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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

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## MEMOIRS OF SISTER CHRISTINE\*

### PLANNING THE WORK

In those early days we did not know the thoughts that were seething in Swamiji's mind, day and night. “The work ! the work !” he cried. “How to begin the work in India ! The way, the means !” The form it would take was evolved gradually. Certainly before he left America, the way, the means and the method were clear in every detail. He knew then, that the remedy was not money, not even education in the ordinary sense, but another kind of education. Let man remember his true nature, divinity. Let this become a living realization, and everything else will follow—power, strength, manhood. He will again become MAN. And this he proclaimed from Colombo to Almora.

First a large plot of land on the Ganges was to be acquired. On this was to be built a shrine for worship, and a

monastery to give shelter to the *guru-bhais* and as a centre for the training of younger men. They were to be taught meditation and all subjects relating to the religious life, including the Upanishads, the Bhagavat Gita, Sanskrit, and Science. After some years of training, whenever the head of the monastery considered them sufficiently prepared, they were to go out, to form new centres, to preach the message, to nurse the sick, to succour the needy, to work in times of famine and flood, to give relief in any form that was needed. How much of what he thought out at this time has been carried out ! To this India can bear testimony.

It seemed almost madness for a mendicant monk to plan such an extensive work. In later years we were to see it carried out in every detail.

### THE WOMEN'S WORK

The summer before he had been at Greenacre, a place on the coast of Maine,

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where seekers of Truth gathered year after year to hear teachers of all religions and cults. There, under a tree which to this day is called "The Swami's Pine," he expounded the message of the East. Here he came in contact with a new phase of American life. These splendid young people, free and daring, not bound by foolish conventions, yet self-controlled, excited his imagination. He was much struck by the freedom in the relations between the sexes, a freedom with no taint of impurity. "I like their *bonne camaraderie*," he said. For days at a time his mind would be concerned with this problem. Pacing up and down, every now and then a few words would fall from his lips. He was not addressing anyone but thinking aloud. His soliloquy would take some such form: "Which is the better, the social freedom of America, or the social system of India with all its restrictions? The American method is individualistic. It gives an opportunity to the lowest. There can be no growth except in freedom, but it also has obvious dangers. Still, the individual gets experience even through mistakes. Our Indian system is based entirely upon the good of the *samaj* (society). The individual must fit into the system at any cost. There is no freedom for the individual unless he renounces society and becomes a *Sannyasin*. This system has produced towering individuals, spiritual giants. Has it been at the expense of those less spiritual than themselves? Which is better for the race? Which? The freedom of America gives opportunities to masses of people. It makes for breadth, whilst the intensity of India means depth. How to keep both, that is the problem. How to keep the Indian depth and at the same time add breadth?"

It goes without saying that this was not merely a speculative problem, mental gymnastics. It was a question

vital to the welfare of India. In America he saw the value and effect of social freedom, yet no one was more fully alive than he to the inestimable good produced by the system of India—a form of society which has kept the country alive throughout many ages which have witnessed the rise and fall of other countries equally great. His problem was to find out whether there was a way of adding to this structure the best of other countries, without endangering the structure itself.

For days he would speak out of the depths of his meditation on this part of the work. In this case, location, buildings, ways and means were all subordinate to the ideal. He was trying to see the woman of the future, the ideal for India. It was not a light task for even his luminous mind, which wrought it slowly, detail by detail. Like a great sculptor standing before a mass of splendid material, he was lost in the effort to bring to life an image, such as no artist had ever conceived before: an image which was to be an expression of the Divine Mother, through which the Light of spirituality shines. We watched fascinated as this perfection slowly took shape. So might some favoured one have watched Michael Angelo at work with chisel and hammer, bringing into form the concept of power, strength and majesty, which was to grow into his "Moses!"

What was the work for women which he had in mind? Certainly not merely a school for children. There were already thousands of these. One more or less would make no appreciable difference. Neither was it to be a boarding school, even if it supplied a need by providing a refuge for girls whose parents were unable to marry them off. Nor a widow's home though that too would fill a useful purpose. It was not to be a duplication of any of the forms of work



which had so far been attempted. Then what? To answer that question it is only necessary to ask: What is the significance of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda to the world, and more especially to India at this time? The new power, the new life that came with this influx of spirituality was not meant for men alone, but how could it be brought to the women of India? How could they be set on fire and become torches from which millions of others might catch the flame? This was one of his greatest concerns. "For this work a woman is needed," he cried. "No man can do it. But where is the woman?"

As far back as his wander years, he consciously searched for the woman who should be able to meet his need. One after another was put to the test and failed. Of one in whom he had had great hopes he said, in answer to the question: why not she?—"You see she intends to do her own work." There was no criticism in this, only a statement of fact. Again and again it happened that those in whom he had attempted to rouse the latent power within, mistook the power emanating from him for their own, and felt that under the same circumstances they too could manifest greatness. They wanted to do not his work but their own! It was not easy to find someone who had the necessary qualifications, spiritual and intellectual, who had the devotion of the disciple, who was selfless and who could pass on the living fire. Having found such a one, and trained her, she in turn would have to train others, from amongst whom five or six would be capable of continuing and extending the work. These five or six would have to be women of towering spirituality, women of outstanding intellectual attainments, combining the finest and noblest of the old and the new. This was the goal. How was it to be accom-

plished? What kind of education would produce them?

*Purity, Discipleship, and Devotion* were to him essential for the one who was to do his work. "I love purity," he often said, always with a touching pathos. "All attempts must be based upon the ideal of Sita,"—he said,—*"Sita, purer than purity, chaster than chastity, all patience, all suffering, the ideal of Indian womanhood. She is the very type of the Indian woman as she should be, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have centered around that one life of Sita, and here she stands, these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman, and child throughout the length and breadth of Aryavarta."*

Of purity he spoke constantly,—but there was a quality which he seldom named, a quality which is not directly associated with womanhood—yet from the stories he told, one knew that to him no type could be complete without it. Again and again he told the story of the Rajput wife who, whilst buckling on her husband's shield, said: "Come back with your shield or on it." How graphically he pictured the story of Padmini, the Rajput Queen. She stood before us in all her dazzling beauty, radiant, tender, lovely. Rather than permit the lustful gaze of the Mohammedan invader, every woman of that chivalrous race would rush to meet death. Instead of sympathising with the trembling timid woman, full of fear for the one she loved, he said: "Be like the Rajput wife!"

Had it been merely a question of a college degree, were there not already numbers of women who had achieved that? The young men who came to him, many of them with degrees, needed training. Much that had been learned must be unlearned. New values must be substituted for old, new purposes



and aims must be brought into focus. When the mind had been purified then it was ready for the influx of spirituality, which was poured into it by teaching, conversation, and most of all by the living contact with those who could transmit it. In this way a gradual transformation could take place and they would be fitted to give the message and continue the work. Intellectual attainments were but secondary, although he did not underestimate their value. Reading and writing must be the key which would unlock the door to the treasure-house of great ideals and wider outlook. For it was not merely a school which he had in mind, not an institution, but something much larger, something which cannot be easily labelled or defined, something which would make thousands and tens of thousands of institutions possible in the future. In short it was to be an attempt to create the educators of a new order. The education must not be merely academic, but, to meet the requirements of the time, it must be intellectual, national and spiritual. Unless those who initiated it lighted their own torches at the altar where burns the fire that was brought from above, the work would be of little value. That is why discipleship is necessary. All cannot come to the altar, but one torch can light others, until hundreds, thousands are aflame. Spirituality must be transmitted. It cannot be acquired, although regular practices are necessary,—meditation, association with those who have realized, the reading of scriptures and other holy books.

Not that it was ever stated that devotion was one of the qualifications. It is only now, after this lapse of time, that in looking back, one knows how necessary it is. Swamiji made no demands of any kind. His respect, nay reverence, for the divinity within was so

sincere and so profound that his mental attitude was always : "Hands off." He did not ask for blind submission. He did not want slaves. He used to say : "I do not meddle with my workers at all. The man who can work has an individuality of his own, which resists against any pressure. This is my reason for leaving workers entirely free." Imperious though he was, he had something which held this quality in check—a reverence for the real nature of man. Not because he believed all men equal in the sense in which that phrase is often glibly repeated, but because in the language of his own great message, all men are potentially divine. In manifestation there are great differences. All should not have equal rights, but equal opportunities. With his great compassion he would have given the lowest, the most oppressed, more than those who manifested their divinity to a greater degree. Did they not need it more? Could such as he exact anything in the nature of control of the will of another? The devotion which he did not demand, but which was necessary nevertheless, lay in acceptance of him as a Guru, a faith and love in him that would replace self-will.

India is passing through a transition, from the old order of things to the new, the modern. No matter how much we may deplore it, how much we may cling to the old and oppose the change, we cannot prevent it. It is upon us. The question is : how shall we meet it? Shall we let it overtake us unawares, or shall we meet it fearlessly and boldly, ready to do our part to shape it to the needs of the future? Some have met it by blindly accepting an alien culture, suited to the needs of the land from which it sprang, but unsuited for transplantation. Each country must evolve its own culture and the institutions necessary for its development. If India



cannot escape the change, which is taking place all over the world, especially in Asia, she must control the situation. The new must grow out of the old, naturally and in harmony with the law of its growth. Shall the lotus become the primrose? Rather let us create conditions by which the lotus can become a more beautiful, a more perfect lotus, which shall live forever as the symbol of a great race, and, which, although its roots be in the mud of the world, bears flower in a rarer, purer atmosphere.

In some respects the transition which is upon us affects women particularly. With the growth of cities, women are taken out of the free natural life of the village, and confined within brick walls in crowded towns. If they are poor but of high caste, as most of them are, they often do not escape from this confinement for months at a time. The economic pressure is incredibly severe. Anxiety, poor food, lack of air and exercise result in unhappiness, disease and premature death. The lot of the widow is worse than that of the married woman. There is no place for her in the scheme of things. In the old village life she was part of the social order, a respected, useful asset. Now she is in danger of becoming the household drudge. She feels that the least she can do in return for food and shelter is to save the family the expense of a servant. When poverty becomes still more grinding, she is the first to know that in her absence the family would dispense with such help. In such a case there is a feeling of humiliation for the less sensitive. For others it is much deeper. They feel that they are taking the bread out of the mouths of those around them. Their suffering is great, the more so in that they are helpless. There is nothing they can do to add to the family's income.

It was this class that Swamiji particularly wished to help. "They must be

economically independent," he said. How this was to be done, it was not for him to say, so he implied. It was a problem to be worked out by the one who should undertake the work. "They must be educated," he said next. Here he was more explicit and laid down certain principles. Education should not be according to Western methods but according to the Indian ideal. Reading and writing are not ends in themselves. The teaching could be such that these achievements would be used for a noble purpose and for service, not for self-indulgence and not to add one more superficial weapon. If the woman who learns to read, uses the knowledge only for imbibing vulgar, frivolous, sensational stories, she had better be left illiterate. But if it becomes the key which opens the door to the literature of her own country, to history, to art, to science, it proves a blessing. The great ideals of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were to be kept before their minds constantly, by stories, by readings, *jatras*, *kathakatas*, until the characters lived and moved among them, until these ideas became part of their very being, something living, vital, powerful, which would in time produce a race of superwomen.

There should be, to begin with, a thorough education in the vernacular, next Sanskrit, then English, science, history, mathematics, geography. Add to this, work with the hands: sewing, embroidery, spinning, cooking, nursing, anything in the way of indigenous handicraft. While all Western knowledge, including science, must be given a place, Indian ideals and Indian traditions must always be held sacred. Education will come by the assimilation of the greatest ideas of the East and of the West. Any kind of education which undermines the faith of the Indian woman in the past culture of her race,



its religion and traditions, is not only useless but detrimental. She had better be left as she is. Mathematics must become a discipline for the mind, a training in accuracy and truth, history a practice in tracing effects to their causes, a warning against repetition of the mistakes of the past. The emancipation of women meant to him a freedom from limitations, which should disclose their real power.

The old methods of education in the West, concern themselves only with the mind, its training, its discipline. To this, certain facts relating to history, literature, science, geography and languages were added. This is a very limited conception. Man is not a mind only. Why not build up a new education based upon the true nature of man? When a new Light comes into the world, it must illumine all aspects of life. If man is divine now, education must be an uncovering of the knowledge already in man. "Education is the manifestation of the knowledge already in man," he said.

