the Sufis may be used by the beginners for the purpose of बुद्धारोह or facility of understanding as शालग्राम शिला (ammonite stone) may be used for worship. Such is the magnanimity of Vedanta. Vedanta has come to help, not to destroy. It understands the weakness of man and also knows his strength. It strikes back only when anybody impertinently ventures to attack its position and then its blow is crushing.

3 All is not God. "God is not Piccadilly Circus" but God is all in all. Nothing else matters. This is the meaning of सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म। God in the sense of Pure Ideal or निर्गुण ब्रह्म has nothing to do with the world. To the believer in निर्गुण ब्रह्म the world is nothing. It is तुच्छ, that is, contemptible and false. Pantheism is incompatible with morality but a-cosmism is not. Pantheism can but lead to determinism whereas a-cosmism stands for free will, the foundation of morality.

science are properly to be regarded as hypotheses or postulates. *A postulate is a man-made hypothesis* which purports to explain all the facts known at the time. Now all scientific laws are postulates of this kind. . . . . No scientific law is either finally or absolutely true: in the words of Sir J. J. Thomson, it 'is a policy, not a creed.' " (Joad's *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*).

The Vedantist fully agrees. It is all *adhyâsa*.

And how about Evolution? Evolution is not only a hypothesis but perhaps the weakest hypothesis possible. Its weakness was known to Darwin himself. Says Darwin: "Our ignorance of the laws of variation is profound. Not in one case out of a hundred can we pretend to assign any reason why this or that part varies more or less from the same part in the parents." (Sir Oliver Lodge's *Modern Problems—Essay on Huxley's Lay Sermons*). Struggle for existence and survival of the fittest tend to clinch and make permanent the variations which otherwise arise, says Sir Oliver Lodge in the same essay to those who imagine that they understand fully the origin of those variations without which natural selection would have nothing to work upon.

Says Frederick Soddy: "There is no direct evidence of the change of one species into another." (*Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*).

Does the idea of Evolution apply to matter?

Hear what the same great authority says on the point:

"The world of Physics and Chemistry is fundamentally the non-living or inanimate external world and the student of it must always be on his guard against anthropomorphic notions and the too literal acceptance of mere analogies or supposed analogies that invade it from the world of life. The living world is dominated by a principle which finds no counterpart in that of pure physics and chemistry, leading to a gradual and orderly growth and development of the complex from the simple."

Another important point to be noted is that the element of time which is essential to the idea of evolution has been interpreted by relativity physics as "one of four dimensions describing or determining an event, and so if the time determinant for any event has any indefinite range of variation in accordance with the choice of the other determinants, *evolution must be an illusion of a particular observer.*" (Our italics).

The Vedantist quite agrees though from a different standpoint. Time, he holds, is an illusion. In the words of Kant it is "an *a priori* intuition of thought"—subjective and not objective.

Another difficulty of the theory of evolution is its logical difficulty. There is a world of difference between the Evolution of our Sankhyas and the Evolution of the modern world. The modern conception of Evolution is epigenetic. Formerly Evolution meant unrolling, the implication being that that which is evolved must have been involved.[1] In the early part of the eighteenth century there was a great controversy between two schools of anatomists, the "evolutionists" and "epigeneticists". The controversy was ultimately decided in favour of the epigeneticists. The epigeneticists hold that the change that arises is something new altogether. The new feature was never 'enfolded' or 'involved'. It suddenly happens. It may be put in this way: "The oak springs *from* the acorn but it was not *in* the acorn." This view has been accepted by the latter-day evolutionists. *This evolution is the same thing as our Asat-kârya-vâda and not the Sat-kârya-vâda of the Sankhyas.* From the logical point of view the *Sat-kârya-vâda* of the Sankhyas

1 When Swami Vivekananda speaks of Evolution and Involution he speaks only for बुद्धारोह or facility of understanding. This is known in Vedanta as अध्यारोप and अपवाद न्याय।

is far superior to the *Asat-kârya-vâda* of the modern evolutionists. But the *Sat-kârya-vâda* of the Sankhyas is also open to serious objection. How can *mulâ prakriti* which consists of three PARTS *sattwa, rajas* and *tamas* (*substances—not qualities*) and which is *achetana* (inanimate) can change at all to some purpose without the active intervention of an animate principle?[1] How again can cause-and-effect relation be established between things that are *bijâtiya* (of a different order)? According to the root-conception of *Sankhya's prakriti* there cannot be anything that is *bijâtiya,* for the three constituents of *mula prakriti* are its PARTS. That being so, anyone thing ought to be the cause of any other thing. But the Sankhyas say that oil cannot be the *parinâma* of sand.[2] "Why not," the critic will ask, "your conception of Nature being what it is?" The Sankhyas admit their inability to answer. They say: "We do not know. We know only from experience that certain antecedents produce certain consequents, but not all." Thus Sankhya *Sat-kârya-vâda* falls to the ground.

This naturally leads to a severe examination *of the very idea of cause.* The result of the examination is that there is no cause anywhere in Nature. Causality is wholly subjective. It comes under Kant's *a priori* categories. The Vedantist agrees and says it is all *adhyâsa. Parinâma-vâda* is thus given up by Vedanta and in its place we have got *Vivarta-vâda.* The Vedanta accepts *Sat-kârya-vâda* only provisionally; but even then there is a world of difference between the *Achetana-pradhâna-vâda* of *Sankhya* and the *Chetana-Brahma-kârana-vâda* of Vedanta. The former is spontaneous evolution, the latter creative evolution, though not exactly in the Bergsonian sense.[3] The idea of *Chetana-Brahma-kârana-vâda* also cannot stand, for Brahman[4] or the Absolute can have no relation. If it had, it would not be the Absolute. If it had not, there would be two Absolutes which is impossible. Atman is असङ्ग (unrelated). न तस्य कार्यं करणञ्च विद्यते। Atman has neither effect nor cause. The Vedanta rejects the futile cause-and-effect philosophy in its entirety and explodes the world as a whole. Vedanta is a bomb-shell. It rejects all the cosmological and teleological arguments of popular theology and carries us aloft to the dizzy height of *Ekamevâdwitiyam.*

From this point let me return to Evolution. I have shown the sad predicament in which the theory stands to-day. It is a disjointed world—discontinuous or परिच्छिन्न. The gaps and chasms are formidable. Still there are people who would bridge the gulf! They speak of 'emergent evolution'. They would make their evolution jump. Make evolution jump—evolution that cannot even creep! Naming is not explaining. Why does emergent emerge? No answer—only a mocking reply: "Why does winkle wink?"

There are some people who will never be dismayed however wretched their cause. They are obsessed. The apostle of emergent evolution is Prof. Lloyd Morgan and its philosopher and theologian is Prof. Alexander who defines Deity in terms of the principle of emergence! According to him nature rises higher and higher and the ultimate result will be Deity. So spirit comes within time-scheme! But they say, he is a great philosopher!!!

Whether Deity will emerge or Destruction will dance we do not know. According to Dr. Jeans,

1 The Sankhyas believe in objective Law and Order.

2 The modern evolutionists will no doubt laugh at this idea of *parinâma.* But I put things as they are.

3 In Vedanta there is no apotheosis of *elán vital,* though *mukhya prâna* is a distinct principle and lasts till *bideha mukti.* (See *Chhandogya*).

4 निर्गुण ब्रह्म is अप्राप्योच्चसना यथः 'living' only in the sense of a 'living ideal.'

perhaps the greatest living cosmogonist of the world, it is not Deity that will emerge but Destruction that will dance. This is Dr. Jeans' picture of our *Pralaya :*

"As a star gets older its mass decreases, the disappearing mass leaving the star in the form of radiation. The end of a star, and indeed, so far as we can see, of the whole material universe, is simple—it is annihilation—

Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the
gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great
globe itself,

Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve, and either leave no rack behind, or in so far as anything is left behind, it will be intangible radiation travelling endlessly through space."

It is thus that Dr. Jeans sounds the death-knell of the doctrine of infinite progress to which some evolutionists still cling with limpet-like tenacity. Joad, the Realist, however, does not believe in infinite progress any more than Bertrand Russel. Says Joad : "If then the end of the evolutionary process were identical with the beginning, if unity split itself into diversity merely in order that it might again achieve unity, the universe was either a meaningless joke or a vicious circle." (*Contemporary British Philosophy*).

Such, in brief, is the present state of the science and philosophy of the West. It is a state of dazed perplexity.

Where, then, lies the hope of mankind? Only in Vedanta—Vedanta which preaches the sovereignty of the Self, Vedanta whose ethical ideal of *Moksha* is identical with the ontological truth of *Brahman* ;[1] Vedanta which disdains the unholy overture of a compromise between *vidyâ* and *avidyâ, Brahman* and *Jagat,* Reality and Value ;[2] Vedanta which views with supreme indifference the petty quarrel between the so-called idealism (rather, mentalism, as Sidgwick has so well said) and realism of the West and which standing like the highest Himalayan peak in the midst of a world, storm-tost and tempest-buffeted, proclaims in the voice of thunder : Know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free. HERE AT LAST IS THAT UNITY FOR WHICH THE HUMAN HEART CRAVES.[3] No evolution,[4] resultant, emergent or creative, no grandmother's tale of special creation, no world, no sun, no moon, no universe, no multiverse—Thou Alone Art, Thou the Ideal, the Infinite, the Eternal, the Timeless, the Spaceless, the Causeless, the Effectless, the Birthless, the Deathless—Om Tat Sat Om !

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[1] नित्यशुद्धब्रह्मस्वरूपत्वान्मोक्षस्य ।

[2] The great problem of Realists to-day is how to reconcile Reality with Value. The neo-Hegelian Green also regards as unanswerable "every form of the question why the world as a whole should be what it is." (*Prolegomena to Ethics,* p. 97). But not a single modern Western philosopher stands for complete renunciation, whatever his label, idealism or realism. Vedanta says : 'A plague on both your houses !' Schopenhauer, the pessimist, is the only modern Western philosopher who recognises the supremacy of the ascetic ideal and we all know Schopenhauer's great regard for Indian philosophy as contrasted with the supercilious and ignorant contempt of Hegel for all things Eastern. This ideal need not have any terror for anyone. It will but lead to the purification of the world. I have laboured this point in my little brochure entitled *Pessimism and Life's Ideal,* published by the Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

[3] The cardinal mistake of Deussen is the identification of *Âtman* with Kant's thing-in-itself which according to Schopenhauer is Will. Kant's thing-in-itself, however, is objective. It is neither the will nor the idea. It is certainly not the Absolute. As far as I know, Swami Vivekananda was the first man to point this out.

[4] *Parinâma-vâda* is *tuccha* (false and contemptible), as Sankara has so well said in his interpretation of *Brahma-Sutra,* 2-1-27. It has absolutely no spiritual value.

# BUILDERS OF UNITY*

By Romain Rolland

## Ram Mohun Roy

Ram Mohun Roy, an extraordinary man, who ushered in a new era in the spiritual history of the ancient continent, was the first cosmopolitan type in India. During his life of less than sixty years (1774—1833) he assimilated all types of thought from the Himalayan myths of ancient Asia to the scientific reason of modern Europe.

He belonged to a great aristocratic Bengal family, bearing the hereditary title of Roy, and he was brought up at the court of the Great Mogul, where the official language was still Persian. As a child he learnt Arabic in the Patna schools, and read the works of Aristotle and Euclid in that language. Thus besides being an orthodox Brahman by birth he was nurtured in Islamic culture. He did not discover the works of Hindu theology until he began to study Sanskrit between the ages of fourteen and sixteen at Benares. His Hindu biographers maintain that this was his second birth ; but it is quite conceivable that he had no need of the Vedanta to imbibe a monotheistic faith. Contact with Islam would have implanted it in him from infancy. Again the science and the practice of Hindu mysticism only reinforced the indelible influence of Sufism, whose burning breath had impregnated his being from his earliest years.[1]

The ardour of his combative genius, mettlesome as a young war horse, made him when he was sixteen take part in a bitter struggle, destined to last as long as life itself, against idolatry. He published a book in Persian with a preface in Arabic, which attacked orthodox Hinduism and led his outraged father to drive him from home. For four years he travelled in the interior of India and Thibet, studying Buddhism without growing to love it, and risking death by raising Lamaist fanaticism against him. At twenty years of age the prodigal son was recalled by his father and returned home. In a vain attempt to attach him to the world he was married, but there was no cage for such a bird.