Let us try a new experiment. At this crucial time when it becomes necessary to review the whole subject, let us break away from some of the old traditions of education. Let us build upon a broader conception, larger aims. Not only must Indian women be highly educated, but a few at least should be of outstanding intellect—the intellectual peers of any women in the world—their flame of spirituality set aglow by the Great Light which has illumined the world in these modern times. They should be on fire, renunciation and service should be their watchwords. A few such women could solve the problems of the women of India. In the past, women made the supreme sacrifice for a personal end. Are there not a few now who will devote heart, mind, and body for the greater end? "Give me a

few men and women who are pure and selfless," Swamiji would say, "and I shall shake the world!" No man can do this work. It must be done by women alone. On this point he was stern. "Am I a woman that I should solve the problems of women? Hands off! They can solve their own problems." This was consistent with his unbounded faith in the power and greatness latent in all women. "Every woman is part of the Divine Mother, the embodiment of Sakti," he believed. This Sakti must be roused. If woman's power is often for evil rather than for good, it is because she has been oppressed; but she will rouse the lion in her nature when her fetters drop. She has suffered throughout the ages. This has given her infinite patience, infinite perseverance.

Just as in theology, we no longer teach that man is a child of sin and sorrow, born and conceived in iniquity, but is a child of God, pure and perfect, why should we not change our attitude towards education, and look upon the student as a creature of light and knowledge, unfolding the leaves of his destiny in joy, freedom and beauty? All religions have taught: "The Kingdom is within you."

For obvious reasons, a new experiment in education can be worked out more easily with women than with men. Women need not work for a degree, as, for some time to come they will not attempt to get positions requiring one. In this respect they do not yet find it necessary to conform to accepted standards. Out of it will grow a new race, a race of supermen and women,—a new order. Schools for children? Yes, for education should be widespread. Widows' homes, nursing, all forms of service and activity. New life on all planes, the new intellectual outlook, full of new vigour. If the experiment fails,

it will not be an entire loss. Power, initiative, self-responsibility will have been developed. If it succeeds as it inevitably must, the gain will be incredibly great. Results can hardly be foreseen at this stage. The woman who is the product of such a system will at least approach the stature of a superwoman. A few such are urgently needed at the present critical time.

Some of us believe that if Swami

Vivekananda's ideas regarding the education of women are carried out in the true spirit, a being will be evolved who will be unique in the history of the world. As the woman of ancient Greece was almost perfect physically, this one will be her complement intellectually and spiritually—a woman gracious, loving, tender, long-suffering, great in heart and intellect, but greatest of all in spirituality.

## CONFUSION ABOUT THE WORD 'NATIONAL'

BY THE EDITOR

### I

"What is the idea of your national education? Do you think only the introduction of a *Charka* over and above the usual curriculum in schools, will make the education national?"—was the question put to an organizer of national education in a provincial town during the heyday of Non-co-operation movement.

"No, it will not. National education should be judged by as to how far it has freed us from slave mentality."—was the reply. (During those days the word slave mentality was much in use).

"Well, what is the criterion of slave mentality? How to judge it?"

"It should be judged by our attitude towards Europeans. The Government schools and colleges are the breeding ground of slave mentality. There the students taught by Europeans or under European influence, grow up with the idea that the Europeans are superior and they cannot shake it off throughout their whole life."

"Why," continued the interrogator,

"in some colleges or even in some universities, Indian elements preponderate; you cannot then say, they are the hotbed of slave mentality. There the professors and the persons at the helm of the university show quite an independent spirit which cannot but exert a healthy influence upon the students."

The fact is we have no clear and definite ideas as to what national education is and how to carry them into execution. Since the days of the Swadeshi movement the word 'national education' has received much importance. Attempts have been made twice or thrice to wreck the present schools and colleges, but they have failed; nor has any national institution been founded on a sure basis. Where there is any national institution, it is only in name—it is almost always a replica of the Government or Government-aided schools and colleges with very slight changes. Sometimes institutions started to impart national education had to take the financial help of the Government, and as such they willingly submitted themselves to the influence of



the Government educational policy. In some cases as the institution failed to attract sufficient students, it had to be affiliated to the existing universities, and for that its original purpose had to be given up to a great extent, if not altogether. In some cases institutions meant to be national became denominational, and as such became the breeding ground of communalism—a worse thing for a sacred seat of learning. Some time back Lala Lajpat Rai, no less known as an educationist than as a great political thinker, showed with great scrutiny and minute analysis how almost all the institutions in the country—including his own institution, the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore, with which he was vitally connected for a quarter of a century—had failed to give a really national education. Nevertheless we should admire the efforts that are being made from time to time to introduce national education in the country. For it is through blundering experiences that we learn and a perfect system is evolved.

## II

In order to draw up a scheme for national education, we must impartially and with an open, unprejudiced mind judge the merits and demerits of the present Government-owned institutions and then should try to remedy their defects and preserve their good points in the national universities to be started. One glaring defect of the present system of education is that the students become foreign in outlook and manners; they become out of touch with the life of the country—nay, even their very family. Even those who are fired with national aspirations love India from a superficial basis and not from any deep conviction of a particular mission which India has to fulfil. They simply envy

the material prosperity of the independent nations of the world and want to see India to be one like them. Brought up in an atmosphere of an alien culture and foreign ideals, they fail to recognize the real value of Indian culture. It is a strange phenomenon—and that publicly pointed out first by an English Governor—that in the curriculum of the Calcutta University European philosophy is given preference to Indian philosophy, that many students grow proficient in Western philosophy without knowing a single word of what Shankara or Ramanuja has said. This is true not only of philosophy, but of almost all other subjects which have got any relation to local culture and environment. People know more of European history and literature than Indian. One knows more the beauties of Shakespeare than of Kalidas, is inspired more by the idealism of Shelley than by the songs of a Mirabai or a Tukaram. Thus the students in our country grow up like an orphan brought up in a rich man's house. They may, in some cases, grow up well; but they have a parasitic growth. They have nothing to call their own, which will fire their imagination, give them inspiration and unlock the sources of innate strength. They may possess a brilliant intellect, but have no emotional centre of gravity. They become a part of the rich man's household, or at best set up a house on the rich man's model of life. And this is worse than suicide. For, as has been truly said, imitation like prayer done for love is good, but when done for show it is horrible.

And as the students with foreign ideals constantly placed before their minds value material prosperity more than the development of their inner being, their wants are so much increased that they are quite taken up with the



struggle for existence and find no scope to look beyond themselves (at present majority of them have to live a life of miserable poverty). And as such they can contribute nothing to the national well-being. Some of the national institutions failed because they could not give as much scope for a *career* as the existing institutions (however dubiously) held out a promise for.

Under the present system, only the intellect is developed and no attention is given to any other faculty—like emotion, will, etc. As a result, even recognizing their own mistakes many students cannot give up the beaten track, as their will is not developed. They can well take up a critical attitude in life, but are unable to feel deeply and act nobly. Their emotional life has become a great blank. And this is terrible because it is emotion that supplies strength for action, hopes against despair and enables a man to contend against the surging waves of difficulties. The man who feels really for the country will count no cost to improve its lot. He will plunge headlong into the work, to sink or swim; very death will lose all its terrors for him and a prospect of lifelong suffering will cast no gloom upon him. What is the reason that we hear so much of the educated unemployed? Does not the nation offer enough work for people a hundred times the number of those who are lying idle? The fact is that they have been shown only one path and only one of their faculties has been cultivated. They cannot therefore freely turn their attention around to seize an opportunity, though there may be many. It has been said that there is nothing so belittling the human soul, as the acquisition of knowledge for the sake of worldly reward. But unfortunately worldly reward is the only prospect by which our boys are nowadays drawn

to educational institutions. Though some of them may be imbued with a better idealism during their academic career, they find no inspiration for action, as that idealism is very often a foreign growth in their life and not a part and parcel of their being.

### III

National education should aim at three things :—(1) to impart a thorough knowledge of the national culture, *i.e.*, as to what the nation did in the past, (2) to foster a spirit of love for the nation and its people, (3) to develop a capacity to think out measures for the well-being of the nation and a strong will to put them into practice.

The people who have no past or cannot feel proud of the national achievement in the past, will simply drift in the present and will have no future even. The man who does not feel proud of his family—even though he may not have much to boast of—will fail to add to the glory of his forefathers. The people whose imagination does not catch fire by the thought of the achievements of their national heroes in the past cannot hope to do anything in the present. They will be always like poor people who look enviously at the prosperity of their rich neighbours. On the contrary, those whose life is rooted in the past history and traditions of their country will develop such a strong feeling of self-respect that they will never yield to the thought that they are inferior to any. One of the dangerous defects of the present system of education is that it breeds inferiority complex. Boys taught to appreciate the beauties of only the Western literature, fail to recognize the loftiness of Indian thought. This is true in regard to almost all branches of learning. Many minds thus get dazed and stupe-



fied. And what about the infinite suggestions our students get as to their inferiority? In the opinion of Sir John Woodroffe, "The Young Indian has been subjected to such a strong and continuous *suggestion* of his inferiority, that it is a wonder that any spirit of self-assertion has at all survived. He has been told that he has no glorious past, that the history of his country is lacking in great personalities, that the 'progressive' West is superior to the 'immobile' East and its old-world civilization and so forth, and that therefore his only chance of making himself the equal of Western peoples is by giving up his 'Barbarism' . . . . and making himself as much like his civilized Western teachers and rulers as possible. If day in and day out, suggestions of his innate inferiority are made to a boy, and the superiority of a foreign civilization affirmed, he will, according to every probability, come to depreciate his own people and culture. This is what has happened and the racial Sangskara has been veiled." Boys have to read Indian history through the eyes of the Westerners. They have to get a knowledge of their past civilization from what has been painted by the Europeans, who however sympathetic they may be—and their number is not large—cannot do their work altogether free from prejudices and pre-conceived ideas. (Here we leave out of discussion why the Indians themselves have not been able to delve into the country's past history). In the college administration even—not to speak of what is constantly seen outside—they find how the Indians are pushed to the background. Naturally constant sight of such things creates a feeling of despair, and despair does not allow self-confidence to grow.

So much has been the vicious influence of the present system of education that

even all national workers cannot altogether shake that off. As such, some of them give occasional advice to the country not to look so much to the past, but to turn its direction more to the achievements of the Western nations for inspiration and guidance. We do not say that one should lose oneself in the contemplation of the greatness of the past and be led away by an overestimate of what the nation did in days gone by. But everybody should certainly utilize the past as a lever to raise the present. It is only those who strongly believe themselves to be inheritors of the great ideals of the past, that will be able to build the national edifice in the present.

Some take a very practical view of the thing. As for instance, some say, "What is the use of studying Sanskrit at the present age? Is it not much wiser to learn more of modern science, industry, etc.? To give too much emphasis on Sanskrit culture will be to put back the country's progress. It is as ridiculous as to ask the English people to devote their whole time to the study of classics." Well, we do not gainsay the importance of studying the modern objective sciences—that must be done by all means; but a section of people should be strongly encouraged to study the ancient language, literature, history, etc., of the country, so that through them the present generation may know the past. There are some subjects, as for instance, science, which have no local relation. They are true of all nations and countries. But subjects like art, history, religion, philosophy have got decidedly local relations, through which national ideas are to be fostered.

Even with regard to these subjects we should aim at transcending the local or national limitations at a certain time in future. The national education should be so directed that the boys after



thoroughly mastering the literature of their own country will be able to appreciate the foreign literature; their sympathy should be so widened that they will not only draw inspiration from their own national heroes but will also be able to appreciate the greatness of persons belonging to other nations. It is said that one who can appreciate the beauty of the Taj can understand the picture of a Raphael also. But, for an Indian it is better that he develops the faculty to understand the artistic beauty of the Taj first, and then develops his faculties in such a way that he can add to his resources from the inspiration of a Raphael also. From the national to the inter-national. Plants must grow into widely branching trees, but for that they must have roots in the earth.

It is not only a knowledge of the past that is required of our boys but also a love for their own people. The tragedy that a boy as soon as he receives some education becomes a foreign element in the family or the national life, considers himself as if a separate breed, and becomes utterly incapable of identifying himself with the joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations of the general mass, should be remedied. Modern education has created a wide gulf between the educated and the uneducated. If educated people show at any time any feeling of sympathy and love for the general mass, it is like feeling for the sorrows of a character in a drama read in print or seen in a stage. There is no real response of the heart, in that.

Above all, boys must be given a strong impetus to transform their national feelings into actual action. It must be strongly impressed upon them that the aim of education is to grow impersonal, to live for others. They must be taught that the best use they can

make of the education they have received is to utilize that in the service of the country and the people. By that we do not mean that everybody should engage himself as a teacher. The man who is engaged in unearthing the glories of the country's past or one who has devoted oneself to make new discoveries in modern subjects is also serving the cause of the country. A Bose or a Raman no less serves the cause of the country than one engaged in the actual political fight. But there must be the impersonal element in one's activities. The man who constantly keeps in view that by his actions he should not seek any personal return in riches or name and fame but that his achievement is to be the index of the nation's glory, will find much better impetus and inspiration for action. No less glorious will be the action of those, who unknown to name and fame devote themselves to the actual spread of education amongst their people. The late Sister Nivedita once suggested that if everyone who gets education takes into his head to serve the cause of education in the country, then within thirty years the torch of learning will be in every home of India.

#### IV

Nowadays the reason why such altruism is not found except rarely is that the attention of the boys is more towards the idea of material enjoyment than towards self-denial. The Indian ideal of poverty and renunciation has lost all value to our educated youths. Many will say that constantly glorifying the ideal of poverty has resulted in making the people poor. But poverty for poverty's sake is not the ideal,—one who embraces poverty for its own sake is steeped in Tamas—poverty for some higher purpose is the ideal. He who wants to serve the cause of others,



must give up all considerations for himself—must banish all thoughts for his own material comfort. Does not the man who is absorbed in scientific pursuit forget all thoughts about himself? The same thing is true even of a rich man engaged in the accumulation of wealth. So much attention does he give to increase his wealth that he has no time to enjoy that. Though it looks like a paradox, yet some rich men are very poor in fact. Thus there is the call of sacrifice in every field of activity. If the glory of voluntary poverty for some higher end and the joy of self-sacrifice for the cause of others be sufficiently infused into the young minds, there will not be dearth of national workers and the future of the country will be assured.

But the inspiration of such an ideal—as a matter of fact of any ideal—can only come from the living touch of the life of teachers. Ideal that is to be active, dynamic and capable of producing result must come from the examples set before one's life. Books in that respect serve but a secondary purpose. And sententious sermonizing is worse than nothing. Unfortunately nowadays teachers have no personal relationship with the students; they do not come into close touch with their boys and the relation between the teacher and the taught is hardly better than that of hired services. In ancient days the students becoming a part of the family life of their Guru could get inspiration not only from the intellectual life—but from life as a whole of the Gurus. The teacher would teach not for any remuneration, but for the joy of the giving. In regard to spiritual life, it is said, if the teacher wants any material return, he loses all his strength. It is no less true in the intellectual field also. In the proportion any pecuniary consideration is associated with the work of

a teacher, the sanctity of his mission is desecrated. But no use sighing for the past. We must look to the practical side of the problem. In the present age it is not possible for a teacher to work without any consideration whatsoever for his personal needs. But this pecuniary consideration can be and should be brought to the minimum. And if the teacher cannot be a substitute for a Guru of the old system, he can be a friend, philosopher and guide to his students. By himself living a life of idealism he can hope to spread that imperceptibly among his students. For that, Indian teachers will serve a better purpose than the foreign teachers, provided their taste has not been vitiated by the influence of the foreign culture.

## V

National education in order to be real, must be free from all Government control. A foreign Government with all good intentions cannot even understand the people fully, and as such there is bound to be undesirable interference. It will be a paradox if the education started with a view to spread national ideals has to come under the influence of a foreign Government in lieu of the financial help got.

But we need not altogether give up all hopes of utilizing the existing institutions also. No use of wrecking the present institutions, as long as better substitutes have not been built. If better national institutions fostering better idealism—can be founded and run, necessarily charm for the existing institutions will die out. In the meantime those at the helm of existing institutions may regulate them in such a way that they will serve the national cause as far as possible.

Nowadays the idea is widespread that the present system of education is de-



fective, it very little fulfils the country's demand and but poorly serves the cause of the nation. Discontentment is the root of all progress. As such we feel no doubt that as a result of the present

dissatisfaction there will one day be evolved the right system of education—a system that will be equally in consonance with the past of the country and the present aspirations of its people.

## THE SCIENTIFIC VIEW OF DEATH

BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

### THE GREATEST PROBLEM IN THE WORLD

In this age of commercialism and materialism few people think about death. They are rather afraid of it. They do not care to think what will happen after death either. They would rather live in this world, enjoy all the pleasures of life, make the best use of everything, and make a will, insure their life, or save a little money to pay the funeral expenses, and go on living. Out of the two thousand millions of people who inhabit this little planet, earth, forty millions of human bodies are disposed of every year, and a million tons of human flesh, bones and blood are thrown away as waste matter, as useless thing and are allowed to return to their elementary states. During the last war in Europe many millions of people were killed and were destroyed. Some of them were blown into atoms. But we do not think of that horrible scene. We have almost forgotten it, and we do not think for a moment that we shall die. We go on living and doing the same things as we did before. Our interest is not in solving the problem of death, although it is the greatest mystery in the world. It is as mysterious as the coming of life on this plane. But still we do not

think much about it. Even the Christian Churches do not take such a lively interest in this problem of death to-day, as they did in the last century. They would rather busy themselves with questions—social, educational, and especially political problems of the day. The medicine-men of this age do not solve the problem of death, although hundreds are dying in their hands every year. They gather all the things that they can, and their ideal is to enjoy the pleasures of life, to make the best of their opportunity.

In the Mahabharata, the most ancient epic of the Hindus, we read a prize question that was asked to different great men of ancient times: "What is the most wonderful thing in the world?" Various answers were given, but they were not satisfactory. The answer which Yudhishtira gave was accepted, and his answer was this: "Every day, and day after day, animals and human beings are passing out of life, but we do not think of death; we think that we shall never die. What can be more wonderful than this?" This answer was given nearly thirty-five centuries ago, but the same truth prevails to-day. We do not think of death, although we see every day dead bodies carried to the grave right under our eyes.

### MYTHOLOGY AND SCIENCE ON DEATH

The mystery of death is not solved by mythology or mythological beliefs of ancient peoples which have been handed down to us through generations. The scriptures of the Jews, the Christians, the Parsees, and the Mohammedans do not explain what death is. But in some of these scriptures, we find that God commanded the first man to do certain things, not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge; but when the man did eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the Lord cursed him and his curse brought death in this world. We read in Genesis, Chapter II, verse 17, the Lord commanded, "Of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Of course, Adam did not die in the day when he was tempted and when he ate the fruit thereof, but he reaped the consequences afterwards and died later. This passage shows that at first God did not intend that man should die, but the death came to the world through the evil influence of Satan, the devil. It was Satan who brought death into this world. In fact, the curse was the cause, but the curse was brought about by the evil influence of the devil. Those who believe in this, that death was caused or brought about by Satan, do not care to think further about it. They leave this question as settled, and naturally they do other things and do not try to solve the problem. They think that, if it be the curse of God, it is an inevitable end of life, let us be satisfied with it.

Scientific researches, however, toward tracing the causes of death have brought out many truths and many laws which were unknown to the

writers of Genesis and other scriptures of different nations. The orthodox science, or the materialistic science, as it is known to us, which denies the existence of the soul as an entity, and also denies the existence of mind, or life, or intelligence, as distinct from the results of matter and material particles governed by physical forces and chemical actions, says that death is nothing but the cessation of life, an inevitable end which all beings come to. The scientists do not explain it elaborately because they do not know much about it. Still they try to explain that when the vital parts of the body wear out in this machine, then naturally the whole of the machine must stop. The vital parts are regarded as the heart, the lungs and the brain. When any of these vital centres is worn out, or injured by disease or accident, then naturally the whole machinery of the body stops.

But here a question may arise, "Does the death of the conscious life imply the death of the life of the organs?" That is a very difficult question to answer. Or, in other words, when a person is dead, does it mean that the organs are dead also? On the contrary, science tells us, that the organs do not die immediately after the death of the body or the conscious life. For instance, if a chicken's head be cut off and its heart taken out and watched, it will continue to live for a long time after the death of the chicken. In fact, in the Rockefeller Institute, there is a heart of a chicken that has been kept for eight years, and it is still going, doing normal action. That shows that the organs have their independent life which may continue to live even after the conscious life of the individual is dead. In the same manner, it can be shown that the cells and tissues have their own life. They do not die, but they live for a long time after the death of the conscious life.



Modern science tells us that there are two kinds of death. One is the death of the conscious life; the other is the death of the organic and the cellular life, which is called somatic life. One does not depend upon the other. In fact, the life continues to exist, depending upon the natural process of the vital force which is known as the life force. But this materialistic science does not explain how it is that the organs, the cells and the tissues continue to live; because it denies the existence of a vital energy or vital force as distinct from all other known forces of nature. On the other hand, it considers that this vital force is a result of the chemical actions of the atoms and molecules of the organism, and therefore, it cannot explain any further.

Professor Charles Minot, of Harvard Medical School, writes, in his book entitled *Old age, Growth and Death* :

“Differentiation leads, as its inevitable conclusion, to death. Death is the price we are compelled to pay for our organization, for the differentiation which exists in us. Death of the whole comes, as we now know, whenever some essential part of the body gives way. Sometimes one, sometimes another, perhaps the brain, perhaps the heart, perhaps one of the other internal organs, may be the first in which the change of cytomorphosis goes so far that it can no longer perform its share of work, and failing, brings about the failure of the whole.

This is the scientific view of death. It leaves death with all its mystery, with all its sacredness. We are not in the least able, at the present time, to say what life is; still less, perhaps, what death is.”

#### CAUSES AND SIGNS OF DEATH

Thus by studying the materialistic science, we do not gain a very clear

idea of what death really means. But science goes on trying to trace the causes of death, and describes the signs of death. Science tells us that the actual signs of death are very difficult to find. The so-called popular signs of death, like the stoppage of the heart-beat, stoppage of the pulse or respiration, are not the actual signs of death, because there have been hundreds of cases where the heart-beat stopped and the respiration stopped, and yet after some time they were revived. The heart-beat might stop for many hours, even for days, and then it can be revived. Respiration might stop for a long time; in fact, science has recorded many cases of suspended animation, where the respiration and the heart-beat stopped for forty-eight hours in the least. But there have been other cases where men have been buried alive in a hermetically sealed box for forty days, and afterwards they were taken out and revived. They lived, they married, and enjoyed all the blessings of life afterwards. It is very difficult to say which would be the proper or the final sign of death. The science tells us that the decomposition and putrefaction are the only final signs of death, and nothing else. And that shows that people might be buried prematurely. There have been many cases of premature burial recorded in the medical journals of the world every year. And for that reason, some of the countries in Europe have passed a law that no one should be buried immediately after death, until decomposition sets in. Because it is a very serious thing to bury living beings. There have been cases of many prematurely killed by putting them into the coffin and burying it under the ground.

As premature burial is objectionable, so premature embalming is objectionable. Embalmers have killed many



before they really died. They might have been revived and might have lived for a long time. Because it is a proven fact to-day, that when the person is considered as dead, he might be in a trance, in a state of catalepsy or in a state of ecstasy.

Trance, catalepsy and ecstasy are conditions which resemble death. The outward signs are similar. But what happens to the soul? Science does not know, because it denies the existence of a soul. A person might go into a state of trance and remain in that state for hours. There are persons who can stop the heart-beat by their will. I knew a Hindu Yogi who came to America a few years ago, and who, in New York, went through all the medical tests to prove that he could stop his heart-beat at his will. The medical practitioners were all dumbfounded, and questioned how he could do it. It is possible, because it obeys the will of the individual. The individual will commands and directs the organic functions. But materialistic science cannot explain this, how it is possible, through the known laws that are accepted by these scientific thinkers.