When he was twenty-four he began to learn English, as well as Hebrew, Greek and Latin. He made the acquaintance of Europeans and learnt their laws and their forms of government. Suddenly casting aside his prejudice against the English, he made common cause with them. In order to further the higher interests of his people he won their confidence and took them as allies. He had discovered that only by depending on Europe could he hope to struggle for the regeneration of India. Once more he began his violent polemics against barbarous customs such



1 The intuitive power and mystic enlightenment of this nature have been somewhat obscured by his reputation, especially in the West, as a man of vigorous reasoning power and a social reformer fighting against the mortal and deadly prejudices of his people. But the mystic side of his genius has been brought to the fore again by Dhirendranath Chowdhuri. The freedom of his intellect would not have been so valuable if it had not been based upon devotional elements equally profound and varied. From infancy he appears as giving himself up to certain practices of Yogic meditation, even to Tantric practices which he later repudiated, concentrating for days on the name or on one attribute of God, repeating the word until the Spirit manifested its presence (exercise of Purascharna), taking the vows of Brahmacharya (chastity) and silence, practising the mystic exercises of Sufism, which he found more satisfying than the Bhakti of Bengal, too sentimental for his proud taste. But his firm reason and will never resigned their functions. They governed his emotions.

as *Sati*, the burning of widows.* This raised a storm of opposition culminating in his definite expulsion from his family in 1799 at the instance of the Brahmans. A few years later even his mother and his wives, his nearest and dearest, refused to live with him. He spent a dozen hard and intrepid years, abandoned by all except one or two Scotch friends. He accepted the post of tax-collector, and gradually rose until he became the ministerial chief of the district.

Then his father died and he was reconciled to his own people, he inherited considerable property, the Emperor of Delhi made him a Rajah, and he possessed a palace and sumptuours gardens at Calcutta. There he lived in the estate of a great lord, giving magnificent receptions in the oriental style with troops of musicians and dancers. His portrait is preserved for us in the Bristol Museum. It reveals a masculine face of great beauty and delicacy with large brown eyes. He is wearing a flat turban like a crown, and a shawl is draped over a robe of Franciscan brown.[1] A prince of the Arabian Nights though he might be, this in no wise interfered with his ardent study of the Hindu Scriptures or his campaigns for restoring the pure spirit of the Vedas. To this end he translated them into Bengali and English and wrote commentaries upon them. He went further. Side by side with the Upanishads and the Sutras, he made a close study of the Christian Testaments. He was, it is said, the first high caste Hindu to study the teachings of Christ. After the Gospels he published in 1820 a book on the Precepts of Jesus, a Guide to Peace and Happiness. About 1826 he became for some time a member of a Society of Unitarians, founded by one of his European friends, the Protestant minister Adam, who flattered himself secretly that he had converted Roy to Christianity, so that he might become its great apostle to the Indians. But Roy was no more to be chained to orthodox Christianity than to orthodox Hinduism, although he believed that he had discovered its true meaning. He remained an independent theist, essentially a rationalist and moralist. He extracted its ethical system from Christianity, but he rejected the Divinity of Christ, just as he rejected the Hindu Incarnations. He attacked the Trinity no less than polytheism ; for he was a passionate Unitarian. Hence both Brahmans and missionaries were united in enmity against him.

But he was not the man to be troubled on that score. As all other churches were closed to him,[2] he opened one for himself and for the free believers of the universe. It was preceded by the founding of the Atmiya Sabha (the Society of Friends) in 1815 for the worship of God, the One and Invisible. In 1827 he had published a pamphlet on the Gayatri, supposed to be the most ancient theistic formula of the Hindus. Eventually in 1828 his chief friends, among whom was Tagore, gathered at his house and founded a Unitarian Association, destined to have a startling subsequent career in India, under the name of the Brahmo Samaj,[3]

* It is said that in 1811 he was present at the burning of a young sister-in-law, and that the horror of the sacrifice, heightened by the struggles of the victim, upset him completely, so that he had no peace till he had freed the land from such crimes.

1 He had adopted Mohammedan costume. He tried later in vain to impose it at the meetings of his Brahmo Samaj. In dress he possessed an aesthetic taste and hygienic need for cleanliness and comfort, belonging rather to Islam than to Hinduism.

2 With the exception of the Unitarian Church of the excellent Adam, which, nevertheless, was not prosperous.

3 The name of Brahmo Samaj appears for the first time erroneously in the deed of purchase of land whereon the Unitarian temple was built in 1829.

Its first meeting was held on August 25, 1828. Every Saturday from seven till nine recitation of the Vedas, readings from the Upanishads, sermons on Vedic texts, the singing of hymns mostly composed by Roy himself and accompanied musically by a Mohammedan, took place.

(Adi Brahmo Samaj), the House of God. It was dedicated to the "worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe." He was to be worshipped "not under or by any other name, designation or title peculiarly used for, and applied to, any particular Being or Beings by any man or set of men whatever." The church was to be closed to none. Ram Mohun Roy wished that his Brahmo Samaj should be a universal house of prayer, open to all men without distinction of colour, caste, nation or religion. In the deed of gift he laid down that no religion "shall be reviled or slightly or contemptuously spoken of or alluded to." The cult was to encourage "the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe" and "of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and the strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds."

Roy, then, wished to found a universal religion, and his disciples and admirers voluntarily called it "Universalism". But I cannot accept this term in its full and literal meaning; for Roy excluded from it all forms of polytheism from the highest to the lowest. The man, who wishes to regard without prejudice the religious realities of the present day, must take into account that polytheism, from its highest expression in the Three in One of the Christian Trinity to its most debased, holds sway over two-thirds at least of mankind. Roy called himself more correctly a "Hindu Unitarian", and did not hesitate to borrow from the two great unitarian religions, Islam and Christianity.[1] But he defended himself strenuously, and his disciples are agreed on that point, against the reproach of "eclecticism". According to him doctrine should rest on original synthetic analysis, sounding the depths of religious experience. It is not then to be confounded with the monism of the Vedanta nor with Christian unitarianism. The theism of Roy claims to rest on two poles, the "absolute" Vedanta and the Encyclopædic thought of the XVIIIth century in Europe—the Formless God and Reason.

It was not easy to define, and it was still less easy to realise after he had gone; for it implied a rare harmony of critical intelligence and faith going as far as the enlightenment of a noble mysticism, consistently controlled and dominated by reason. Royally constituted physically and morally, he was able to attain the heights of contemplation without losing for an instant the balance of his everyday life or interrupting his daily course; he was protected against emotional excess, to which the Bhaktas of Bengal were a prey, and which he avoided disdainfully.[2] It is not until we reach Aurobindo Ghose a century later that we find the same aristocratic freedom of diverse powers linked to the highest type of mind. It was not easily communicable and in fact was impossible to communicate intact. Noble and pure though the successors of Ram Mohun Roy were, they changed his doctrine out of all recognition. Nevertheless the

[1] Ram Mohun Roy's Hindu Unitarianism is nearer to the Bible than the doctrines of his immediate successors at the head of the Brahmo Samaj, especially Devendranath Tagore.

[2] Cf. Dhirendranath Chowdhuri: *Ram Mohun Roy, the Devotee* (The Modern Review, October, 1928).

. . . . "the Raja would be frequently found absorbed (in Brahmasamadhi), all his distractions notwithstanding . . . For the Raja Samadhi is not an abnormal physiological change of the body that can be effected at will, not unconsciousness generated as in sound sleep but the highly spiritual culture of perceiving Brahman in *all* and the habit of surrendering the self to the higher self. Atmasakshatkar to him was not to deny the existence of the world . . . but to perceive God in every bit of perception . . . Ram Mohun was pre-eminently a Sadhaka. . . . A Vedantist in every pulse of his being, Ram Mohun failed not to perceive that the Upanishads were not sufficient to satisfy the Bhakti hankerings of the soul, nor was he able to side with the Bhakti cult of Bengal. . . . . But the needs of Bhakti would be met by the Sufis, as he hoped. . . ." [This is not Samadhi, but merely spiritual contemplation.—*Ed., P. B.*]

Constitution of the Brahmo Samaj—the *Magna Carta Dei*,—which included such part as could be understood and assimilated by his successors, founded a new era in India and Asia, and a century has gone to prove the grandeur of its conception.

Its other practical aspect was emphasised by Roy in his vigorous campaigns for social reform,[1] supported by the English administration, more liberal and more intelligent than that of to-day. His patriotism had nothing parochial about it. He cared for nothing but liberty and civil and religious progress. Far from wishing to expel England from India, he wished her to be established there in such a way that her blood, her gold and her thought should be intermingled with the Indian, rather than as a blood-sucking ghoul, leaving her exhausted. He went so far as to wish his people to adopt English as their universal language, to Westernise India socially, and then to achieve independence and enlighten the rest of Asia. His newspapers were impassioned in the cause of liberty on behalf of all the nations of the world, of Ireland, of Naples crushed under reaction, of revolutionary France in the July Days of 1830. But this loyal partizan of co-operation with England could speak frankly to her, and he did not conceal his intention of breaking with her if his great hopes of her as a leader in the advancement of his people were not realised.

Towards the end of 1830 the Emperor of Delhi sent him as his ambassador to England; for Roy wished to be present at the debate in the Commons for the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company. He arrived in April, 1831, and was warmly received at Liverpool, at Manchester, at London and at Court. He made some illustrious friends, Bentham among their number, paid a short visit to France, and then died of brain fever at Bristol on September 27, 1833, where he is buried. His epitaph runs:

"A conscientious and steadfast believer in the Unity of Godhead: he consecrated his life with entire devotion to the worship of the Divine Spirit alone" or to use the language of Europe, its meaning being the same, "of Human Unity."

This man of gigantic personality, whose name to our shame is not inscribed in the Pantheon of Europe as well as of Asia, sank his ploughshare in the soil of India, and sixty years of labour left her transformed. A great writer of Sanskrit, Bengali, Arabic, Persian, and English, the father of modern Bengali prose, the author of celebrated hymns, poems, sermons, philosophic treatises, and political and controversial writings of all kinds, he sowed broadcast his thoughts and his passion. And out of the earth of Bengal has come forth his harvest—a harvest of works and a harvest of men.

### Devendranath Tagore

The poet's grandfather, Dvarakanath Tagore, a friend of Ram Mohun Roy, was the chief supporter of the Brahmo Samaj after the latter's death; the father of Rabindranath, Devendranath Tagore (1817—1905), the second

1 We cannot attempt to give here a full list of his innumerable reforms or attempted reforms. Let us mention among the chief, Sati (the burning of widows), which he proved to be contrary to the sacred texts and which he persuaded the British Government to forbid in 1829—and his campaign against polygamy—his attempts to secure the re-marriage of widows, intercaste marriage, Indian unity, friendship between Hindus and Mussalmans, Hindu education, which he wished to model on the scientific lines of Europe and for which he wrote in Bengali numerous text books on Geography, Astronomy, Geometry, Grammar, etc., the education of women based on the example of Ancient India, liberty of thought and of the Press, legal reform, political equality, etc.

He founded in 1821 a Bengal Newspaper, the father of the whole native Press of India, a Persian paper and another paper called the *Ved Mandir* for the study of Vedic science. Moreover India owes him her first modern Hindu college and free schools, and ten years after hia death the first school for women in Calcutta (1843).

successor of Roy after the interregnum of Ramchandra Vidyavagish, was the man who really organised the Brahmo Samaj. This noble figure, aureoled in history with the name of Saint (Maharshi), bestowed upon him by his people, merits some attempt at a short description.

He had the physical and spiritual beauty, the high spirit, the moral purity, the aristocratic perfection, which he has bequeathed to his children; moreover he possessed the same deep and warm poetic sensibility.

Born at Calcutta, the eldest son of a rich family, brought up in orthodox traditions, his adolescence was exposed to the seductions of the world and the snares of pleasure, from which he was rescued by the visitation of death to his house. But he was to pass through a long moral crisis before he reached the threshold of religious peace. It is characteristic that his decisive advances were always the result of poetic emotions, roused by the wind that took him on a night of the full moon to the banks of the Ganges, or the name of Hari (Vishnu), sung by a dying person, the words of a boatman during a storm—"Be not afraid! Forward!", or again the wind blowing a torn page of Sanskrit to his feet whereon were written words from the Upanishads, which seemed to be the voice of God, "Leave all and follow Him! Enjoy his inexpressible riches. . . . ."