The old Babylonian method of embalming the body and burying the dead, which has been handed down to us from pre-Christian era,—and which is practised to-day in all the civilized countries, is based upon the superstitious belief that the body will eventually rise and go to heaven. But after the decomposition sets in, and the body is gone, what will rise? Science shows that it is an absolute impossibility for the body to rise or go to heaven. Still some people cling to that old belief, and think that their friends and relatives will eventually arise and go to heaven with their physical bodies. But the best method of disposing of the dead body is the method of cremation, be-

cause it is sanitary. I mean, it is the best method from the standpoint of health as well as from the standpoint of safety for the living beings. Why should we have so many dead bodies going through the process of decomposition around us? It is better to get rid of them and let them go to their elementary conditions. This cremation has been practised in India from very ancient times; in fact, in the Vedas we find that cremation was regarded as the best method. But among other nations, burial or mummification was regarded as the best method. As I have already said, their idea was to keep the body intact for a long time because the soul will eventually come back to the body. The Egyptians also had that kind of belief. They believed that if the physical body were kept intact and not mutilated, then the soul would eventually come back to dwell in that body; whereas if any part of the physical body was mutilated, that part of the double or soul, would also be mutilated. They believed in a "double,"—a "double" is exactly of the same shape and same form as the physical body. In India we find that the Hindus have a belief in the existence of a double, but it was not dependent upon the gross physical body. They have a philosophy altogether different from that of the Egyptians and other nations of ancient times. They believe that this "double" might leave the body and continue to live even when this gross physical body is destroyed through the process of cremation which they even now regard as the most sanitary method of disposing of the dead body.

#### MIND AS A FACTOR IN THE CASES OF DEATH

Then there is another class of scientific thinkers who are a little more



advanced than the orthodox scientists. They hold that "mind" is a factor in the cases of disease and death. They do not deny the existence of mind or intelligence or consciousness, nor do they believe that the mind, intelligence and consciousness are the results of the chemical actions of the atoms and molecules of the organism. On the contrary, they hold the belief that the source of consciousness and mind are indestructible. So is also life. Life is indestructible. They regard that life-force (Prana) is not the result of chemical actions. It is not the same as electricity or any other force that is known to the orthodox science, but it is distinct and separate. They give the cases where mind can bring death through extreme emotions. Some of the functions of the mind, which we call passions, will create disease and death.

Dr. John Hunter, a noted psychologist, was a genius of extraordinary nature. He was a scientist, but he believed in the power of the mind, and yet he had very little control over his passions. He could not control anger. Once he had extreme anger as the result of a slight provocation, and through that extreme anger, he instantly fell dead. There is a historical record that anger kills the person instantly. The French physician, Tourtelle, witnessed two women who died of extreme anger. Extreme anger will produce the stoppage of the heart-action and poison the whole system. As extreme anger will kill persons, a slight expression of anger, anger of a milder form, will bring diseases of the worst kind. In fact, when a mother nurses the baby while she is in that state of anger, she feeds the baby with poison, and that poison works and creates all kinds of trouble in the baby's system. It is a scientific fact to-day.

As anger is dangerous and it is a destructive force which creates a havoc in the system, so is fear. Now, the ordinary expression that we are frightened to death has some meaning. Extreme fear will bring on death, will stop the heart-action, and the lungs also will stop, and simultaneously other organs too. Then there are other passions, hatred and grief. Grief will produce a havoc in the system. These are all recorded facts. When there have been cases of disease and death through extreme hatred and grief, how can we deny the power of the mind? If mind and mental states can produce such effects upon the physical body and bring premature death, how can we deny the existence of mind as the most powerful thing that we possess? Therefore these scientists, who are advanced thinkers and not bigoted, like the orthodox materialists, regard mind as the most wonderful force that is working through this physical body.

There are cases of counterfeits of death, even in the lower animals. There are some of the insects which would feign death. The fox, when he is pursued by an enemy and when he does not know how to escape, lies flat on the ground and feigns dead, and remains in that state for some time. There are other animals which would even become stiff and the *rigor mortis* of death will be perceptible in the physical body of the animal. It can be produced by the mind. And this counterfeit of death may be caused by different things, such as intoxication, apoplexy, heart-trouble, and so on. Thus it shows that mind can produce these things under those conditions—the signs of death—and therefore these advanced thinkers and scientists consider that death can be brought about by the power of the mind. And they regard that this

ordinary state which we call death is caused by that self-conscious, living force, which is working through the organs; when that self-conscious, living force is detached, then it produces death. In fact, the self-conscious, living soul has vital energy or life-force (Prana) and mind with it. Mind is inseparable from the life force or vital energy. But the mind cannot work unless it has an instrument. Therefore, it manufactures the instrument of the physical body. It draws from the surrounding environments atoms, molecules or particles of matter and charges them with the life-force or the vibrations of Prana; and when the vibrations or life-force are weak, and are not up to the standard of the conditions of life, then the living soul, or the self-conscious mind tries to raise those vibrations of the cellular structure up to the standard by making all efforts, and if it fails to raise the standard of vibration of the cells and tissues, then there is the death of the whole. The whole machinery dies.

#### MIND AND PRANA

Thus we see that there are two principal factors in the body, the one is mind and the other is the vibration of Prana or the vibratory state of cells and tissues of the body; but the vibratory state of the cells and tissues is governed by the mind. Mind is the creator. It is the manipulator. It is the organizer. It is the director of all the organic functions. The organs might go on vibrating in their own way, but that would not be the standard of life. There must be co-ordination. The heart-action must correspond in a certain way with the action of the lungs, and all this intricate mechanism must be all adjusted in such a way that one helps the other.

Otherwise, there would be no life. If one screw is loose anywhere, that screw must be tightened; otherwise the machine would not work. And who tightens this screw? It is the individual self-conscious life-force, which is called, in ordinary terms, the living soul. Living soul means the self-conscious individualized, life-force with the sense of "I"; and that sense of "I" holds them together. I am this body. I am Mr. so-and-so. This sense of "I" holds all together, unifies them, and makes the separate parts vibrate and produce a perfect harmony, and that harmony is life. As in an orchestra there might be a hundred instruments, and if each instrument goes on playing in its own way without following the direction of its conductor it will produce no harmony but discord; similarly, if the organs of the body go on beating in their own way, without producing any harmony, without having any co-ordination, without being directed by their conductor then it is useless. Who is the conductor of the organs? Who is the director? The orthodox science does not see that director, but this advanced science tells us that there is a director, and this director has the absolute control over the whole organism. He is the living soul. At the time of death he disconnects himself from the organs and leaves the body.

In cases of trance, catalepsy and ecstasy, this living soul leaves the body, but the connection is not entirely cut off. There still remains some kind of connection. It is like the umbilical cord of a new-born babe which holds this entity as connected with the physical body. Therefore the physical body can be revived; but when the connection is entirely cut off, the body cannot be revived. Then it is called death. That is the difference. This difference very few people understand.



But this living soul which goes out of the body at the time of death can be photographed. And the most delicate, sensitive instruments have been used to weigh the body, just before death and immediately after death, and making all allowances for the gases that escape, it has been found that the substance which passes out of the body at the time of death has a definite weight of about half an ounce or three-quarters of an ounce.

This fine substance that emanates from the body at the time of death has a luminosity, and this luminous substance is photographed, and can be seen by the psychic, as passing out of the body. The whole body becomes enshrouded with a kind of luminous mist. I remember the case of a girl, whose brother died in Los Angeles, some years ago. I heard it from her mother. At the deathbed of her mother the young girl said: "Mamma, mamma, see, there is a mist around his body, what is it?" But the mother could not see it. She said, it comes out of the body. Scientists have taken up that subject in Europe and are experimenting on this emanation. They call it "Ectoplasm." It is a vapour-like substance, but it has no particular form. It is like a cloud, but it can take a shape or a form, and can be photographed. What substance it is, they do not know; but they cannot deny its existence.

Our human bodies are emanating that substance all the time. It can be seen especially at the time when there is a medium in a trance-like condition. The materializing mediums emanate that very strongly. I have seen it in *séances*, and in private *séances* when there was no professional medium at all. I have handled it, touched it. There is no particular feeling when we feel "Ectoplasm." It cannot be described. But when it takes a definite

shape, then it becomes almost like solid, like flesh of our own body. It can take any form.

At the time of death, all these vital forces that are governing the different organs, become concentrated and centralized into one point, before it leaves the body, and then we find the dying person's sight becomes dim, and the sensations of the body become faint, and gradually the whole body is going through a transformation. And in this transformation there are cases where the psychic powers of the individual manifest. Some of the dying persons develop clairvoyance and clairaudience. They can appear just at the time of death, either before or immediately after, to distant friends, in the form of an apparition, and they can give their messages. Such cases have been recorded by the scientists. The French Astronomer Camille Flammarion had written a book entitled *The Unknown* on that subject, by gathering all the authentic reports made under the test conditions in different families, which describe the experiences of different people immediately at the time of death or after death. Fifteen hundred such records were gathered, and afterwards he selected quite a few out of them which were absolutely authentic, and published them in this book. Now, these records show that there is something which is not the result of the physical body. This "Ectoplasm" is a substance which contains finer matter in vibration, and this finer matter forms the under-garment of the soul, and the gross physical body is the outer garment. So, we have two bodies, the gross physical body and this finer or ethereal body, which exists in each one of us. We may not feel it at present, because our sight and senses are looking for the gross, material, tangible objects. But it does not become tan-



gible until it is brought down to the plane of our senses. The plane of our senses depends upon a certain degree of vibration. We can see light when the vibration of light is within the range of our vision. From red to violet our eyes can see, but if there be less vibrations than the red, we do not see it. In order to become visible it must vibrate in a certain way so that our organs might catch. Just like sound. There are sounds which we do not hear at all, because our organ of hearing is imperfect. Similarly the ethereal body cannot be seen until it is brought within the range of our vision by a process which is called materialization. It is a process which brings the finer matter, which is vibrating at a high rate, into a lower rate of vibration, so that we can catch it, or get a glimpse of it.

#### VERDICT OF THE VEDANTA

The Vedanta Philosophy is in perfect harmony with the conclusions of this latter kind of advanced scientists who hold that mind and the living soul are distinct factors in creating disease, bringing on death, and manufacturing the physical body. These ideas we find in the Vedanta Philosophy, which is the oldest system of philosophy in this world. The truth never grows old. The truth that was discovered five thousand years ago is the same truth to-day, even if it be re-discovered by the Modern scientists. For we must remember that truth is one. There is only one condition which can be absolutely true. The others are imitations of truth. That absolute truth might have been discovered ages before, but because of the time, the truth does not change. It is the eternal truth. Therefore we find that this finer body which I have just described is called in Vedanta the "subtle body," which is

the under-garment of the soul, and the gross physical body is the outer garment. When the soul has performed certain functions and has enjoyed certain pleasures, and has fulfilled certain desires it finds that this gross physical body is no longer of any use, and it does not work right. Then the living soul leaves the gross body and manufactures another. Just as you have run a motor-machine for two years, and after two years you find that the parts are worn out and that it has done its service, then you leave it and get another. That is exactly what the living soul does. You cannot blame the soul for doing that. Because the body is the instrument through which the soul must manifest its powers, gain experiences, learn the lessons and gather knowledge. In this way, the living soul is progressing in the process of evolution, rising from a lower to a higher state, and fulfilling its mission at every step of manifestation.

This idea of life will explain the mystery of death. Death is no longer mysterious when we know that there is an entity which has manufactured this instrument and which is dwelling in it, and which leaves it when the time comes. So death does not mean the annihilation of anything, or destruction, or reduction into nothingness of anything; but it means disintegration. It means that the instrument which has served its purpose must be thrown away, and another instrument must be rebuilt, out of the same material, perhaps. Who can tell that the atoms and molecules which made up the body of Cleopatra thousands of years ago are not used in the bodies of living beings to-day? The same atoms and molecules that are buried in the dead bodies, have been dissolved and taken up by the vegetable life, have reappeared in the forms of plants or cereals, and we



might be eating them and taking them in again, and they are forming parts of our own body. So, it is a revolution. Nothing is destroyed. The atoms and molecules go into one body, get out, and enter into another body. And in this continuous process of life and its manifestations, of evolution and involution, the living soul is the master. That living soul has no death. Where will it go if it were destroyed? Do you think it could go into nothingness? No, it is impossible. Science tells us that which has existed once, will continue to exist forever. But the physical form of the body will go. It has no existence. It is constantly changing. The form that you had when you were a little baby is gone. The form that you had yesterday you have not got to-day. The form that you have this minute, you will not have it next minute. It is a continuous influx and reflux of matter. It is just like a whirlpool. The particles of matter are revolving and keeping up the shape according to the type that you have manufactured, so that there would be an identity.

Now, in this vortex of the particles of matter which are constantly in motion, there is something that is constant and unchangeable within us. That is our consciousness. If you ever see your own hand or any part of the body through X-ray, you will find like a revelation that your body consists of finer particles of mist-like matter, which are hanging around the outline of the bones. The gross physical body which appears as solid is not at all solid. It is just like a cloud, and we think it is solid only under certain conditions. At the time of death, the soul leaves this plane and enters into another plane of consciousness, which may be called

another dimension. We are now living in three dimensions. There is another dimension where the sense-objects do not exist at all. It is beyond the limitations of our physical body. Even the motion of the earth and of the planetary systems do not exist there. We cannot imagine such a state unless we get a glimpse of that other dimension. It is called the fourth dimension. Where does the human soul go? It does not go anywhere after death. It remains in the fourth dimension and cuts off all connections with the physical world of three dimensions. The third and fourth dimensions are related to each other just like a wheel within a wheel. We know, through the study of science, that the cells of the body are constantly moving. But do we feel that motion? Are we conscious of it? No! When we sit still, we are enjoying that quiet, but there is a constant motion going on within our system, which we are not conscious of. So, the departed soul is not conscious of the changes and conditions of the gross physical body.

So, our bodies are nothing but the instruments, the garments of the soul. Therefore Vedanta tells us that when a person dies, he is not really dead, but death means a change, change from one state of consciousness into another state of consciousness, and the soul throws away the gross physical body at the time of death just as we throw away our old worn-out garments. This idea is beautifully expressed in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "As we throw away our old worn-out garments and put on new ones, so the living soul, after using the body which is the gross physical garment, throws it away when it is worn out, and manufactures a new one."<sup>2</sup>



# LEGENDS

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

(Address to the Youth)

Prof. Zelinski of the Warsaw University came to the conclusion in his interesting work about the ancient myths that the heroes of these myths are not only legendary figures, but really existed. To the very same conclusion came also many other authors, thus overthrowing the materialistic direction of the past century, which sometimes even tried to prove that even historical figures were also but myths. Thus the French scholar Senard tried to prove that Buddha never existed and was nothing else but a solar myth. Likewise attempts were made to deny even the existence of Christ overlooking that we have proofs very close to the epoch of His existence and besides there was also found the Roman inscription with the edict against the first Christians in Syria, so very close to the time of the great manifestation. In this fight between those who acknowledge and those who deny, is evident a trait of universal psychology. In this it is instructive to see how the denying ones are gradually defeated and those defending heroism, truth and reality find support in the very facts themselves.

Besides, those who appeared as dreamers about heroes and myths, suddenly appear as realists, whereas the denying sceptics gradually occupy the places of dreamers who trusted slander or a counterfeited source. Thus, slowly but certainly the wheel of evolution turns, carrying with it the revelation of the forgotten truth.

Let us look back and see how quickly

and easily humanity forgets even the recent events and personalities. Only recently such personalities as Paracelsus, Thomas Vaughan were listed in Encyclopedias even as impostors. But then the just have assumed to read their works and found instead of the proclaimed charlatans, profound scholars from whose discoveries humanity benefited. I remember how in my childhood I was fascinated with the book by Gaston Tissandier *The Martyrs of Science*. Those who perished as a holocaust, in tortures and on the scaffold are regarded now as great scientists. But the false scepticism continues its work and instead of those martyrs it hastens to create different ones in order thus in a sure way to honour them by monuments and celebrations.

For the last years a social manifestation is obvious which sometimes gives us the hope that perhaps even the time is at hand when the harmful negation will be bridled and will occupy its deserved place.

People became desirous to read biographies. Truly even here the sceptics try not to give in. They will tell you with a shrug of their shoulders, "How can we be sure about the true impulses of the actions of the portrayed personalities? or "How can we be certain what were the casualties which created the events which marked the life of the portrayed heroes?" or "How can we be certain of the non-partiality of the biographer?"

Let these remarks even be true to a certain extent. Let us allot a certain



part to the personal mood of the biographer. But nevertheless the collection of historical documents offers us just the same milestones of true reality. Likewise up till recently were chronicles considered to be inadequate documents not worthy of serious consideration. But a detailed study of documents and finds contemporary to these chronicles have shown that chronicles deserve much more esteem than it usually was supposed. Certainly one has also to hope that humanity will not neglect entire centuries before paying attention to outstanding manifestations.

Reading biographies, humanity will learn also to write them. Of course it is erroneous to think that heroes could be attributed only to antiquity. The synthesis of our era will likewise crystallize its heroes and we may hope that the holocausts, prisons and executions will cease to be the attributes of these great souls.

Having ascertained that the gods of antiquity were heroic personalities imprinted upon the memory of the peoples, we shall affirm ourselves in the knowledge that in our days individuality and personality are likewise laying their hand upon the rudder of humanity. Ascertaining the existence of such personalities, we shall learn as did the ancients, to accompany them by a positive rendering of their lives. We must not forget that in future these life-descriptions shall reach the schools as torches of history. Hence let our youth not only like to read biographies, but also learn to write them or rather to discern which of the manifestations of their contemporaries shall become history.

Reading legends the youth shall also learn to dream. And this is a great capacity, to know how to dream filling one's heart with the best fires. With

these fires of the heart the youth will learn also to discriminate where is the truth. No calculations shall provide the truth—it is but the language of the heart which knows where this great truth abides, which in spite of all leads humanity upward.

Legends, are they not the collection of best flowers? About the small, the insignificant, humanity does not create legends. Often even in seemingly negative legends is contained a great part of reverence to power. In any case, each legend contains something unusual. And does not this unusualness lead us beyond the twilight of the mechanical standard. With this machine-like standard, evolution is not built. But the legend which liberates us beyond the limits of the everyday's oppressing routine refreshes our trend of thoughts and permits to merge into new depths of knowledge with an eternally unextinguishable youthful ardour.

Ask a great mathematician, a great physicist, a great biologist, a great astronomer, whether he knows to dream? I do not even mention artists, musicians, poets, for their entire being is composed out of the capacity to dream. And a great scientist when truly great and when not confused by the presence of a witness, will tell you how beautifully he knows to soar in dreams and how many of his discoveries have at their foundation not only calculations but exactly a dream.

We have remembered then that legends are not abstraction, but usually reality itself. We also remembered that dreams are not signs of illiteracy but are qualifications of refined souls. Let us then encourage in our youth the striving to the calling and creative legend and together with the youth remaining young pay tribute to the dream as to the leading and uplifting



medium of our regeneration and perfection.

Striving, Hierarchy, Infinity and Beauty—only under these milestones we progress indisputably. Everything of which consists the activity of our Societies must be applied in life immediately. Paying tribute to the

dream we shall not become “dreamers.”

Let it be the dream of a Creator. In this dream will be no intoxication, nor vascillation but the immutable knowledge gathered in the depths of our spirit. And first of all we shall remember that the word “Culture” signifies Cult-Ur,—cult of Light.

## CHILD-GARDEN SCHOOLS FOR INDIA

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

The main idea of the Kindergarten system, as this was formulated and arranged by Fröbel, early in the nineteenth century, lies in the two-fold principle enumerated by Pestalozzi: *Knowledge comes by sensation, abstract thought by concrete experience; and the child in its development follows the race.* These two conceptions, working together, account for the manifold toys and occupations included in the Kindergarten, and account also for the not less interesting and important feature of the Kindergarten game. Behind both principles alike, lies the perception of a deeper truth still, namely that education is to be determined by the nature of the educated, rather than by the thing taught.

To be initiated into child-study, to be enabled to observe the child for himself, is a more valuable accomplishment to the teacher than any of the special subjects in which he may be proficient.

Like all great psychological discoveries, Fröbel's theory of education seeks continually for new expression. It is never to be considered as fixed or identified with its outer form.

The discoverer was himself a German, and local characteristics have adhered

in a peculiar degree to his creation. The German Kindergarten was built up by observation of the German play of German children. It was equipped with German materials impressed with German taste. It expresses a German mode of thought, and in some respects bears the stamp and limitations of the age which gave it birth. If we are ever to have an Indian Kindergarten, all these elements must be correspondingly Indianised. It must be the result of the observation of Indian childhood, and must reflect Indian life and express Indian ideals.

Before such a system can come into being, however, we must be in a position to grasp the main outlines of the Kindergarten, or child-garden-school, as it is known in Europe, and to deduce from these the principles that are essential and universal in their application. For this, nothing could be more necessary than a brief synopsis of the Kindergarten as it stands.

Fröbel saw that the play of children was full of significance. By it the child enters into relationships with the external world and with his fellows, which in their totality, will constitute his character and personality. By play, again,



the young animal begins the process of acquiring knowledge of the world about him.

And by play, finally, with its apparently aimless movements, he gains control over his own body, and finally becomes skilled in its use and direction. There is thus nothing, in the whole life of a child, which affords so much educational capital as the spontaneous self-activity which we call play. Education is understood to be a development, a leading-out, from what is already attained to what is naturally attainable. If this is so, it follows that we can help no one to develop, unless we are first in full sympathy with his present standpoint. Hence Fröbel's effort to watch the play of children as it actually was, and make it the basis and starting-point of the intellectual processes, was strictly scientific.

He found that various raw materials were universally beloved,—mud, sand, water, coloured chalks, beads, sticks, straw, string, paper, fibres of any sort, seeds, fruits, flowers, and a host of other substances were all, to the babies, as so many opportunities of delight. Neither Raphael nor Michael Angelo knew greater joy than the children, as Fröbel watched them, found in their mud pies. Metaphorically speaking, he imported the mud into the schoolroom, and determined to bring with it the creative joy that of right belonged to it. The result was the tabulation of some 8 or 10 processes, which were to be used for the initiation of education. In the Western plethora of manufactured objects, it was easy to provide the schoolroom, further, with certain toys, which were found to have a stimulating effect on the mental energy of the children. But these were all characterised by the quality of calling forth activity. A Fröbelian toy must always demand effort from the child, never represent

labour accomplished by others for him. The one quality educates, the other pampers and spoils.

First of these toys—which Fröbel named “Gifts”—was a box containing six coloured balls. To a young child, as to a kitten, a ball is scarcely a thing. It is almost a person, almost a companion. Intending his gift for very young children, Fröbel gives it, in typical form, at the end of a string, and leaves it to be swung and waved and tossed, and played with in a thousand ways that will not mean losing it! It is by way of extension and continuation of this gift, however, that in the playground, or in the course of the game, the child receives an indiarubber ball, and is taught to bounce and catch and through this, in accordance with the power of school and class, to organise and co-ordinate what would otherwise be merely aimless movements. The German logic in Fröbel sometimes overrides the motherly tact of the great educator and he allows himself to be led by the subject, rather than by the child. This must account for the nature of his Gift II, which consists of a wooden ball, cylinder, and cube. In actual teaching this gift may be ignored. Gifts II to VI consist of boxes of wooden cubes and bricks for building. From there, the child learns the elements of number, of fractions, and of Geometry. They have a power of giving pleasure and developing faculty which in the hands of a skilled teacher is little short of infinite. There is hardly any subject which they cannot be made to serve. The children will work with them for years, always finding in them something new, and never tiring of them. A box of thin coloured tiles, some square and others of various triangular shapes, constitutes Gift VII, and completes the series known as ‘The building gifts.’ This is used for still further elaboration of



geometrical ideas, and for pattern-making.

These boxes of toys form the gifts proper. For the rest, Frobel supplies the child with raw materials which he is led to use in various more or less suggestive ways, and each of these is known as 'an occupation.' Paper is folded, or cut into definite shapes and patterns.

Beads are threaded. Stitches are made with coloured threads on cards, by way of delighting the child with the elements of sewing. Simple weaving is

provided for, with paper or string. Drawing is attempted both with carbon and in colours. The programme sounds as trivial as may be, and its significance is derived, not from anything in itself, but entirely from its relation to the development of the child.

There is a third department of the Kindergarten process, as thought out by Fröbel, and this is the Kindergarten story and game. Fröbel himself wrote the simple little collection of Mother-And-Child-Songs.

## RITUALISM: ITS FUNCTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

BY PROF. D. S. SARMA, M.A.

### I

There is no religion without ritualism. All great religions of the world have their rituals. In fact ritualism is more indispensable to religion than even morality. For one thing, morality comes later than ritualism in the history of a religion. Some scholars say that even faith comes only after ritual. Whatever that may be, there is no doubt that we receive our first impressions of religion in our childhood through the rites and ceremonies that we witness. And there is no doubt also that a great many people in every country hardly get beyond the stage of rituals in religion. Ritual may be the husk of religion, but without the husk the seed will not grow. When the sower goes out to sow, he takes paddy and not rice. He knows that, if the husk is removed, life goes out of the seed, and his sowing will be in vain. Thus ritualism has some vital functions assigned to it in religion. Let us closely

examine them, and see what ritualism can do for us, before we consider what it cannot do for us.