In 1839 he founded with his brothers and sisters and several friends a Society for the propagation of the truths in which they believed. Three years later he joined the Brahmo Samaj, and became its leading spirit. It was he who built up its faith and ritual. He organised its regular worship, founded a school of theology for the training of ministers, preached himself, and wrote in Sanskrit in 1848 the Brahmo Dharma, "a theistic manual of religion and ethics for the edification of the faithful." He himself considered it to be "inspired".[1] The source of his inspiration, of quite a different order from that of Ram Mohun Roy, was almost entirely the Upanishads, but freely interpreted.[2] Devendranath afterwards laid down the four articles of faith of the Brahmo Samaj:

1. In the beginning was nothing. The One Supreme Being alone existed. He created the Universe.

2. He alone is the God of Truth, Infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Power, Eternal and Omnipresent, the One without second.

3. Our salvation depends on belief in Him and in His worship in this world and the next.

4. Belief consists in loving Him and doing His will.

The faith of the Brahmo Samaj then is a faith in a One God, who created the universe out of nothing and who is characterised essentially by the Spirit of Kindness, and whose absolute adoration is necessary for the salvation of man in the next world.

I have no means of judging whether this is as purely Hindu a conception as Devendranath thought it to be. But it is interesting to note that the Tagore family belong to a community of Brahmans, called Pirilis, or chief ministers, a post occupied by its

[1] "It was the Truth of God that penetrated my heart. These living truths have come down into my heart from Him who is the Life and the Light and the Truth." (Devendranath). He dictated the first part in three hours, and the whole of the treatise was produced "in the language of the Upanishads like a river, spiritual truths flowed through my mind by His grace." The danger with this process of inspired legislation, the natural expression of a man with Devendranath's temperament, is that on the one hand his Brahmo Samaj maintained that "Truth is the only eternal and imperishable scripture" and did not recognise any other holy book as scripture, and on the other, Truth rested on the authority of this inner outpouring, which had issued in the last resort from several of the Hindu Scriptures, chosen and commented upon in a preconceived sense.

[2] The attitude of Devendranath to the Holy Books was not always consistent. Between 1844 and 1846 at Benares he seemed to consider that the Vedas were infallible, but later he gave up that idea after 1847, and individual inspiration gained the upper hand.

members under the Mussalman regime. In a sense they were placed outside caste through their relations with the Mahommedans ;[1] it is, however, perhaps not too much to say that the persistent rigour of their theism has been due to this influence. From Dvarakanath to Rabindranath they have been the implacable enemies of all forms of idolatry.[2]

According to K. T. Paul, Devendranath had to wage a prolonged struggle on the one hand against the practices of orthodox Hinduism and on the other against Christian propaganda, which sought to gain a foothold in the Brahmo Samaj. The need for defence led him to surround the citadel with a fortification of firm and right principles as picket posts. The bridge was raised between it and the two extremes of Indian religion—polytheism, which Devendranath strictly prohibited[3] and the absolute monism of Sankara ; for the Brahmo *Burg* was the stronghold of the great Dualism of the One and Personal God and Human Reason, to whom God had granted the power and the right to interpret the Scriptures. I have already pointed out that in the case of Devendranath, and still more of his successors, this Reason had a tendency to become confused with religious inspiration. About 1860 from the depths of an eighteen months' retreat in the Himalayas near the Simla hills he produced a garland of solitary meditation. These thoughts were later expanded into improvised sermons deeply moving to his Calcutta public. Further he bestowed upon the Brahmo Samaj a new liturgy inspired by the Upanishads and impregnated with an ardent and pure spirituality.

A short time after his return from the Himalayas in 1862 he adopted as his coadjutor Keshab Chunder Sen, a young man of twenty-three, who was destined to surpass him and to provoke a schism, or rather a series of schisms in the Brahmo Samaj.

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## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

By Ananda

### External Renunciation

Is external renunciation also necessary? Is not mental renunciation enough? Our opinion is that internal renunciation is not enough. One reason is obvious. Our external behaviour is the expression of our thoughts and motives. If we renounce internally, it must express itself outwardly also, if we are sincere. He who has no world, no family inside, cannot have them outside. He becomes like a dry leaf swept by the wind of God's will. He wanders about unattached to any fixed set of persons and place. He cannot have any home. If we find any difference between the inside and the outside, between thought and behaviour, we must know that there is somewhere a kink in the internal renunciation, re-

1 Cf. Manjulal Dave : *The Poetry of Rabindranath Tagore*, 1927.

2 Over the door of Shantiniketan, the home of the Tagores, an inscription runs : "In this place no image is to be adored." But it goes on to add, "And no man's faith is to be despised."

Islamic influences in the infancy of Ram Mohun Roy as well must always be borne in mind in a consideration of the penetration of the Indian spirit with the current of Monotheism.

3 To such a degree that at the death of his father in 1846, the eldest son whose business it was to arrange the funeral ceremonies, refused to bow to family tradition because it included idolatrous rites. The scandal was so great that his family and friends broke with him. I must not linger over the years of noble trial which followed. Devendranath devoted himself to the crushing task of paying back his father's creditors in full and of meeting all the engagements made by his prodigality; for he died heavily in debt.

nunciation is not yet complete and sincere.

But this is about ideal renunciation. We admit that there may be persons who are sufficiently unattached in the mind, though they are still in the world. Their number is very small ; and they should be looked upon more as exceptions than the general rule. King Janakas are not plentiful. We should not make this our ideal. For it is extremely difficult to follow and realise this. We shall more often fail than succeed. If we can, we must take to normal and natural renunciation, that is, both internal and external. But if we are so circumstanced that we cannot renounce formally, we must of course try to realise the Janaka-ideal, however difficult it may be, for then there is no other choice.

We shall discuss here only the cases of those who *can* renounce. Is it necessary for them to renounce externally ? Has such renunciation any special value ? We would request our readers in this connection to remember what we said about the fitness and conditions of external renunciation in our June article. We hope they remember the condition of mind we stated to be favourable to renunciation. If they do, they will at once find out why we are insisting on formal renunciation. We said that there is a state of mind, in which the mind by itself does not hanker for the objects of enjoyment, but that if those objects are contiguous, the mind is disturbed and wishes to grab at them. If we are convinced that our sole aim is to make the mind completely desireless, we should, in that condition of mind, live far off from the objects of desire. We must physically go out of society, family and the company of women and children. After all, villages and towns are pre-eminently places of enjoyment—we use the word in a broad sense. There almost all men and women are after self-gratification, consciously or unconsciously, grossly or finely. Constant contact with them and with the objects of enjoyment which abound everywhere will unconsciously draw the mind down to the level of self-gratification. The best course for one, intent on spiritual self-realisation, is to retire from the habitations of householders and dwell apart. One must live in the company of those who have already renounced and in association with things and activities which are pre-eminently spiritual. To live in the world and yet to grow in the spirit of renunciation means a tremendous waste of energy and most often failure. You have to fight constantly. The mind *will* be disturbed by low desires if you always come in contact with their objects. And you will have to pull it up again to a safe level. This eternal play will go on,—the sliding down of the mind and drawing it up. The energy that is to be devoted to the realisation of God will thus be spent up in looking after the mind. There would, therefore, be little spiritual progress. It is a nerve-racking business,—this struggle with the mind. Heaven knows the mind is sufficiently intractable even without stimulation from outside. Constant struggle with the mind leads to neurosis ; and this is dangerous. If we are sincere and serious, we must, therefore, retire from the world also externally.

We often meet with serene-minded householders, who appear undisturbed by passions and quite self-poised. Some there are who are really highly developed. But as we said they are exceptional. Most of those who appear peaceful are not really so. Firstly, appearances are often deceptive. Secondly, there is a psychological reason why they appear calm outside. It is that they have a constant subconscious knowledge that the objects of enjoyment are already in their possession. This consciousness of possession naturally keeps the mind calm. It is not that we want to enjoy twenty-four hours. We want to enjoy whenever we wish ; but we do want to *possess* the objects of enjoyment twenty-four hours. Take away from a so-

called calm person the objects of his enjoyment, and you will see he has lost all peace of mind,—his nature has changed. When you renounce, your mind becomes unusually sensitive about enjoyment. Desires appear much stronger and much more hideous than when you were in the world. They appear before you in all their hitherto potential power and ugliness. Then the real fight begins and you have to win the battle. In the world, these subtle forms have scarcely any occasion or opportunity to appear in the conscious mind, for the gross forms already abound there. We often congratulate ourselves on the conquest of desires simply by minimising the gross desires, because we do not know that the subtle desires are lurking like wild animals in the subconscious regions of the mind. External renunciation makes them come up to the surface, and then they can be fought and conquered.

This is not the only reason why we should renounce. There are certain ideals which every man aspiring after God-realisation has to try to follow and realise. For they are the emanations of God Himself. We have to become absolutely unselfish. We must practise and realise universal love. We must be fearless and truthful. These are all concomitants of Divine realisation. We cannot hope to realise God without becoming all these. But can we be truly unselfish being in the world? A householder may make charities. But he must necessarily devote his best energies and resources to the service of his parents, wife, children, relations and friends. Though from the standpoint of the householder such preference is a duty and not reprehensible, from the high standpoint of one who is seeking to realise God, it is far short of duty. One feels that any distinction between one's relatives and other persons is born of ignorance and physical attachment, and contradicts Divine knowledge. One feels an urge to remove this distinction. He who surrenders to this urge, eventually goes out of the world. But most persons drown the voice of their conscience in their love for their own. They devote the best parts of themselves to their wives and children and relatives, and care little for the suffering millions outside their families. How can even internal renunciation be possible in such a life, not to speak of God-realisation? A householder can never practise universal love. The very mode of his life is a contradiction. To love all, one must serve all equally. A householder, however spiritual, cannot do so.

Spirituality cannot come without a true valuation of things. We confuse values. A seer knows that the world has no value, it is unsubstantial, empty and insignificant. Its grandeur, its societies, its Governments, its powers, all are nothing. We must grow to this consciousness, if we want to be spiritual. That is, we must have a keen sense of freedom. We must never feel that we are under anything or any person. Absolute freedom,—that is the ideal. Can a householder ever feel and realise it? He cannot. The moment you attach any value to things or persons, the moment you want to possess them, that moment you come under the jurisdiction of society, Government, conventions, customs and vulgar criticism. You are no longer free to do what you feel to be right. You have to submit to other powers than your conscience. You see that your thoughts, words and deeds do not jeopardise the interests of family, relations, friends and community. You cannot stand by truth alone. You cannot antagonise society. You may antagonise society, but only when you are confident of the protection of another society. Real freedom, real fearlessness and real truthfulness can never be of one who is clogged by family or earthly possessions. Only a *Sannyâsin* can have them. We do not mean that all *Sannyasins* are so. But they have the *opportunity* to be so. The householders have not, even if they want to be so.

These qualities have to be acquired through constant practice by everyone, householder or *Sannyasin*.

And above all, power. One must have tremendous power if one is to conquer the turbulent mind and defeat the inexorable *Mâyâ*. That power can never be acquired by one who has not renounced. Freedom alone gives power. The mind must be absolutely free to be powerful. This freedom is so precious to a spiritual aspirant that when one of his young disciples entered a service, Sri Ramakrishna wept aloud in the bitter agony of his heart, and said that he would not have been more pained to hear of his death. Indeed a full growth of spiritual life, even the fulness of manhood, is impossible without external renunciation.

We must last of all mention that the true import of renunciation can never be felt till one has actually renounced. No effort of imagination can bring its significance to one who is yet in the world, married or unmarried. A new world opens before one when one crosses over. That world is known only to the man of renunciation.

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## DECLINE OF INDIA'S CULTURAL SWARAJ

By Pramatha Nath Bose, B.Sc. (London).

I

We saw in the last article, that India maintained her Cultural Swaraj and, on the whole, prospered under it down to the earlier years of British Rule. As has been observed by Mr. E. B. Havell, "in the deeper sense India was never conquered. Islam seized her political capitals, controlled her military forces, and appropriated her revenues, but India retained what she cherished most, her intellectual empire, and her soul was never subdued. Her great University cities lost to a great extent their political influence ; some changed their sites as they had often done before ; others, like Benares, Kanchi and Nadiya were less populous and wealthy, but remained as the historic seats of Hindu learning."[1]

It would perhaps be no exaggeration to say, that the destiny of India in recent times was decided not so much by the result of the battle between Sirajudowla and Clive in 1757, as by that of the battle between the Orientalists and the Anglicists in 1835. It has loosened the bond of cultural affinity and amity which was the strongest that had held together the heterogeneous elements of the Indian nation, and has been fruitful of mischief in various other ways. The battle ground was the Committee of Public Instruction. Until 1834, the heroes in the fight were equally balanced, five against five.