Ritualism has first of all an important social function. Religion, like language, comes to us in our early years as a social product. It comes to us in the form of ritual with a meaning behind, just as language comes to us in the form of articulate sounds with a meaning behind. Ritual is the body of faith, as sounds are the body of language. And it is ritual more than faith that binds together large masses of believers. We can see the proof of this every day in the large congregations of worshippers that take part in a common ritual in a Hindu temple or a Catholic church or a Buddhist *vihara* or a Mohammedan mosque.

Ritualism has also a historical function. It binds together not only the different units of society during a generation but also the different generations of a race. It binds the present with the past and secures a visible continuity to

religion. Take for instance the injunction that every pious Hindu once in his life should visit Benares and bathe in the Ganges and perform a *Srâddha* at Gaya, or the injunction that a Buddhist should once in his life visit the holy land and see the four sacred spots where Buddha was born, where he was illumined, where he taught his first sermon and where he attained Parinirvana. What great historical associations are conjured up in the mind of a pilgrim when he visits these famous places! Last December when I visited Brindaban, bathed in the Jumna and saw the white beds of sand where the Beloved of India once played on his flute, I could easily understand the overpowering emotions of Sri Chaitanya when he visited the place. Similarly a few days later when I went to Buddha-Gaya and saw the Bodhi tree and witnessed a troop of Tibetan women prostrating themselves there, I could understand what pilgrimage to India had meant to those Chinese pilgrims of whom we hear in history. Many an ancient rite becomes worth preserving if only for the sake of its historical associations, and for being a reminder of the unsophisticated childhood of our race.

But the chief function of ritualism is determined by its symbolism. Most of the rites we perform are intended for visualising belief. Our gratitude and thankfulness to God is visualised by our offerings of grain and fruit on the altar. Our humble service to Him is visualised in the temple-worship, where God is treated as an earthly king and roused from his sleep in the morning and sent to bed at night with music. In Christian ritual, fellowship with Christ is visualised by the Eucharist. In Middle Ages the Catholic church strove to drive home the mysteries of Christianity into the minds of the people by means of liturgical plays enacted in the church.

These three functions of ritualism—social, historical and symbolic—which we have so far considered are objective in character. But ritual is cherished more often for its subjective influence than for its objective aim. Therefore let us examine what the subjective functions of ritualism are.

Ritualism has an obvious psychological function of providing an outlet for religious emotion. Every emotion tries to seek an outlet in action. It finds its satisfaction in something that is done under its influence. Religious emotion too craves for expression, and it finds it in the prescribed ritual. The worshipper has the satisfaction, after going through a long ceremony, that he has done something with a holy purpose, that this act of his is different from his other secular acts and that it is a thing apart and sacred in character.

Closely connected with this psychological function is the æsthetic function. Ritual satisfies not only our craving for expression of religious emotion, but also our sense of the beautiful. In all ages and all countries ritual and art have been closely connected together. Witness the great temples of Southern India, the mosques in Agra and Delhi and the cathedrals of Europe. Beautiful places of worship, sacred vessels and sacred vestments connected with ritualism satisfy the æsthetic needs of the congregation and are accordingly encouraged by all great historical religions.

Ritualism has also a moral function. In fact we may say that rituals are incipient morals. The numerous fasts and vigils, the numerous rules regarding eating and drinking which a complex ritualism enjoins are not without their disciplinary value. Almost every rite that we perform is a lesson in self control. It is the first step in that long process of the liberation of the spirit from the thralldom of the flesh,



which is the aim of all morality and religion.

Finally the most important subjective function of ritualism is what may be called its mystical function. The heart of every true religion is a profound mystical experience. And one of the functions of ritualism is to suggest this experience and create an atmosphere in which the soul would be predisposed to it. This is done by means of various ritual acts the symbolism of which we only dimly comprehend, by means of sacred formulas in an ancient, archaic language the meaning of which is only half perceived but the utterance of which thrills the heart with a vague suggestion, and by means of consecrated things—images, rosaries, vessels, lamps, etc.,—which with their thousand associations with the religious mood take away the mind from what is familiar, worldly and vulgar. Here we have the subtlest of the functions of ritualism, the secret of its great influence. A wisely-planned and wisely-conducted ritual prepares the ground, creates the atmosphere, suggests the mood and predisposes the mind so that the religious soul may easily detach itself from the world and contemplate on the Mystery of mysteries.

Thus ritualism has very important subjective as well as objective functions—social, historical, symbolical, psychological, æsthetic, moral and mystical—which short-sighted Puritanism will do well to consider carefully before it launches its attack. Families and communities which neglect the forms of institutional religion are likely to lose their religious spirit in a generation and be easily exposed to the attacks of other religions. A well-established ritualism is like a fort which protects a religious community from all disintegrating forces from without. Even a soulless ritualism goes a great way in

warding off the blows of an aggressive alien religion. The havoc committed by the enemies of Hinduism in its days of decline would have been far greater if its deep-set phalanx of rites and ceremonies had not afforded it protection.

## II

But ritualism has its limitations and dangers. And it is time we turn our attention to these.

In the history of the religious life of every man there comes a time when rituals cease to satisfy the heart and a higher way opens itself before the mind. Light and darkness are deemed the world's eternal paths, says the Bhagavan of the Gita. By the one we go never to return, by the other we go only to return. Happy is the man who comes to see that the path of ritualism, in spite of all its seductive beauties, its safeties and assurances, is the path of darkness which only the un-enlightened tread. Happy is he who, when he comes to the parting of ways, leaves the primrose path which takes one round and round endlessly and steps into the higher path—the path of light—which leads to the great Beyond from which there is no return. It is only when a man has gone considerably far on this path that he is entitled to look down and speak of the limitations of ritualism. And ritualists will do well to pay attention to criticism from above, as they will do well to treat with contempt any criticism from below from people who do not know what religion is. Let us therefore consider what great prophets and religious teachers have said protesting against the abuses of ritualism. For every great religion has its prophets as well as priests—its Upanishads as well as its Brahmanas, its Vedanta as well as its Mimamsa.

An extensive ritual system, while en-



sure the existence of a religion, perpetuates only a low type of religion appealing to the senses and crudely making concrete what should be abstract and spiritual. Every cultured and refined mind is often repelled by the paraphernalia of a popular religion with their low appeal. Directors of popular religion always defend these by saying that the masses require that kind of appeal. Well, our masses are not so ignorant as the priests make them out to be, just as our children are not so ignorant as the teachers make them out to be. And great temples are meant not only for the masses but also for the classes. If ritualism perpetuates a low type of religion in these places, the educated classes which resort to them become spiritually starved and lose all faith in religion. This is really what is happening in all great pilgrim centres of our country. These places are mostly in the hands of uncultured, extortionate priesthood who occupy a much lower intellectual and moral level than many of the worshippers who go there.

Again ritualism has always a tendency to make religion mechanical. When the same formulas are repeated, the same verses chanted and the same ceremonies gone through over and over again they are apt to lose their power of suggestion and become only tedious and boring. Many of us, I believe, set apart certain moments in the day for our religious exercises and go through them regularly. But I doubt whether they are really our most religious moments in the day. It is not when we are 'saying our prayers' that we are most religious, but when we have a great disappointment in life or when we receive a moral shock at the success of evil or when we are plunged in sorrow owing to the loss of a dear one. So it is not enough that we have set moments for religious exercises. We have to adopt a general

religious attitude to life. We should learn not only to say our prayers but also to pray.

How ritualism makes religion mechanical is seen in what is called the *Pârâyânam* of the Gita or the Ramayana. There is no doubt that the reading of a chapter of the Gita every morning before we begin the day's work is greatly helpful to religious life. But when it is read by those who do not know Sanskrit and who think that the uttering of the Sanskrit Slokas is in itself a meritorious act and who never connect their reading with their life, we see within what miserably narrow limits ritualism could confine religion.

Ritualism tends to make religion not only mechanical but also static. When belief changes, ritual also should change along with it. But any innovation in a well-established ritual is resented by people, so that in course of time a wide gulf is created between faith and ritual. This is what has actually happened in Hindnism. Most of our ritual represents an obsolete faith. It invokes the aid of many gods in whose existence we have ceased to believe. Hindu ritual is like *English spelling*—obsolete, chaotic, irrational, the incrustation of centuries. Just as in a progressive language spelling should follow pronunciation, or written idiom should follow spoken idiom, though at a respectable distance, so in a progressive religion ritual should follow faith, though at a respectable distance. The printing press more or less fixed the English spelling in the 15th century according to the pronunciation of that time. In the succeeding centuries the pronunciation of the people has moved on but the spelling has remained where it was. Similarly our ritual was more or less fixed some centuries before the Christian era by our priesthood according to the faith of



those times. The faith has moved on, but the ritual remains where it was. So that there is a yawning gulf between the two. Here is plenty of work for those who have both religious zeal and scholarship. Our ritual is in great need of enlightened and cautious reform. It has to be simplified and rationalised, if the rising generation is to be rescued from loss of faith. It has to be brought nearer the actual faith of the people, if it is to exert a wholesome influence and play its legitimate part in religion.

But the greatest danger of ritualism is that it leads to Pharisaism against which all great religious prophets have raised their indignant voice. When ritualism becomes strongly entrenched in an opulent priesthood who are morally depraved or who are absolutely heartless and soulless and yet most punctilious with regard to rites and ceremonies, it becomes a horrible travesty of religion. We all know the terms in which Jesus addressed the Pharisees of his day. Even such a tolerant teacher as the author of the Gita pours out vials of wrath (in Chapters II and XVI) on those who make a parade of their adherence to the letter of the law and ignore the spirit.

Lastly, ritualism with its great insistence on form is likely in modern times to stand in the way of a recognition of unity of all religions. In the present century a systematic study of the lives of mystics and saints of all religions has convinced us that underneath every religion there lies, like a steel frame, the common mystic path. The experience of every mystic passes through the same stages, encounters the same difficulties and reaches the same goal. The mystic path is generally divided everywhere into three sections—purification, illumination and union, corresponding to our Karma, Bhakti and Jnana. Every religion undertakes

to give advice and guidance along this path. In the first stage we are required to cultivate virtue and purify ourselves by leading a spotless moral life. Every religion teaches this, but every religion has its own list of cardinal virtues, which determine its individual character. If Hinduism insists on *Vairâgya* and *Ahimsâ*, Christianity insists on humility and love. It is all a question of emphasis. Similarly in the second stage every religion insists on the worship of a Divine Form which would fill the worshipper's mind with its luminous presence. One worships Rama, another Krishna, a third Buddha and a fourth Christ. It is a question of form here. In the third stage of union of the soul with God some religions insist on similarity and some on identity. It is largely a question of temperament here. If these facts are clearly recognized by all the followers of different religions, humanity will take a long step towards religious amity and peace and co-operation against the common enemy—irreligion. But if ritualism makes too large a claim for form and individuality and ignores the common spirit underlying all forms, it becomes an obstacle to the religious peace of the world.

### III

From what has been said above we are in a position to state what the ideal ritual of any religion should be. Of course, ideal ritual is, like an ideal language, an impossibility. We cannot superimpose on any historical religion an artificially perfect ritual any more than we can superimpose on any historical language an ideally perfect spelling or an ideally perfect grammar. Rituals, like grammatical forms, are natural growths. They cannot be thoroughly transformed, but they can be suitably modified by the process of

cutting and pruning. With this precaution, then, we may proceed to state that the ideal ritual is one which skillfully combines some opposite qualities. It should be fairly transparent and at the same time remain somewhat mystical. It should be progressive as well as traditional. It should be subjective as well as objective. And above all it should be as close to faith as possible. The ideal ritual never abrogates its functions, nor does it usurp those of the other elements in religion. Morality is

no substitute for ritualism any more than ritualism can be a substitute for morality. The spheres of the two are distinct. If religion should be compared to human body, ritualism would be the feet, morality the hands, faith the heart and knowledge the head. The feet, of course, are the lowest members, but without them the figure cannot stand. Similarly, without ritualism religion cannot stand. But the feet cannot be the hands, much less can they be the heart or the head.