The Orientalists argued, that the education grant of 1813 was assigned for "the revival and improvement of literature," which could only mean oriental literature, and for "the encouragement of the learned natives of India ; by which oriental scholars alone could have been intended" ; that English education meant only a smattering of it, and the question was between "a profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic literature on the one side, and a superficial knowledge of the rudiments of English on the other," that the classical languages were "absolutely necessary for the improvement of the vernacular dialects" and "that the condemnation of the classical languages to oblivion, would consign the dialects to utter helplessness and irretrievable

[1] "Aryan Rule in India," p. 408.

barbarism," that "little real progress can be made until the learned classes in India are enlisted in the cause of diffusing sound knowledge," and that "one Pundit or Maulavee, who should add English to Sanskrit or Arabic, who should be led to expose the absurdities and errors of his own system, and advocate the adoption of European knowledge and principles, would work a greater revolution in the minds of his countrymen than would result from their proficiency in English alone;" and "that as we have succeeded the native chiefs who were the natural patrons of Indian learning, we are bound to give that aid to oriental scholars which they would have done had they never been displaced by us."

To these arguments, the Anglicists replied, that the grant of 1813 was not only for "the encouragement and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India," "but also for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences," by which European sciences alone could be intended, that the example of the Hindu College showed, that Indians could acquire a command of the English language and a familiarity with its literature and science "to an extent rarely equalled by any schools in Europe;" and "the best test of what they can do is what they have done ; that all that is required is to impregnate the national mind with knowledge, but by adhering to oriental education the national mind would for ages be kept in a state of worse than Egyptian bondage, in order that the vernacular dialects may be improved from congenial, instead of from uncongenial sources" ; that it was quite unnecessary, even if it was practical, to have able Pundits and Maulvis versed in English to propagate a taste for European knowledge, as such taste had been created already, and the people were greedy for English education ; and the English Government were not "bound to perpetuate the system patronised by their predecessors, merely because it was patronised by them, however little it may have been calculated to promote the welfare of the people."

Though the parties were equally balanced, the Orientalists, in point of distinction, were at first the stronger, including as they did among them such men as Wilson and Shakespeare. But the arrival of Macaulay in 1834 and his able advocacy of the cause of the Anglicists turned the scale in their favour ; and the discussion was at last terminated by his minute in which he thus sums up his arguments :

"I think it clear that we are not fettered by the Act of Parliament of 1813 ; that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied ; that we are free to employ our funds as we choose ; that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing ; that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic ; that the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic ; that neither as the languages of law, nor as the languages of religion, have the Sanskrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement ; that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed."

"In one point I fully agree with the gentlemen to whose general views I am opposed. I feel with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern ; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for convey-

ing knowledge to the great mass of the population."

In March 1835, the following resolution, evidently determined by the minute of Macaulay, was passed by Lord William Bentinck:

"His Lordship is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone."

It gave immense impetus to English education. Two of the Orientalist members of the Committee of Public Instruction tendered their resignation. New members were elected whose views were more in conformity with those of the Government resolution. The Hindus who had hitherto been unrepresented on the Committee were now allowed a share in their deliberations. The newly organised Committee with Macaulay as their President took very active measures for the spread of English education. Six new schools were established the very year the resolution of Bentinck was passed, and six more were established at the commencement of the next year. A library was attached to each school. Books and scientific apparatus of various kinds were ordered from England. Within three years, between 1835 and 1838, the number of seminaries under the control of the Committee rose from eleven to forty, and the number of pupils from about three thousand and four hundred to six thousand.

## II

That the rapid spread of English education has done some good is unquestionable.

It has relaxed the restraints of authority and of conventionalities sanctioned by immemorial usage. Literary ambition has a freer scope, and has been soaring into regions hitherto unknown in India. The Indian intellect has ventured out of the well-beaten paths of theology and metaphysics. The medical and mathematical sciences which yielded such notable results to the ancient Hindus are now being cultivated on the improved methods of the West. Biography, novel (in its modern forms), archaeology, and the different branches of natural science are subjects almost entirely new in modern Indian literature. It is true, the emancipated intellect has been producing much that is worthless and even mischievous, and is marked rather by extent of surface than by depth. In these respects, however, modern Indian literature resembles, to a great extent, its prototype, the Western literature. In the social sphere also many evils which had crept into Hindu Society such as *Sati* and polygamy have been removed.

There is a fable that on the birth of the son of a mighty personage, all the fairies were invited to his cradle except one, and they were all very profuse in their gifts. The uninvited fairy came last in great dudgeon. But unable to reverse what her sisters had done already, she mixed a curse with every blessing they had conferred. From my experience of over six decades, I find the moral of this fable illustrated in most, if not all, of our sublunary blessings.

The benefits conferred by English Education are overwhelmingly countered by the evils resulting from the extreme pro-Western bias of the average English-educated Indian or Neo-Indian as he may be conveniently called. He regards the methods and ideals of Western culture to be so superior to those of Indian as to render their propagation to be, on the whole at least, a boon and a blessing, and eagerly pursues the path of Western civilization as the right path of progress and reform. Macaulay had the foresight to predict that English education would train up a "class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in

opinions, in morals, and in intellect." That is exactly what has happened.

It should be observed, that new India is no longer characterised by that attitude of aggressive hostility which it assumed towards old India in the early years of English education. It was not enough for the first generation of English-educated youths, at least in Bengal, to show their liberation from Hindu superstition by taking beef and drinking spirituous liquors, but some of them went so far as to purposely offend their orthodox neighbours by throwing beef-bones into their houses. Happily, new India is now generally free from this pugnacious spirit, and the forces of old India have been gradually increasing in strength. But in this conflict of culture new India is still decidedly the more articulate, if not the stronger factor.

The bias of education, formed at the most impressionable time of life, is always very strong and very difficult to remove. The Neo-Indian can hardly be said to have a mind of his own. It is more or less a shadow, a reflection of the Western mind. I find this passage in a work on Indian economics, by a distinguished Indian author: "The rise to a higher standard of life without which no advance in civilization is possible has begun in India."

This is only an echo of the prevailing Western view, that we are just emerging from a lower to a higher state of civilization under Western tutelage. The Western-educated Indian does not pause to ponder whether this "rise" adds to our social efficiency, whether it does not rather diminish it—materially by attenuating to the vanishing point our meagre margin between sufficiency and privation, and morally by inordinately enhancing the stringency of the struggle for animal existence, and thereby leading to the scramble of individual against individual and of class against class, and the consequent diminution of that spirit of benevolence and of social service which has so long cemented our society together, and to various other ethical obliquities. It cannot be gainsaid, that a rise to a higher standard of living is the necessary concomitant of advance in civilization. Such a rise took place in the case of the Hindus as they advanced in civilization some two thousand years ago, and until recently they kept to the standard of decency, comfort and luxury which they then attained. The so-called "rise" which is now taking place under the influence of a highly materialistic culture like the modern is only an exchange of the indigenous standard of decency, cleanliness, comfort, and luxury for an exotic one. The exchange, instead of benefiting our community, is, on the whole, doing endless mischief. For instance, in a climate where the minimum of clothing, consistent with the indigenous idea of decency, is conducive to health and comfort, the swathing of the body in a multiplicity of cumbersome apparel from head to foot in accordance with the Western idea of decency, produces discomfort, injures health, and drains the purse without any equivalent advantage.

The typical Neo-Indian has become more or less an automaton, moving, acting, and talking much as the Occidental would make him do. He hesitates to take a single step for which there is no precedent in the West. He attempts nothing which is not likely to meet with Western approbation, and nothing passes with him which has not the "Hallmark" of Western approval. He merely echoes the views and shibboleths of the Westerner and does it with all the zeal of a neophyte. The Occidental—naturally enough from his view-point—regards the sparsely clad Indian of simple habits living in the style of his forefathers as but little removed from a barbaric condition. His Indian disciple, as we have just seen, forthwith pleads vehemently for a "rise in the standard of living" after the Western fashion as essential for the emergence of his compatriots from such

condition, forces up the demand for drapery and all the tawdry paraphernalia of Western civilization hundredfold, and thus adds fresh links to the ever lengthening chain of India's industrial slavery and swells the volume of an exhausting economic drain. The Occidental, accustomed to a different state of society and but little acquainted with ours, views, as a rule, the restricted freedom of higher class Hindu females, the comparative seclusion in which they live and their untiring, whole-hearted, self-sacrificing devotion to household duties as little better than a state of drudgery and bondage, and unable to reconcile illiteracy with enlightenment, regards them as immersed in darkness. New India at once rings with the cry of the "degraded condition of our womanhood" from end to end ; the unregenerate males of old India are reprobated by a hundred tongues and castigated by a thousand pens for perversely keeping their women in a condition of slavery wallowing in the slough of ignorance. That there is room for reform in Hindu Society, as there is in every other society, goes without saying. But the Neo-Indian reformer knows no way of reform except that of Western civilization ; and burning with zeal he loudly proclaims the gospel of female emancipation on Western lines and girds up to lift the benighted females by making them race with the males along the paths of University education and Western civilization, little reflecting upon the goal to which they are likely to lead and to which they are already leading in the West.

The Upanishads were for a long time sealed books to the Neo-Indian. But when a Western philosopher (Schopenhauer) declared emphatically, that "in the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads," and that "it had been the solace of his life, and would be the solace of his death," he began to see that there might really be something in them and to pay them some sort of lip-homage. Vedantism, the most scientific religion which civilized man has risen to as yet, has for good many centuries been, and still is, the dominant creed of the enlightened in old India ; but new India knew but little of it until it secured the adherence of Max Müller, Deussen, and other European savants. Even now, the great majority of the Neo-Indians, like the great majority of the Westerners, look upon Vedantism and similar products of ancient Hindu culture much as they look upon Museum specimens of palæontological and archæological curiosities. The Caste System is generally regarded by the Westerner as a "monstrous engine of pride, dissension, and shame," and the Neo-Indian, following his lead, anathematizes it and exclaims from housetops : "Our character is being unhinged, our divisions and dissensions are being sharpened, our activities for public good are being weakened, our very national existence is being threatened by this demon of caste, which has made, and is making cowards of us."

## III

The Neo-Indian is so fully convinced of the beneficence of the present system of Education on Western lines, and is so enamoured with it, that he constantly urges its extension in the press and on the platform, for males as well as for females, for the upper as well as for the lower classes. He measures the progress of any particular area, or of any particular section of the population, by its progress in literacy on Western methods. The Neo-Indian scholar considers himself so far above the learned of old India, that they evoke in him a complacent feeling of benignant patronage, if not of contemptuous indifference. A discussion at a meeting of the Senate of the Bombay University, held in October, 1913, will illustrate the attitude of new India in this respect. The discussion arose out

of the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Education Department, to the Registrar of the University :

"I am directed to state that at the conference of Orientalists held at Simla in July, 1911, there was a general consensus of opinion that it was necessary while making provision for Oriental study and research on modern critical lines, to maintain side by side with it the ancient and indigenous systems of instruction, since the world of studentship would, it was thought, suffer irreparable loss if the old type of pandit and maulavi were to die out, and that what was needed to promote this indigenous system was encouragement rather than reform. With this object in view it has been suggested that a Sanskrit school might be established at Poona for the training of pandits. The school should be furnished with a good library to which the collection of manuscripts at the Deccan College might be transferred. The students at the proposed school would be partly pandits engaged in the acquisition of Oriental learning on the traditional lines, and partly graduates interested either in Oriental research or in extending their knowledge of the more recondite branches of Oriental studies. The staff would consist partly of the repositories of the ancient traditional learning and partly of modern Oriental scholars. Provision would also be made for the imparting of an elementary knowledge of the English language to the pandit students, and of the German and French languages, a knowledge of which is necessary for the study of modern methods of criticism."

In connection with this letter an elderly Fellow of the Bombay University, who was on the borderland between old and new India, proposed :

"That Government be informed that the University is prepared to establish a branch of Oriental studies with suitable titles of distinction if arrangements are made for the teaching of this branch of knowledge generally on the lines indicated in the Government letter."