## A SOCIOLOGIST IS INTRODUCED TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA<sup>1</sup>

BY MELVIN J. VINCENT

*"The ordinary leaders and members of the Western social order are widely proclaiming the superiority of Western civilization. They fail to study, either at all or with unprejudiced minds, the worthy points of Eastern development; they see chiefly its defects."* Emory S. Bogardus in *Fundamentals of Social Psychology*.

*"Whereas, Occidental nations have used every effort to improve their material position, India has done differently. There, live the only men in the world, who, in the whole history of humanity never went beyond their*

*frontiers to conquer any one, who never coveted that which belonged to any one else, whose only fault was that their lands were so fertile...and so tempted other nations to come and despoil them. They are contented to be despoiled, and to be called barbarians, and in return, they want to send to this world, visions of the supreme, to lay bare for the world the secrets of human nature, to rend the veil that conceals the true man...."*—Swami Vivekananda in *"My Master," Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. IV.*

<sup>1</sup> For this introduction, I am indebted to Swami Prabhavananda of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood, California, to Romain Rolland's enlightening book, *Prophets of the New India, the Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, published by the Advaita Ashrama, 1925; and to an article by Swami Shivananda on Sri Ramakrishna, published in *Prabuddha Bharata*, March, 1930. I have also read with much profit, the brilliant article, *My Master*, by Swami Vivekananda, in Vol. IV, *Complete Works of the Swami Vivekananda*.

Doctor Charles A. Cooley, in his admirable treatise entitled, *Social Process*, writes significantly: "I look with wonder and reverence upon the expression of human nature in countless forms of art and aspiration. It seems to me that back of all this must be a greater life, high and glorious beyond my imagination, which is trying to work itself out through us." And it is with



this attitude that I have come away from the study of the life of the golden saint of India, Sri Ramakrishna. For one who leaves the study of this most remarkable career must indeed be made of granite if he does not carry away with him the holy idea that back of this eventful life there has been that effulgence of that greater Life, high and glorious beyond the scope of the ordinary Western imagination.

In the minds of the most advanced socialized thinkers of the present day, there exists the fundamental notion that world unity is a necessity of the immediate future. To the sociologist, this need has been apparent for a very long time. He, like his brother, the physical scientist, is ever on the alert for that which shall harmonize, for that which shall bring order out of chaos. And he realizes full well that these must be a more full and complete understanding of the peoples of the world before any attempts at unification can be undertaken. He is mindful of the great dynamic force inherent in religion, and he is cognizant of the fact that in order to comprehend the culture of a people, it is essential that their religious thought and beliefs be subjected to study and research. In their religious thought may be found the utilitarian key that will open the door to friendship and unity. The sociologist is further impressed by a religion which encompasses a social outlook; that is, a religion which is based first, on Service to others, and not on individual salvation.

What wonder then, that the sociologist should become attracted to the teachings of a man who could say: "What! First accumulation of money and then God! And how great is their charity and kindness! They will spend thousands of rupees in the marriage of their daughters, but the next-door neighbour may be starving with his

family, and they feel constraint in giving him a handful of rice,—they have to think a lot before doing so! When people are starving, they think, 'Never mind, whether they live or die, it is of little consequence to me! Let me and my family live well.' And they talk of kindness to all beings!"<sup>2</sup>

It is, then, with an intensified interest that I have studied the religious life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna whose "soul animates modern India,"<sup>3</sup> and without an understanding of whose life, the spirit of modern India will remain an enigma forever in the Western mind. For I believe that Romain Rolland is right when he divines that a knowledge of this radiant soul with his message of a practical Love will afford a key to "human unity with God."<sup>4</sup> And it may not be amiss to insert at this point a message of thanks to Mr. Rolland for the presentation to Western readers of his inspirational treatise on the life of Sri Ramakrishna; it is to be devoutly wished that his pregnant hope, "to bring the beating of that artery to the ears of fever-stricken Europe...to wet its lips with the blood of immortality,"<sup>5</sup> will be realized in the not distant future. A new understanding of India and its leaders is vital and full of meaning for the cause of world unity, and when the message of Sri Ramakrishna is understood in the West, a new evaluation will have been necessitated.

Has Indian thought as moulded by the influence of this honoured saint anything to contribute to the friendship of the world? What is the sociological evaluation of his life and work? These are the major points of interest in this dis-

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, 377. (Compilation from authentic sources)

<sup>3</sup> Romain Rolland, *Prophets of the New India*, xxvi.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvi.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, xxvii.



cussion. The sociologist will be the first to acknowledge that a leader, whoever he may be, and, whenever, and wherever he may appear, will prove to be a force which the world must reckon with sooner or later, especially when that leader is filled with the essence of a universal and dynamically operating and functioning spirit of Love.

Sri Ramakrishna's great strength as a powerful spiritual leader lies in his continuous emphasis on *Service*. Like the Christ, of whom he was so fond, this service meant an uncontaminated one, a service not profaned with the desire for returns. And he could do this because in his God-intoxicated state, he saw his fellow-men as only the many expressions of the Divine Mother. He was first of all, the humanitarian. What would it mean to the world of to-day if all men were capable of catching this rare vision of the divine spark resident in every one? What a noble message from India; India, the misunderstood! We glimpse the whole spirit of social service, the nobility of a divinely gifted soul in the beautiful tale of his visit with the rich Mathur Babu, when that worthy led him to his tenanted estate. Mathur, typical feudal lord, overseer, and employer, possessed the age-long attitude of those who own, "It's mine, therefore I can do whatever I like with it and those who belong to it." But how firmly and sharply rebuked Mathur was by the gentle but firm words: "These are Mother's tenants. You must help them. You are but the Mother's steward." This is a basic attitude for the foundation of the ideal society. Once again is the rich truth pointed out that material wealth when misapplied, abases; selfishness bars the door to the Kingdom of Eternal Bliss. Sharing with others was his only road to complete ecstasy; witness his visit with the suffering and miserable Sau-

thals. He refused to move from amongst them until he had been promised that they would be given oil; bathed, clothed and fed. Of him, the sociologist would report: an ideal and practical social worker!

Another supreme instance of Sri Ramakrishna's social thought is revealed in his treatment of his favourite student, Narendranath Dutt (later Vivekananda). His beloved disciple had just emerged from a state of the highest super-consciousness. Long had this ecstasy been sought, and it had been found to be sweetly satisfying. To Naren, the summit had been reached. "I had forgotten the world," he said. "Shame!" cries Sri Ramakrishna. "I thought you were a vast receptacle, and here you wish to stay absorbed in personal joy like an ordinary man." Service, service, first, last, and always. The Mother's work must be done. And here is the essence, the divine oil of that social religion which the Christ taught, being brought again to the world. Little wonder that the two are identifiable. His significant statement, "Oh, Mother, let me remain in contact with men,"<sup>6</sup> marks the identity still more closely. How many times had he noted that personal salvation was an utter selfishness based on the desire for escape.

The universality of all religions was realized by his demonstration that the Truth is one; it is his message of religious harmony that carves his name on the tablet of the immortals. And what a message to present-day so-called Christianity! Mother India, reveal thy true self! "And he will share the food of immortality in a Lord's supper, not with the twelve apostles, but with all starving souls—with the universe."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Romain Rolland, *Prophets of the New India*, 64.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.



Truly, he had seen and heard the superb orchestration of the vast symphony of religions playing the Song Divine—"I and my brother are One; I and My Father are One." World friendship rests on this revelation. India knows for she has had the precious jewel concealed in her breast, she awaits the call for its display. Ramakrishna, citizen of the world!

Man is Divinely created. Small wonder that, knowing this and practising it, Sri Ramakrishna could see the Oneness pervading all things. The social principle of Love is put to the acid test, and does not fail. The rich and the poor, the unlearned and the learned, the impure and the pure—all are embraced. He could catch the glimpse of the Mother in the adulteress, the prostitute, and the murderer. His was, like the Christ's, a truly cosmopolitan Love. Swami Shivananda reports: "I have seen him showering his love equally on men and women, on the learned and the ignorant, and on saints and sinners, and evincing interest and unceasing solicitude for the relief of their misery and for their attainment to infinite peace by realizing the Divine. And I dare say the world has not seen another man of his type in modern times, so devoted to the welfare of mankind."<sup>8</sup>

There is another sociological test to be applied. And that is the regard for the family unit which a great leader may possess. Here again Sri Ramakrishna fulfils the necessary requirement. He would not allow any of his close followers to renounce their families in

order to follow him, until they had declared that those families stood not in need of their services. He steadfastly proclaimed that "not even a depraved mother ought to be deserted."<sup>9</sup> He, himself, had been ready to renounce his spiritual enterprises if his wife had demanded her physical rights. For him, the family was sacred, and he ever was the first to render homage and honour to parents and to wives.

The message of Sri Ramakrishna to India and to the world is therefore fraught with much sociological significance and importance. Love is a dynamic concept, a supreme motivation which leads ever onward to that unity which is designed to make of all men, brothers. It was this message that he entrusted to his successor, Swami Vivekananda, in order that it might be borne to the West on his broad and sturdy shoulders.

How vastly important is the ideal of service, unselfish service, to man! It is a manifestation of the universal Fatherhood and Motherhood of the great I Am. It signifies the realization of social justice, the blooming of love, humility and self-sacrifice in man, the welding of the nations of the world into an organic unity based on a recognition of a like Divine inheritance. Sri Ramakrishna's life amplifies the claim that the great soul concentrates within itself the urgent longings of many men for a noble and edifying explanation of the unity of Life—and that this soul awakens these seekers to the consciousness of the One permanent Reality.

<sup>8</sup> Swami Shivananda, "Sri Ramakrishna," *Prabuddha Bharata*, Mar., 1930, 107.

<sup>9</sup> *Prophets of the New India*, 175.

# THE RELEASE OF PHILOSOPHY

BY PRAMATHANATH MUKHOPADHYAYA

(Concluded from the last issue)

## TYRANNY OF SCIENCE GONE

The gain to philosophy and the stock of true human knowledge has been two-fold. The chief gain has of course been that the tyranny of scientific absolutism is now gone. The human spirit of enquiry is now breathing free. Matter no longer is there with its noose round its neck. As to the other point that matter is an illusion, or for the matter of that, the sensed and perceived world is merely an appearance, it must be recognized that indications are there which suggest that all may be Maya, but here again science should not be dogmatic and say something outside its brief. The question of the reality of the world must as yet be left an open question, and one upon which science as science should not claim to have the final say. So long as science was arrogant, it required philosophy to play second fiddle to it. Now that science is modest, it may feel that it had no right to demand of philosophy its vassalage, and may now return the deed of its self-surrender which it had not rightfully in its possession.

That the world may be a Maya is not a new revelation in Natural Philosophy. Herbert Spencer was commonly looked upon as the best exponent of the philosophical creed of the older generation of physicists; and his philosophy certainly did not make matter and motion the first principles. The world is the transfigured projection of an unknowable Being, an inscrutable Power. If we but put the Brahman of the Indian Upanishads for this inscrutable Power, and

the transfigured projection of that Power for Maya, then it does not appear to be a far cry from this sort of scientific agnosticism or "realism" to the ancient doctrine of Maya. Brahman, however, is not the unknown and inscrutable Being or Power. It is certainly unmeasured and immeasurable, undefined and indefinable, undivided and alogical. But it is not merely the hidden but the patent Wonder: not merely the transcendent but also the immanent Being or Power. But let us not pause over this. Among physicists themselves there were some who possessed the "X-ray vision" to penetrate the hard *ensemble* of scientific facts and laws, deductions and explanations and get at the kernel of truth, the foundations of the edifice of science. They found not only that science proceeded upon limitation of the given data, but upon not actually given but manipulated and prepared data—that the basic elements of scientific construction were largely, if not exclusively, conceptual moulds and convenient fictions only. Some cautious minds had even suspected that the Law of Causation, the Principle of the Uniformity of Nature, the Conservation of Matter and Force, and so forth might not after all be absolute and unquestionable. Nevertheless the facts and principles of Science, the methods and results, the spirit and outlook of science were, and still to some extent are, the models to which all facts, etc., must conform. New science has ceased already to pitch its demands too high, and sundry orders of phenomena are already seceding from the



empire of physical and mathematical science and declaring their independence and domestic sovereignty. And philosophy ought to take, if she has not taken already, the lead in this movement. She must declare that she has a subject-matter which is not covered by the Science Group, and that her method of doing her job has not been and cannot be assigned by science. It is now felt that philosophy must be more scientific and science must be more philosophical. Truth cannot be partitioned between science and philosophy; nor can the apprehension and appreciation of truth be cut in halves and each half reserved for each of the two disciplines.