This proposal met with a storm of opposition which was led by a prominent representative of new India. So far as I can gather, his reasons for opposing it are

First : The traditional mode of learning developed the faculty of "cramming."

Secondly : It was adverse to "liberal education."

"The old traditional learning", said this gentleman, "would not stand the test of modern ideas. They should leave the pandits to take care of themselves. If Government desired to give them encouragement let them do so, but the University should have nothing to do with them. He did not want traditional learning at the expense of liberal culture."

Another Neo-Indian gentleman in seconding the amendment said that

"He was surprised that at that time of the day they should talk of the preservation of the pandits. Considering the harmful mode of their learning it was not advisable for the University to recognise them by instituting degrees. The University should not extend its recognition to any one who had not acquired an insight into what he called the modern outlook of life. The pandits' outlook of life was so narrow, and the traditional school of learning was so harmful and opposed to modern learning, that by encouraging it they would not be encouraging what was termed liberal education."

Poor pandits ! The fact that such men as Bhaskaracharya, Ramanuja, Ramananda, Madhavacharya, Chaitanya, Rammohan Roy, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bapudeva Sastri, Taracharan Tarkaratna, Sudhakar Dvivedi, Rakhal Das Nyayaratna and Dayananda Sarasvati have come from their ranks in comparatively recent times—not to speak of the great sages and scientists who flourished during the heyday of our civilization—should have afforded

food for reflection to men who have any pretension to "liberal" education. That there are serious defects in the indigenous system of higher education would be readily admitted by all who know anything about it. But it is not so harmful, nor does it compare so very unfavourably with the system of English education in vogue among us, as to be undeserving of the small measure of encouragement vouchsafed by Government. There is, I think, no less of "cramming" among us than among the pandits. They exercise their memory to be thorough, we do so merely to pass examinations. Thoroughness and profundity are writ large on the brow of the pandits, as superficiality and shallowness on ours. Then, in regard to the matter "crammed," I am not sure that we can reasonably boast of superior discriminative capacity, when we remember that a good portion of our time has been consumed in committing to memory such things as the feats (with dates) of glorified assassins, murderers, freebooters, and swindlers.

A tree is to be judged by its fruit; and I have grave doubts if the fruit of the exotic recently planted is so markedly superior to that of the indigenous plant that we can despise it and leave it to perish. The pandit is the embodiment of a high cultural ideal which actuates but few of us. He is but little influenced by commercial considerations. He not only imparts education without any fee but also feeds his pupils ; and though "Brahmacharya" has undergone considerable relaxation of late, the physical and mental discipline they are still subjected to is far more wholesome than what is enforced in our English schools.

Physically, intellectually, and morally the average pandit does not compare at all unfavourably with the average product of English education. I doubt if the pandits as a body are more narrow-minded and illiberal than such sticklers for "liberal culture" as the Neo-Indian scholars who have arraigned them. Lest I should be charged with bias in favour of the pandits, I shall cite the testimony of some Western scholars :

"The Brahmans who compiled," says H. H. Wilson, "a code of Hindu law, by command of Warren Hastings preface their performance by affirming the equal merit of every form of religious worship. Contrarieties of belief, and diversities of religion, they say, are in fact part of the scheme of Providence ; for as a painter gives beauty to a picture by a variety of colours, or as a gardener embellishes his garden with flowers of every hue, so God appointed to every tribe its own religion, that man might glorify him in diverse modes, all having the same end, and being equally acceptable in his sight. To the same effect it is stated by Dr. Mill in his preface to the Khrista Sangita, or Sacred History of Christ, in Sanskrit verse, that he had witnessed the eager reception of the work by devotees from every part of India, even in the Temple of Kali, near Calcutta, and that it was read and chanted by them with a full knowledge of its anti-idolatrous tendency."*

It would be difficult to find such catholicity and philosophic toleration even now in many parts of the civilized West.

Max Müller thus writes about the pandits :

"During the last twenty years, however, I have had some excellent opportunities of watching a number of native scholars under circumstances where it is not difficult to detect a man's true character, I mean in literary work and, more particularly, in literary controversy. I have watched them carrying on such controversies both among themselves and with certain European scholars, and feel bound to say that, with hardly one exception, they have displayed a far greater respect for truth,

* "Essays and Lectures on the Religion of the Hindus," Vol. II, p. 8.

and a far more manly and generous spirit than we are accustomed to even in Europe and America. They have shown strength, but no rudeness ; nay I know that nothing has surprised them so much as the coarse invective to which certain Sanskrit scholars have condescended, rudeness of speech being, according to their view of human nature, a safe sign not only of bad breeding, but of want of knowledge. When they were wrong, they have readily admitted their mistakes ; when they were right, they have never sneered at their European adversaries. There have been, with few exceptions, no quibbling, no special pleading, no untruthfulness on their part, and certainly none of the low cunning of the scholar who writes down and publishes what he knows perfectly well to be false, and snaps his fingers at those who still value truth and self-respect more highly than victory or applause at any price. Here too, we might possibly gain by the import cargo. Let me add that I have been repeatedly told by English merchants that commercial integrity stands higher in India than in any other country, and that a dishonoured bill is hardly known there."*

Mr. Adam gives the following interesting description of the pandits: †

"I saw men not only unpretending, but plain and simple in their manners, and though seldom, if ever, offensively coarse, yet reminding me of the very humblest classes of English and Scottish peasantry ; living constantly half-naked and realising in this respect the descriptions of savage life ; inhabiting huts which, if you connect moral consequences with physical causes, might be supposed to have the effect of stunting the growth of their minds, or in which only the most contracted minds might be supposed to have room to dwell—and yet several of these men are adepts in the snbtleties of the profoundest grammar of what is probably the most philosophical language in existence, not only practically skilled in the niceties of its usage but also in the principles of its structure ; familiar with all the varieties and applications of their national laws and literature and indulging in the abstrusest and most interesting disquisitions in logical and ethical Philosophy. They are, in general, shrewd, discriminating and mild in their demeanour. The modesty of their character does not consist in abjectness to a supposed or official superior, but is equally shown to each other. I have observed some of the worthiest speak with unaffected humility of their own pretensions to learning, with admiration of the learning of a stranger and countryman who was present, with high respect of the learning of a townsman who happened to be absent, and with just praise of the learning of another townsman after he had retired, although in his presence they were silent respecting his attainments."

The pandits have at least preserved the precious heritage bequeathed by our ancestors. But for them much of it would have been irrecoverably lost. Instead of being grateful to them, to load them with contumely, argues a degree of flippancy and narrow-mindedness which one would be loath to associate was "liberal culture." Our outlook on life is certainly broader than that of the pandits. But how many of us have either the time or the inclination to inquire whether it is not shallower than of yore? We have learnt to take a brighter view of mundane life than the pandits, but is not much of the brightness the mere shine of flimsy tinsel?

## IV

Education is obviously a means to an end. That end is knowledge. But all knowledge is not desirable, as, for instance, the kind of knowledge which enables one to practise robbery or mur-

* "India : What can It Teach Us," Lecture II.
† Quoted in F. W. Thomas' "History and Prospects of British Education in India," p. 8.

der more efficiently and more scientifically than he would be able to do without it. From this point of view, the spread of the knowledge of submarines, large, long-range, quick-firing guns, aeroplanes, asphyxiating gases, explosives, &c. is condemnable. Had the Western world been more discriminating and more careful to check the dissemination of such knowledge, it would not have been landed in such a disastrous situation as it is occupying at present. But the Westerners have been under the delusion that the practical applications of physical science to the art of war would make war less frequent and less destructive. The wars of the present century, especially the late World-War, have frustrated this expectation, and will, I hope, serve to disillusion them.

Right knowledge, then, is the end of education. But what is right knowledge? There is a certain amount of conflict of opinion between the Ancients and the Moderns in this respect. With the Hindu sages the goal of knowledge was ethical and spiritual advancement. Every system of Hindu philosophy, whether theistic, pantheistic, monistic or even agnostic, recognises the salvation of the soul as its end. Its object is to secure the good or well-being of humanity by the development of the inner life for which more or less of abstention from sensual gratification, a life of more or less of ascetic simplicity is requisite. In this respect Hindu culture is at one with the Roman or Greek culture. No Hindu teacher could have exhorted his disciples to be independent of external circumstances and bodily conditions more forcibly or more earnestly than did the Socratic or the Stoic sage. Even Epicurus, with whom pleasure was the sole ultimate good, maintained the immense superiority of the pleasures of the mind over those of the body, and the Epicurean sage no less than the Vedantic sought for happiness and tranquillity of soul from within rather than from without. The ancient philosopher, Eastern as well as Western, strove to keep the struggle for animal existence to the lowest point of animal necessity in order that one might be free, so far as possible, from the moral corruption incidental to it, and might, if he chose, devote more time and energy to the higher and more arduous struggle for spiritual development than he would otherwise be able to do.

The basic principle of modern culture, on the other hand, is to secure the well-being of man by perpetually provoking and feeding his sensual desires, by eternally inventing means and appliances for gratifying them. The goal of invention to-day becomes its starting point to-morrow. One effect of this inventional activity has been to commercialise education, especially scientific education—to efface to a very large extent, if not entirely, the old line of demarcation between education for culture and education for livelihood. The technological, that is to say, the vocational side of a modern University overshadows the cultural; and in countries like Germany, which have taken the lead in modern progress, there have sprung up Universities solely for the purpose of technical education. The greatest majority of the scientific men of the present day are only glorified mechanics and tradesmen. The cultured Ancients, whether in the East or in the West, looked upon trade and industry, in fact all money-making occupations as fit pursuits of people in lower planes. Plato, for instance, valued Mathematics only because "it habituates the mind to the contemplation of pure truth and raises us above the material universe." He remonstrated with his friend Archytas who had invented powerful machines on mathematical principles, and declared "this was to degrade a noble intellectual exercise into a low craft fit only for carpenters and wheelwrights." Archimedes was half ashamed of his inventions which were the wonder of his age.

Among the Hindus, Manu condemned the institution of huge machinery as a sin. Visvakarma, the divine patron of crafts in India, receives worship only from artisans, and he was in no way superior to Maya, the architect of the Danavas. Sukracharya, the greatest Indian inventor of ancient times of whom we have any traditions, was a professor of the Daityas.

There is no doubt that the domain of kuowledge has been expanding widely and rapidly in the West, but there is equally no doubt that the domain of wisdom has been contracting. Is militarism increasing? The Westerners set up the Hague Tribunal and League of Nations, while they go on increasing their armaments aud fiendish means of destruction, feeding greed and sowing discord, and do not make any earnest attempt to curb their grabbing spirit or to promote the spirit of benevolence. Their action is like that of piling faggots on a fire while plying the fire engine, of sprinkling water at the top of a plant while cutting away at its root.

The vast overwhelming mass of Western literature bearing upon an infinity of topics constitutes a gigantic labyrinth in the intricate and bewildering mazes of which one is apt to get lost, without any light that would point out a rational goal of his life and help him to attain it. The inventive miracles of the West, however, have enabled it to build up its colossal fabric of industrial civilization and to exploit the weaker peoples of the globe. From the purely material standpoint, therefore, it has gained at least temporarily. India, however, has not only not gained but lost heavily. I have elsewhere shown how the spread of Western civilization there has led to physical and moral degeneration.* No doubt Government has to a great extent, consciously or unconsciously weakened or destroyed the bulwarks of our Cultural Swaraj. But the Westerners have not yet attained the highest stage of civilization in which selflessness prevails over selfishness. And their prosperity, nay, in several cases, even their very existence, under existing conditions, depends upon the exploitation of the weaker peoples of the globe. But we are perhaps more to blame for having aided and abetted an alien Government with interests and ideals different from and often diametrically opposed to ours.

Indeed, it would, perhaps, be no exaggeration to say, that we have acted like the simpleton of the Sanskrit sloka—

*Karasthamudakam tyaktvâ*
*ghanasthamabhibânchhati,*
*Siddhamannam parityajya*
*bhikshâmatati durmati.*

(The fool neglecting the water at hand aspires to that from the clouds, and despising the ready meal at home goes begging abroad.)

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* "Survival of Hindu Civilization," Part 2; "Physical Degeneration, its Causes and Remedies;" "Some Present-day Superstitions."

# ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By Swami Nityaswarupananda

## CHAPTER V

### Four Ways to Self-realisation

**अष्टावक्र उवाच ।**

**न ते सङ्गोऽस्ति केनापि किं शुद्धस्त्यक्तुमिच्छसि ।**
**सङ्घातविलयं कुर्वन्नेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ १ ॥**

**अष्टावक्रः** Ashtavakra **उवाच** said :

**ते** Your **केन** with anything **अपि** verily **सङ्गः** contact **न** not **अस्ति** is (**अतः** so) **शुद्धः** pure (**त्वं** you) **किं** what **त्यक्तुं** to renounce **इच्छसि** wish **सङ्घातविलयं** dissolution of the complex **कुर्वन्** effecting **एवं** thus **एव** surely **लयं** Dissolution **व्रज** attain.

Ashtavakra said :

1. You have no contact with anything whatsoever. Therefore, pure as you are, what[1] do you want to renounce? Destroy the complex[2] and even thus[3] enter into (the state of) Dissolution.[4]

[This chapter describes four different ways of the realisation of the absolute state. The first verse speaks of being *Asanga,* unattached; the second of looking upon the universe as the same reality as the Self — there is only one Atman; the third of considering the phenomenal universe as illusory; and the fourth of remaining unaffected by the phenomena of the universe, internal and external. Any of these four outlooks will lead to the realisation of the Absolute.

1 *What etc.*—We renounce what we are attached to. But the pure Self is unattached.

2 *Complex*—the aggregate of the body, mind, intellect, the senses, etc. We are at *present identifying the Self with all these and thus making them exist. This identification* prevents us from going into Samadhi. The moment we shall destroy this identification, we shall merge in the Absolute.

3 *Thus*—by destroying the complex.

4 *Dissolution*—The state in which no phenomena exist, — the Absolute.]

**उदेति भवतो विश्वं वारिधेरिव बुद्बुदः ।**
**इति ज्ञात्वैकमात्मानमेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ २ ॥**

**वारिधेः** From the sea **बुद्बुदः** bubbles **इव** like **भवतः** from you **विश्वं** universe **उदेति** rises **इति** thus **आत्मानं** Self **एकं** one **ज्ञात्वा** knowing **एवं** in this way **एव** verily **लयं** Dissolution **व्रज** attain.

2. The universe rises from you like[1] bubbles rising from the sea. Thus[2] know the Atman to be one and enter even thus into (the state of) Dissolution.

[1 *Like etc.*—thus showing that the reality of the phenomenal world is no other than the Self itself.

2 *Thus*—The knowledge that Atman alone exists negates the phenomenal world and thus the Absolute is realised.]

**प्रत्यक्षमप्यवस्तुत्वाद्विश्वं नास्त्यमले त्वयि ।**
**रज्जुसर्प इव व्यक्तमेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ ३ ॥**

**रज्जुसर्पः** The snake in the rope **इव** like **व्यक्तं** manifested **विश्वं** universe **प्रत्यक्षं** visible **अपि** though **अवस्तुत्वात्** on account of being unsubstantial **अमले** pure **त्वयि** in you **न** not **अस्ति** is **एवं** thus **एव** verily **लयं** Dissolution **व्रज** attain.

3. The universe, being manifested[1] like the snake in the rope, does not exist in you who are pure,[2] even though it is present to the senses ; because it is unreal. Thus[3] verily do you enter into (the state of) Dissolution.

[1 *Manifested etc.*—This classical example of the snake in the rope indicates that the universe which has been superimposed on the Self is really non-existent.

2 *Pure*—The illusion of the world can never affect the Self.

3 *Thus*—having known the universe to be non-existent. Then the consciousness of the Atman alone remains.]

**समदुःखसुखः पूर्ण आशानैराश्ययोः समः ।**
**समजीवितमृत्युः सन्नेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ ४ ॥**

**पूर्णः** Perfect **समदुःखसुखः** to whom misery and happiness are the same **आशानैराश्ययोः** in hope and despair **समः** same **समजीवितमृत्युः** to whom life and death are the same **सन्** being (**त्वं** you) **एवं** thus **एव** verily **लयं** Dissolution **व्रज** attain.

4. You are perfect and equanimous in misery and happiness, hope and despair, and life and death. Therefore even thus do yon attain (the state of) Dissolution.

[We are affected by joy and sorrow, hope and despair, and life and death as long as we consider ourselves as imperfect, as other than the Self. The moment we know ourselves as the Atman which alone is perfect, we go beyond all pairs of opposites and attain Samadhi.]

## CHAPTER VI

### The Higher Knowledge

**अष्टावक्र उवाच ।**
**आकाशवदनन्तोऽहं घटवत् प्राकृतं जगत् ।**
**इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ १ ॥**

**अहं** I **आकाशवत्** like space **अनन्तः** limitless **प्राकृतं** phenomenal **जगत्** world **घटवत्** like a jar- **इति** this **ज्ञानं** Knowledge (**भवति** is) **तथा** so **एतस्य** of this **त्यागः** relinquishment **न** not **ग्रहः** accept ance **न** not **लयः** dissolution (**न** not **च** and **भवति** is).

1. Boundless as space am I. The phenomenal[1] world is like[2] a jar. This[3] is Knowledge. So[4] it[5] has neither to be renounced nor accepted[6] nor destroyed.[7]

[1 *Phenomenal—Prâkrita* = evolved out of *Prakriti.*

2 *Like etc.*—Just as a jar contains a space which is the same as the infinite space, so the universe with its manifold name and form, contains a reality which is identical with the Atman.

3 *This etc.*—The sage Ashtavakra speaks in this chapter of a higher outlook. In the previous chapter he spoke of *Laya,* of the need and methods of going beyond the relative consciousness into the Absolute. But even this attempt at *Laya* rises out of a vestige of ignorance; for the pure Self was never at any time bound. Here he speaks of that higher outlook to which the universe and its consciousness is no longer a bondage and does not, therefore, require to be transcended. That is to say, the universe, to this view, reveals itself as being of the same substance as the Atman itself. All is now the Self. As Sri Ramakrishna said, till we have reached the roof, we negate the stairs as something other than the roof, but when we have reached the roof, we find that the stairs and the roof are of the same material.

4 *So*—When this Knowledge has been attained, there is then only the one Self; the question of renouncing, accepting or destroying anything does not arise.

5 *It*—the phenomenal world.

6 *Accepted*—We then do not feel attached to the world.

7 *Destroyed*—we then do not require to negate it as something other than Atman.]

**महोदधिरिवाहं स प्रपञ्चो वीचिसन्निभः ।**
**इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ २ ॥**

**सः** That **अहं** I **महोदधिः** ocean **इव** like (**अस्ति** am) **प्रपञ्चः** phenomenal universe **वीचिसन्निभः** like the wave (**भवति** is) **इति** etc. *as before.*

2. That I am like[1] the ocean and the phenomenal universe is like the wave. This is Knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted nor destroyed.

[1 *Like etc.*—This example makes clearer the oneness of the Self and the universe,—both same substance like ocean and its wave.]

**अहं स शुक्तिसङ्काशो रूप्यवद्विश्वकल्पना ।**
**इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ ३ ॥**

**सः** That **अहं** I **शुक्तिसङ्काशः** like pearl-oyster (**अस्ति** am) **विश्वकल्पना** the world-projection **रूप्यवत्** like silver (**भवति** is) **इति** etc. *as before.*

3. That I am like the pearl-oyster; and the world-projection is like[1] silver. This is Knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted nor destroyed.

[1 *Like etc.*—The reality behind the silver-illusion is the pearl-oyster. Even so the reality of the universe is the Self itself.]

**अहं वा सर्वभूतेषु सर्वभूतान्यथो मयि ।**
**इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ ४ ॥**

**अहं** I **वा** indeed **सर्वभूतेषु** in all beings (**अस्ति** am) **अथो** and **सर्वभूतानि** all beings **मयि** in me (**सन्ति** are) **इति** etc. *as before.*

4. I[1] am indeed in all beings and all[2] beings are in me. This is Knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted nor destroyed.

[1 *I etc.*—I am the inner substance of all beings.

2 *All etc.*—I am the substratum of the universe.

This verse also indicates that the reality of the Self and of the phenomena are not different. The Atman is both the contained and the container of the universe.]

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In This Number

As will be seen from the *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* printed this month, the Swami was eager to establish a monastic centre in Kashmir, and to that end, a plot of land was also chosen. H. H. the Maharajah was only too eager for this; but the proposal was vetoed on the list of Agenda for Council, in the following autumn, by the English Resident, Sir Adelbert Talbot. . . . . *Sri Ramakrishna on the Outlook of Renunciation* is translated from the diary of M., a disciple of the Master, as published by him in Bengali. . . . . The opinion of ROMAIN ROLLAND (himself an artist of the highest rank), as expressed in his article, *Art and Life*, deserves our most careful and respectful attention. To

him Art is not a pastime, but a "vocation," to be nourished by his heart's blood. . . . *A Bird's-Eye View of the Present State of Science and Philosophy with Passing References to Sankhya and Vedanta* by KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A., who is the Principal of the Rajendra College, Faridpur, Bengal, is a challenging article. His estimate of Sir J. C. Bose's scientific discoveries should be carefully considered. Sir Jagadish himself should not be expected to draw out logically the philosophical implications of his researches. This task must be left to philosophers themselves. But first perhaps it is necessary to decide whether we are living in a universe or multiverse . . . . . *Builders of Unity* by ROMAIN ROLLAND, translated from the original French, is extracted from his *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* still unpublished. We hope to publish a few more extracts from the same source in our next issues.

## Quacks

The finer a thing, the greater is the chance of confusion about it. Spirituality is, therefore, very often misunderstood. All sorts of things pass under that name. The reason of the abuse of religion is at least threefold. First, scarcely any religion except Hinduism has as yet conceived spiritual phenomena rationally and scientifically. Transcendental experiences have come to the votaries of all great religions. But the true co-ordination of those experiences with the other experiences of life and reality has not been made by the non-Hindu religions. These experiences have been often conceived by them as either miracles or grace of God, mysterious and inexplicable, as mere revelations. Naturally faith has been the only attitude possible towards them. Understanding has been lacking. A theoretical knowledge of the nature and workings of the mind, subconscious, conscious and superconscious, and of the nature and ways of the spirit makes one less liable to error ; and there is less superstition and spiritual confusion. Secondly, theoretical knowledge is not enough in itself. When we come face to face with the psychical and psychological phenomena, we often fail to properly estimate them in spite of theoretical understanding, because of inexperience. These new experiences are so unlike the accustomed ones that their proper evaluation becomes extremely difficult. We easily make blunders. Thirdly, there is always the tendency in us to press our higher knowledge to the service of our base desires. We want to exploit spiritual knowledge and power for our earthly benefit.

This last reason, in our opinion, is the greatest obstacle in the way of the West becoming truly spiritual. The West is too much *râjasika,* outward bound. Whatever comes in its way, it seeks to apply in glorifying its normal earthly self. Science has already suffered in this way. Science has almost become synonymous with the quest for more and more worldly riches, powers and comforts. Science is primarily a search for truth and knowledge and is consequently holy. But it is now utterly desecrated by being forced to serve the earthly and the gross. The science of mind has succumbed to the same fate. The higher is being constantly dragged to the level of the lower to satisfy the greed of the worldly-minded. The Indian spiritual activities in the West have to suffer greatly from this. It is a great shame that even Indians do not sometimes hesitate to take advantage of the situation. There are Indians in the West, who have made the preaching of pseudo-religion a means of earning wealth. There are imitation Swamis and Avatars parading their wisdom in the West making extravagant claims calculated to ensnare the greedy. Not merely Indians, but there are many more Western men and women who have set themselves up as spiritual teachers, pandering to the credulities of

the people. And false occult books are being written by scores and hundreds in order to catch the unwary.

The present is pre-eminently the age of psychological investigation. There is no doubt that Indian knowledge has been a great stimulus in this respect. That religion is a matter of psychology in the last analysis, and not of theology, has been demonstrated specially by Indian religion. The idea has caught on. But the great interest in psychology in the West is not all due to India. The Western psychologists also have of late contributed a good deal. The result, however, has not been happy. Confusion has become worse confounded. An American writer has recently given a vivid picture of what psychology-mania is doing in America. It will be foolish to deny that there is much truth in applied psychology ; but it is also true that there is much fraud. A little knowledge is dangerous, and there are always quacks and cheats. To quote the above-mentioned American writer :

"It would require more space than is available to draw up a list of the better known 'greatest scientists' and 'master minds' whose powers range from developing an imbecile into a genius to growing hair on a pate that for years has been as bald as a billiard ball. A few of the more alluring specimens may be mentioned.

"Pre-eminent is the lady with the radiant glance, who, probably more than any one else, has been instrumental in initiating the so-called 'Applied Psychology Clubs.' She lectures on such irresistible topics as 'How to Live One Hundred Years,' 'How To Make A Million Dollars Honestly,' and —of tragic significance to her listeners —'How To Grow Brains.' Wreathed in smiles, she recites with charming informality the well-known hokum rhyme which begins :

> If you think you are beaten, you are;
> If you think you dare not, you don't;
> If you'd like to win, but think you can't—
> It's almost certain you won't.

Then ignoring how human constitutions differ, she tells you to take half a teaspoonful of precipitated chalk every morning—it has helped her, therefore it should help you.

"A worthy rival of this female quack is the Florida 'judge' who sells a 'realization system of practical psychology'—'realization,' I fancy, because it has *realized* a tidy little profit for him. Illustrations of a country home, a Rolls-Royce, a lovely bride, and other such desiderata grace his circulars. You can have these and many other luxuries after you have enrolled in the course—and paid thirty dollars for the privilege. But first you must fill out an elaborate application, resembling a legal document, which includes the question : 'Are you prepared to promise that you will never knowingly use the truths now about to be given into your possession for the injury or oppression of any other person ?' . . .

"No less intriguing are the pledges of the 'Wonder Woman' from Los Angeles, founder of 'auto-science.' Enrolled in her course—twenty-five dollars for twelve lessons packed into six lectures—you will learn 'how to radiate magnetism,' and 'how to broadcast your thoughts at will and produce action.' You will be taught the 'psychic handshake,' 'how to increase your business from one hundred to one thousand per cent in a few weeks,' 'how to collect debts without collection agencies or lawyers,' 'how to sell by means of thought transference,' 'how to broadcast for customers and get them,' and 'how to protect yourself against the mental influence of others.' In addition, the lady is a mental healer. She gives absent treatments at 'one mile or ten thousand miles distance, with or without consent of patient,' and—for a consideration—she teaches you her magic power. Naturally, to such a gifted person, psychoanalysis, vocational direction, and analysis of persons 'on sight' are mere child's play. . . .

"Another person deserving honor-

able mention in this legion of quackery is the jovial-looking personality transformer who has assumed the name of one of the noblest families in England.

. . he 'makes your brain a super-sending and receiving radio instrument.' You need only buy his book for five dollars and 'you can make yourself what yon will: great, grand, splendid, supreme in mind and thought, honored wherever you are known.' Certainly five dollars is not too much to pay for such results. A companion volume, 'now the standard work of the Magnetism Club of America,' guarantees a complete change of personality in five days —a boast which may be responsible for the sale of 700,000 copies of the book. . . . .

"I could go on citing illustration after illustration of 'master minds,' 'greatest teachers,' 'foremost psychologists,' psychomentors, psychometrists, character analysts, bio-psychologists, metapsychologists, phrenologists, physiognomists, characterologists, numerologists, psychics, and clairvoyants—but a complete directory of charlatans, quacks, and semi-quacks would be both pointless and depressing. However, one 'psychological' contraption, termed a 'Konzentrator,' must be mentioned, if only for its ingenuity. So far as I could determine from the illustration, this device consists of a piece of metal which may be attached to the forehead. With my own modest knowledge of physiological psychology I was somewhat startled to read that this strip of brass, 'revitalizes the neurones, the bi-polar brain nerve cells ; develops a more receptive, more retentive memory no course of training can procure, and helps to concentrate thought. That is all.' Considering that the price is only ten dollars, it is not only all—it is enough, and more than enough. . . . .

"A much more involved problem for the scientist was the scheme concocted several years ago by a few officers in an Applied Psychology Club numbering over a thousand members. Eventually the district attorney became curious to learn in what way turning somersaults in a hammock (which the members were urged to buy at twenty dollars each from one of the club leaders) could lengthen the spinal column or so affect the vertebræ as to add to the span of life. . . . .

"Unfortunately, many thousands of people . . . . still believe that they can get something for nothing, that for a trifling fee they may secure precious secrets, Aladin's lamp, 'open sesame' incantations, wishbones, luck, names, rejuvenation extracts, concentration plates—in other words, all that one can wish for. These optimists are told: 'Tune your conscious Intellectual Energy with the subconscious urge, or Solar Energy, and win! Be sure you are in vibration, and then go ahead. A "Good Name" in vibration with the public's subconscious mind is worth $80,000,000.' They ponder over this advice and feel somewhat as Archimedes did when he cried out 'Eureka!' "

Conditions, as described above, are certainly lamentable. But what is the remedy? The remedy does not lie in condemning applied psychology wholesale. Undoubtedly great wonders can be accomplished through the mind. It is not all charlatanism. But as is natural, the true thing is far rarer than the commodities commonly exhibited. Here India can help a great deal. A theoretical understanding (which India alone can impart) of the ways of the mind and spirit will protect many against deception. A new outlook on life, inspired by the spirit of renunciation, should also be taught. Otherwise there will always be the temptation to utilise mental and spiritual powers for worldly purposes, and the cupidity of the Westerners will make them easy victims of wicked trickeries. And next, India must show the errors in the present psychological theories of the West—the theories some of which are proving so disastrous to the morals of

mankind. We must cure by fulfilling, and not by denying or destroying.

### Supermen

Our last month's correspondent has also sent us the following question:

"The theory of Evolution is leading us on to the dreams of superman. Is the dream an illusion or a realisable hope? In that case what will be the nature of superman?"

From our answer to the last month's question, it can be imagined what our answer to this question will be. We do not believe we are warranted by the so-called theory of evolution to dream of supermen. Obviously our correspondent thinks that in course of time a race of men(?) will grow on earth, who will possess greater physical and mental powers than now, will perhaps have a different nature and would be endowed with unusual psychic powers. It is quite possible that some individuals will be born of the above description in future as they have been in the past. But that an entire race of this type will appear in course of time is after all only a dream. That is to say, it may or may not. Just as there are so many different species of beings on earth at present, it is imaginable that in some future age, a new species may be born, which may be called supermen. But there are also many more things imaginable. And it is scarcely profitable to hope for all our imaginations to be fulfilled.

Apart from Nature herself evolving supermen, it may be said that men by their conscious effort may produce them. Means may be found by which men may easily develop their psychic nature, get control over supernatural laws and thus make themselves supermen. Or it may be that the first supermen may devise ways by which children will naturally inherit the superhuman qualities of their parents, as children now do the human qualities. We entertain serious doubts as to the first alternative. Human beings are so constituted now, that it is too much to believe that any such easy means can be found out for all of them. Religion perhaps will remain as difficult as it has always been. For the real difficulty is not so much with the modes of religious practice as with the minds that practise them. These minds, mostly gross and earth-bound, cannot be metamorphosed by a mere wish. We do not see any chance of a revolutionary change of the present conditions. Some persons will in every generation be spiritually and psychically great. But most persons will have to plod on as they are doing now. As to the second alternative until the law of heredity has been proved to be absolute, it would be idle to dream of such psychic inheritance.

This dream of supermen is after all a variation of the dream of the Millennium. We human beings are always expecting a miracle to happen on earth. This is nothing but a vestige of that desire for earthly prosperity, which is so insidious and so difficult to get rid of. True spirituality is a million miles apart from such dreams.

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## REVIEW

ST. AUGUSTINE. *By Eleanor McDougald, M.A., D. Litt. Christian Literature Society for India, Madras. 114 pp. Price As. 8.*

The book is a small lively portraiture of the spiritual life of St. Augustine with a historical background. The external facts of life have been so depicted as to reveal the internal growth of the man. The whole production is interspersed with relevant passages from the Saint's *Confessions* and *Letters*.

The religious life of the Saint began with his conversion at the age of thirty-two. Presently a complete change came upon him. He gave up all secular concerns, retired to an obscure village near Thagaste, his native town, not far from Carthage, and

devoted himself entirely to prayer and study. His high position as a professor of Rhetoric in the University of Milan, his wealth and fame for learning which were ever on the increase, his ambitions, and the gross temptations, to which he had fallen a prey under the influence of the age, could not hold him back. But this congenial mode of living in constant thought of God he was not allowed to pursue long. His celebrity for learning, wisdom and ability was too great to let him live in obscurity. To his great reluctance, he was summoned away three years after to the busy and public life of the Church ministry.

But no sooner did he accept ordination than he was as earnest in the performance of its duties as in his devotional practices in the life of retirement. Indeed, sincerity and earnestness were the two fundamental trials of his character. This was evident not only in his passionate love, his pursuit of knowledge, his enquiries after truth which involved him in Manichaean errors for nine long years, but even in his hesitation to be baptized.

Four years after the taking of holy orders, he was made Bishop of Hippo. Though called to more conspicuous offices several times, he refused to go beyond it. When this little African town was besieged by the Vandals under Genseric in 430 A.D., he remained within it to share the lot of the people, and died of illness very soon in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

The Saint's devotional spirit particularly manifested itself in his purity, humility and service. No virtue he valued so much as sanctity. No vice he dreaded so much as love of praise and pride of position. Service of his fellow beings was to him a part of the service of God. "Do well whatever thou doest, and then thou hast praised God."

One characteristic of his devotional attitude was very akin to Hindu conception of Divine love. God was to him more a lover than loved. 'Thou wert with me, before I was with Thee'—this is the keynote of his love-consciousness. To the Vaishnavas also God is Love, Lover and Loved at the same time.

Of his numerous writings, our author has taken notice of the important few, the best known of which is the *Confessions*. This is the most faithful record of his life probably up to the forty-second years, when he wrote it as an act of penitence, for the glorification of God's mercy upon him and for the benefit of others. This penitent mood and constant dread of sin have shrouded his personality with a sort of gloom not altogether dispersed by the rays of Divine light and joy.

The book under review, which is the first of the series "The Bhaktas of the World" compiled under the auspices of the Christian Literature Society for India, is evidently meant for the Hindu readers. The Hindus, to whom Divine love and wisdom are not the monopolised treasures of any sect or community, will certainly welcome the book as profitable reading. In fact, the Religion of Love is essentially one. It has different manifestations in different lands, according to physical features, climatic conditions, racial characteristics of the inhabitants and other causes. It is wise to maintain this diversity in shapes and colours, so long as the universal spirit is intact, in order that religious ideals may suit different temperaments and capabilities. Let us clear our understanding mutually and improve our knowledge of one another, free from proselytising spirit or persuasive policy, so as to realise the universal character of religion in every form.

The book is written in an elegant penetrative style. The printing and the get-up are good.

ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION AND CUSTOMS. *By Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha. D. B. Taraporevala Sons and Co. Bombay. 210 pp. Price Rs. 3.*

The book, in its original form, was a paper which represented Zoroastrianism in the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893. It appeared in print in the same year. This third edition under review has come out much enlarged and improved with a number of appendices and a long index. The style is lucid. The printing and the get-up are decent. The author, an Athornan by birth, was renowned for his study of Avesta and Pahlavi and was appointed lecturer of Râhnumâi Mâzdayasnan Sabhâ of Bombay, at whose instance he wrote the paper. The book, as can be expected from the nature of the case, is a genuine though commendatory exposition of the Religion of Zoroaster. In the Parsi sacred books the Religion is called Mazdayasni Zarathustri i.e. worship of Mazda preached by Zarathustra who is said to have been taught by Mazda the Great Lord Himself. Zoroaster was the last great teacher of Iran who was completely successful in

exterminating the worship of the Daevas, the evil spirits, from among its people. The author gives a succinct account of the Holy scriptures of the Zoroastrians, their conception of Godhead, cosmology, theory of man's constitution and destiny and also rituals and customs, in the course of which he removes some misconceptions concerning this ancient faith. It is neither polytheism, ditheism nor nature-worship. These are mere accretions on the pure and unmixed monotheism preached by Zarathustra not later than 1200 B.C.

RAJARSHI RAM MOHAN ROY. *By Manilal C. Parekh, B.A. Oriental Christ House, Rajkot, Kathiwad. 189 pp. Price cloth Rs. 3, board Rs. 2.*

This short sketch of the life and deeds of Raja Rammohan Roy is, properly speaking, a presentment of the Raja as a religious reformer from the standpoint of an Oriental Christian. The author, though a Christian, has a liberalised view in that he acknowledges the truths of other religions and is not for aggressive missionary propaganda. The pioneer-work of Rammohan in almost all fields of Modern Indian life have made him "the first great reformer of Hinduism in modern times and the father of modern India." The author has given him the same position as that of Vyasa, Yagnavalkya, Sankara and other great sages and teachers of India. We do not think the author is justified in this estimation; for though Rammohan was a reformer and revivalist, he was not a seer and maker.

No accredited follower of the Raja will perhaps agree with the author in his conclusion that the Raja was a Hindu-Christian,—Hindu in name and Christian in spirit. How far indeed was the Raja actually influenced by Christianity?

The fact is that Rammohan was a Hindu Theist. He preached the Unity of God and 'the pure mode of worshipping him in spirit' taught by the Upanishads as the common ground of religious faiths. He failed, however, to realise the necessity of worshipping God in concrete forms instructed by the same Shastras, on account of his aversion to polytheism and idolatry engendered by the study of the Koran in early life and because of some social abuses that came to be associated with the image-worship during the decadence of Hinduism. Rammohan even ascribed those social evils to image-worship.

"In accordance with the mild and liberal spirit of universal toleration which is well-known to be a fundamental principle of Hinduism," as he says, he acknowledged all religious truths as far as they appealed to his acute reason and strong moral sense. Though an upholder of Vedantic monotheism, he could not appreciate the pure monism of the Vedanta as the rational basis of all religious and moral truths. The theological belief in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men, underlying moral observances appealed to him more. This is partly responsible for his leaning to Christian moral codes. But he was equally conscious of the supreme value of the moral principles of the Hindu scriptures. For, in his Introduction to the Isa Upanishad, in which he quotes a Christian moral precept, 'Do unto others as you would be done by,' which according to Mr. Parekh is the Christian precept *par excellence*, he says, "I have been impelled to lay before them (the Hindus) genuine translations of parts of their scriptures, which inculcates not only the enlightened worship of one God, but the purest principles of morality."

Our author is a good visionary. He hopes for the Christianisation of Hinduism with Jesus as the central object of worship. Rammohan, according to him, failed to bring about that Christianisation, because of his unbelief in the theory of Avatar. But Keshab, he says, almost accomplished this. He also finds that Rammohan's orthodox Hindu opponent Shankar Shastri (whom, with a wonderful historical sense, he calls to be the forerunner of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda School) showed an appreciative attitude towards Christ. Our author himself finds an unifying link betwen Vaishnavism and Christianity in the theory of Avatar, which eventually led him to prefer the latter to the former.

All these, according to us, only show that the Hindus appreciate Christ; but this does not mean that the Hindus will accept Christ as the typical and perfect Avatar in preference to Rama and Krishna, as the author imagines. The truth is that the Hindus look upon all religious systems as so many phases of One Universal Religion—the Sanatana Dharma—revealed in the Vedanta.

However the author may hail Rammohan as a champion of Christianity, it is he who stemmed the tide of Christian aggression in India and sought for the assimilation of Western ideals on a national basis. It was

under Keshab that the Brahmo movement cut itself adrift from the bedrock of national life. The rising spirit of the country moved in three different directions—Westernism, Liberalism and Conservatism, till the Hindu genius of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda Commingled them in the eternal life-current of India to form one mighty stream of national movement running into the sea of humanity. One who has studied the growth of Modern India, can easily see how the three dominant notes of Rammohan's message —the upholding of the Vedanta, the nationalisation of India and the reconciliation of Eastern and Western ideals have been fulfilled even beyond Raja's conception in the Mission of Vivekananda.

It is not possible to deal with all the points of our disaggreement with the author in the course of a brief review. We have only considered the general attitude of the author. The book is interesting. It has as a frontispiece a full-size coloured portrait of the Raja. A short index has been appended to it. The printing and the get-up are not attractive.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Vedanta Society, Portland, U. S. A.

We have received the following report from the Vedanta Society, Portland, U. S. A. :

Since the outline of the activities of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, under the leadership of Swami Prabhavananda was sent in March 1928, many interesting changes have been made for the growth of the Society and the members individually. From approximately the first of April, 1928, until the latter half of July the regular classes and lectures continued with a steady attendance and sustained interest.

During the third week of June and at the time of the Rose Festival which is an annual city festival in Portland, Swami Madhavananda of San Francisco visited the Society. It was a great treat when he lectured to large classes that week and to a crowded house in the evening of June 24th. On the days between classes high festivities were in order. The annual picnic at Oswego Lake was held. After an ample dinner the students and friends gathered about the open fireplace and a program consisting of several readings, an humorous one act play and games was given.

The second fortnight of July was spent by Swami Prabhavananda vacationing in California. After visiting friends in San Francisco he went to Los Angeles and Alhambra, California, where he spent the major portion of his vacation period. Several lectures were delivered in the California Centres.

Upon his return to Portland Swami Prabhavananda delivered a comprehensive series of lectures upon the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sunday Morning Service hour. This series covered some three months and was deeply appreciated by all the students whose privilege it was to hear it. The classes for members continued with studies of the Gospel according to St. John and of the Isha Upanishad. Upon the completion of the studies from the Bible the Swami began interpreting, at the Friday evening classes, "Vivekachudamani" of Sri Sankaracharya. This study will continue through the remainder of the present year. With the beginning of 1929 Swami Prabhavananda began a second study of the Gita. The class nights were shifted to Tuesday and Thursday of each week again as they were when the Society was first organized. At the request of the Swami all new members and those who had enjoyed the study before are making a special effort to attend this series of lectures. This renewed enthusiasm in the class work has resulted in several new members and at present the class room is crowded to capacity both nigths of the week.

Early in January of this year by unanimous decision of the official board, the location of the Society's headquarter was changed. A fine hall for the Sunday services was procured in the new Studio Building which has recently been constructed for the housing of musicians and allied artists. The lecture hall is new and modern. The platform arrangement for the public lectures is very harmonious and dignified due to the lighting and floral decorations. Adjoining the hall another smaller room, very comfortably and tastefully furnished, has

been secured for the week day classes, personal conferences, etc.

With the opening in the new quarters Swami Prabhavananda has inaugurated two new activities. He has generously donated his personal library, consisting almost completely of books not available to the American reading public, to be used in a reading room (the regular class room) which is open on afternoons every day in the week except Sundays. The lady students take turns being hostesses for the reading room. In order to make it possible for the general public to meet and become acquainted with him, and thus contact the ideals of Vedanta .in a more personal way, Swami Prabhavananda holds an informal question and discussion class on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons of each week. As a result of these changes and activities the membership has increased and all classes and lectures are better attended than ever before in the history of the Society. Since early in January announcements of the public lectures have been made by Radio over one of the largest broadcasting stations in the city and advertising has been carried in the two leading daily papers. This, we feel, has helped to create a more general interest.

At last it seems the Portland public i becoming aware of the splendid work tha Swami Prabhavananda is doing. We feel that it is impossible to put into words an estimate of the deep and untiring efforts of the Swami to bring to the Western world the ideals of the Vedanta. To those who are in personal touch with him in his work this is a constant inspiration. As for the unseen infiuence upon the lives of all who come in contact with the Swami we can only say its effect is beyond estimate.

The birthday of Swami Vivekananda was observed publicly on Sunday, February third. Swami Prabhavananda delivered two masterly lectures dealing with the life and the contributions of the great leader to modern civilization. There were splendid audiences for both the lectures. Special floral and musical offerings were arranged for the services.

On Wednesday evening, March 13th, at eight o'clock, the Society celebrated the 93rd birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. At the celebration that evening, after a short opening talk by the Swami, the program was turned over to the students of the Society. A paper giving many of the interesting details of Ramakrishna's life was read, also a hymn to the Master, written by Swami Vivekananda. These were followed by a recitation from Sir Edwin Arnold's poetic translation of the Bhagavad Gita. After the program the Swami served the students *halua* and tea, which was a most delightful refreshment. Many beautiful floral offerings by the students lent a peaceful and inspiring atmosphere to the occasion. The public services commemorating the occasion were held on Sunday, March 17th. In the morning at eleven o'clock the Swami lectured upon "Ramakrishna and the Modern Age". At eight in the evening his subject was "Ramakrishna and Universality". Large and appreciative audiences attended both lectures.

### Swami Vividishananda Sails for America

Swami Vividishananda sailed from Calcutta for the United States of America on the 7th June last. We understand that for the present the Swami will be placed in charge of the Vedanta Society at Portland, Oregon, that is now being conducted by Swami Prabhavananda who will proceed to St. Louis to firmly organise the work there, a nucleus of which was formed before by the Swami himself. Swami Vividishananda is a sweet, loving, young Sannyasin of the Ramakrishna Order with many beautiful traits of character, and we fervently hope that his genial personality will make a charming impression on the American mind. The Swami had recently been in charge of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Rajkot in Kathiawar for about a year since its inception. Previous to this he had been a member of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, for about six years, during which he also edited *Prabuddha Bharata* for two years with great success. We wish him grea' success in his new field of activity.

### Swami Madhavananda Returns to India

Swami Madhavananda came back to India *via* Europe on the 24th June last from the United States of America after two years' preaching work in the Hindu Temple of San Francisco. He had been in charge of the Temple there, and had left an indelible impression behind of his character which is always loving and faithful to the

highest principles and ideals of Hindu life. His services being required at home, he had to come back after such a short stay in America. We understand that he will be placed in charge of some important work in connection with the Ramakrishna Mati and Mission. We accord him a hearty welcome.

**R. K. Ashrama, Faridpur, Bengal**

A short report of the Ashrama for the year 1928 is to hand. It speaks of the humble services it has been able to do during the year. A free primary school and a Homeopathic charitable dispensary are attached to the Ashrama for the cultivators and poor people of the locality. There is also a free library for the public. During the year 3 mds. 17 srs. 8 ch. of rice were supplied to two families in times of great crisis. The sum of Rs. 119-7 as. was given to poor students towards paying their fees while other poor persons received Rs. 17-0-6. Two needy students were supplied with food free. The workers of the Ashrama nursed 8 persons and cremated 3 dead bodies. Besides all these, the Ashrama collected and sent a sum of Rs. 412-4-6 in aid of the famine relief work at Bankura, Bulurghat and Khulna. The total receipts including last year's balance amounted to Rs. 1481-4-3 and the total expenditure to Rs. 1270-10-0 leaving a balance of Rs. 210-10-3 in hand. The important feature of the Ashrama is intended to be the establishment of a Students' Home which it has already started with 2 students. It wants to increase the number at least to 25. For this purpose it is necessary to purchase at least 10 bighas of land near the Ashrama for providing the students with facilities for agricultural training along with other things. The purchase of land will cost Rs. 5000. Digging a tank for raising the land, construction of dwelling houses, school-building and a prayer hall will require at least Rs. 25000. It therefore appeals to the benevolent zemindars of the district and the philanthropic public to contribute their quota to the Ashrama Fund.

We are pleased with the humble services it has so long done and wish to see it as an instrument of greater and more useful service in the future.

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## Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work

Secretary, R. K. Mission, writes:

In the flooded area of Assam we have got four main centres, at Tarapur, Bhangarpur, Ichamati and Chapghat with six additional sub-centres. These cover an area of 94 sq. miles to include 228 villages and the recipients of help number 6,167 for whom we have distributed 627 mds. 30 srs. of rice excluding what has been spent as a preliminary help. In Nowgong in Assam, we have distributed 300 mds. 10 srs. of rice and the work there has been closed owing to the situation being improved.

We have taken up the work of hut-building from our centre at Tarapur and medical relief has been opened in the relief area of Karimganj. Our work in this province needs much expansion, but this can be possible if only proper funds be forthcoming.

In Akyab of Burma we have so far distributed from three centres 540 mds. of rice, 10 mds. of pulses and 2 mds. of chillies amongst 2,541 flood-stricken people of 26 villages. We have distributed a number of clothes also from some centres.

Cholera having broken out in epidemic type in some villages in the district of Burdwan we have sent a batch of workers to administer relief there.

All contributions for the above will be thankfully received and acknowledged by any of the following:—

(1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Howrah.
(2) The Manager, Udbodhan, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar Calcutta.
(3) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182A, Muktaram Babu St., Calcutta.