The time has now arrived when it should clearly be recognized that there is an aspect of the universe of experience which is amenable to scientific treatment, to which the logical operations of definition, measurement, classification and deduction are applicable; and this aspect embraces not only the so-called realm of matter, but also those of life and mind. There is a great deal of truth in the assertion that the trend of modern philosophy is to find that mind is less mental and matter is less material than they were formerly supposed to be. There is now hardly a room for doubt that between matter and mind or between matter and life, there is not only community of essence, but also community of natural governance. Science cannot be denied jurisdiction over these. But it has further to be recognized that there is also an aspect of experience which is transcendental in the sense of being ultra-scientific, which is not capable of being defined, measured, classified and explained in the sense that scientific entities are. And these two aspects are not in regions isolated from each other. Every scientific entity, for example the

orbital motion of an electron, or the excitability of a plant tissue, presents a measurable and therefore scientific aspect, and a non-measurable or ultra-scientific aspect. In every actual measurement of a given fact or event, a residuum of the unmeasured always remains. No solution is absolutely without a precipitate which has not dissolved. The unmeasured and unexplained dislodged from one position is sure to reappear in a subtler and perhaps more complex form in another. It cannot be pretended that the modern Physics of the constitution of the atom and quantum phenomena has laid the science of the universe on simpler and more understandable lines. The theory of hyper-spaces, of space-time, and so on has not presented a picture of simplicity at the background of the riddle of the universe.

#### PICTORIAL THINKING

To speak in terms of aspects is only pictorial thinking, but it does sometimes help us, when we may be thinking and talking analytically, to put our exhibits in a convenient way. It does not explain the whole or the parts and their correlation to say that the whole presents the aspects A, B, C, any more than the classification of a number of things into certain groups explains the things or their affinities. But then classification serves a purpose. And so does analysis in terms of aspects. It has the advantage of riveting us to the indivisible unity of the whole. Now, the universe presents four aspects. First, there is the aspect of what we may call the whole and the fact. The whole of experience is always beyond measure and logical appreciation. The measurable and understandable order is ever imbedded in an unmeasurable and un-understandable whole. The actual



fact of an event, again, in its concreteness baffles every measure and attempt at analysis. It is amenable to scientific treatment only after the paring off of all the irrelevant details. Secondly, there is the aspect of the as yet unmeasured but measurable order in experience. It is this which makes it possible for science to possess an ever-expanding frontier. Thus some of the frontiers of the previous century have been pushed considerably back in the present. The twentieth century need not stop where the last century had to stop. There has been remarkable extension in the knowledge of great things and small. The universe in the atom as well as the island universes beyond our galactical system are now being scientifically surveyed and mapped. There has been extension in the fields of life and mind phenomena also. We now know more about the cell, its nucleus and fertilization; and more about subnormal and abnormal psychology relating to parapsychic phenomena. The subconscious mind, the potentialities of the mind hitherto unsuspected or disbelieved, the dynamism of the mind and its action and reaction on the dynamism of matter, all these are better exhibited, if not better understood, to-day than they were yesterday. The humility of new science is not due to the fact that it is better informed to-day in such matters than old science, but to the fact that it knows that it does not know in matters in which old science thought or pretended to think that it knew. Thirdly, there is an aspect of facts or events, not merely biological and mental but also physical, which is open indeed to observation, and also to some extent to experiment, but not, at least to the same extent, to treatment by the methods of measurement and calculation. There may be an incalculable factor, an element of idiosyn-

crasy or choice or whatever else we call it, in the behaviour of phenomena. The jumping of an electron in its orbit may or may not in the final analysis present such a factor. But it remains as yet doubtful that any so-called physical event, outside the abstract and prepared treatment by the methods of science, will ever be completely pressed into the moulds of any deterministic equations or formulae. It may after all possess a character of unaccountable indeterminateness. In the reign of law and order, it may bear at the centre of its being an ineffaceable right to be free and to choose in the face of all the tyranny of natural necessity. As regards life phenomena and mind phenomena, a *prima facie* case has always existed that they involve an incalculable factor, a suggestion of something free and spontaneously choosing its line of action. And the burden of proof is on the determinist to shew that freedom or spontaneity in these groups of facts is but Maya in the same way as the onus is on the scientific mechanist to shew that the spontaneity in radioactive phenomena or the discontinuity in quantum phenomena is only seeming. Fourthly, there is that growing body of the so-called facts and laws which have passed muster in science. This does not mean that the cases are closed and cannot be reopened. They are always being reopened, and there is no prospect of finality ever being reached. And further should it be remembered that even the best attested facts and laws in science are determined and determinable only with reference to some conventional frames of reference making certain elements in the concrete situation relevant and the rest, however important from other standpoints, irrelevant. For example, in dealing with the mutual attraction of the earth and the moon we may regard each as



a perfectly rigid sphere with its mass concentrated at its centre. But the actual concrete situation is evidently vastly more complicated. Scientific statements are thus in the nature of approximations. Again, in making its deductions science has to rely on certain principles of a comparatively fundamental character such as Universal Causation, Uniformity of Nature, and so forth which are not self-evident propositions, but are only postulates requiring examination.

#### PROBABILITY AND FIXITY

Some of the front-rank scientists themselves are now perceiving that some of these principles may have their absolute dominion challenged. The very key-stone of the scientific determinism of the last century and also of the present is Universal Causation. But this key-stone is now found to be neither granite nor ferro-concrete, but sand-stone with holes and fissures in it. Not only what are called "emergent" events are now pressing themselves more and more strongly into acceptance, but the fixity of the chain of causal concatenation itself (that *A* must be followed by *B*, *B* must be followed by *C*, and so on; that for a given effect there must be a given cause and no other, and so on) is now found to be loose as soon as we descend from the plane of totals and averages to that of the single bits of events such as the quantum phenomena. Whether the single pulse of event *A* will be followed by *B* or by *C*, is a question of probability; all that we can say in a given instance is perhaps this that *A* is more likely to be followed by *B* than by *C*. Under certain circumstances we can calculate the relative probability. When however we come to deal with facts or events in groups and consequently

with statistical averages, we come to the region of uniformity and fixity. Thus an average particle in a heated gas or liquid conforms to a determinate plan or law of conduct, which need not mean that any individual particle in the swarm also rigidly conforms to it. By taking averages even facts which are believed to be extra-physical may present a character of determinateness, enabling us to draw graphs of their behaviour and formulate laws pertaining to them. With regard to the emergent phenomena and the "personal factor" and eccentricity of every phenomenon, there has been and there will always be difference in outlook among scientific men and philosophers. According to some the domain of mechanistic determinism must remain unchallenged in so far as the physical order of facts at least is concerned. The spontaneity of radio-activity and the jumping of the electron in its orbit for example must have their adequate and sufficient physical reason which we at present happen not to know, but which we may know to-morrow. The emergent variation in the germ-cell which results in the development of a new species of plant or animal may defy the scientific principle of sufficient reason to-day, but to-morrow even it may fall in with the body of facts that have been accounted for. On the other hand, there are others who would place not only the vital and psychical facts beyond the pale of absolute mechanistic determinism, but would claim even for the so-called physical phenomena some latitude of spontaneity and indeterminateness. And it has to be noted that the outlook of new science on such postulates as Universal Causation together with some of its latest findings in the region of quantum and atomicity, radio-activity, and so on, have a clear tendency to favour the latter attitude of mind.



## INTERWOVEN

For my own part, I believe that the determinate and the indeterminate, the accountable and the unaccountable, the measurable and the unmeasurable are interwoven together in every bit of event, material, vital and mental; that these distinctions are themselves pragmatic and conventional. Matter is matter only in accordance with a certain frame of convention, only with respect to certain uses and habits of acting and reacting and experiencing centres such as we are. Apart from such frame of reference and possibly with respect to other appropriate frames of reference, a particle of sand for example may be a living and a thinking centre. Scientific relativity should no longer preclude the possibility that it may be so. However that be, we should now clearly recognize that the scientific explanation of any event, even in the so-called physical realm, on deterministic lines, must be in the nature of asymptotic approximation. As I have said in another place, the net of scientific calculus has an ever-widening spread and its meshes are becoming finer and finer; but the actual concrete fact, whether small or great, both exceeds its utmost spread and slips through its finest meshes. Neither the whole nor the point-event as such can be gripped by the pinchers, and any object can be so gripped only after it has been trimmed to convenient proportions by a pair of analytical scissors. It has been said that modern science shews the world of experience to be an illusion. Some have even used the Hindu term *Maya*. But *Maya* fundamentally means "what measures." The unmeasured and unmeasurable Reality finitizes and measures itself in and as the things and events of the world, but it ceases not to be itself in the mani-

fold of centres thus evolved and evolving. For this reason every object, great or small, presents one aspect in which it can be scientifically measured and logically appreciated, and another in which it exceeds the foot-rule and eludes the logical apparatus. Its determinate and necessary "self" is imbedded in an essential background of indeterminateness and freedom. What is but an appearance is the *Mayik* aspect that it is finite only and not infinite, that it is determined only and not free, that it is passing only and not enduring or independent of space-time reference, that it is dead and unconscious only and not in substance life and consciousness. It is veiled experience to know the measured and conditioned only apart from the unmeasured and unconditioned—to fail to realize that even a particle of dust is *Sachchidananda Brahman* as Power to variously posit itself in space-time and other relations. As the *Veda* says in mystical language: "It has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet; it unfailingly pervades all, and yet exceeds all by the measure of ten fingers." The world is appearance as long as the veil is on. It is real when the veil is off. Then All is Real and All is Brahman. And this *All* embraces the *Appearance* also. For Reality as Power both is and appears.

Science thus covers not the Whole of Reality, but relates to certain aspects of it. It relates to the realm of *Maya* in the sense of what is measured. And it has its method of doing business. Philosophy must address itself to the Whole, and for this purpose must have a method of its own. Science with a truer appreciation of its limits and an ampler vision of its possibilities is coming to realize this. This has rendered a better understanding between the two possible. And with better understanding and co-operation,



the release of Philosophy from an unjust vassalage has now become possible. The release will mean the resurrection

of the Spirit of freedom and joy—Lîlâ and Ananda—buried in the heart of all things—even matter.

## HAS MAN FREE WILL?

BY SISTER DEVAMATA

Will is not the driving power in any action. Behind every act of volition stands a desire. It is desire which determines the force and direction of the will. If the desire is strong, it gives a swift, sweeping volitional impulse; if weak, the impulse is abortive and ineffective. Again, if the desire is sordid and selfish, an act of self-will results; if the desire is lofty and in rhythm with the universe, we have an expression of Cosmic Will.

Midway between desire and will we find another factor,—motive or intention. It is this element which lends moral colour to the will. An action is ethical or unethic according to its motive. It is also this which leaves its stamp on the character. If the motive is a noble one, the character will be uplifted, however disastrous the outward action may appear to be. If the motive is ignoble, the character will be degraded, even though the outward success be dazzling. The human measure of failure and success is signally different from the Cosmic measure.

Thus we see that will must be always a subject-faculty, driven by desire, modified by motive. Our daily experience proves it. We set our will in one direction and at the moment of action it veers and carries us in the opposite direction—"The good we would, we do not; the evil we would not, that we do," to quote from St. Paul. The reason for this is that we work on the

will instead of on our desire. If we would remain secure and firm in our purpose we must deal with the primary cause of action not with the secondary cause. We must not set our will; we must transform our desires. We must alter our mental attitude, our outlook on the world and on life. We must acquire "a new heart and a new mind."

Desire can never be destroyed or eliminated. It is a primal element of man's nature, his prod to perfection, the impelling principle in all his evolution. He who does not desire to learn makes a poor scholar; and they climb slowly who have no longing to reach the heights. Without desire there is no growth or progress. When great teachers like Gautama Buddha, Laotze and others tell us to root out desire, they refer to selfish desire—that which seeks outlet in acts of self-will. Utter desirelessness is impossible on the human plane, because on this plane there is always lack somewhere and lack induces desire. The state of total desirelessness can only be the outcome of union with the Ultimate. We attain it spontaneously when through this union we realize fullness or completion of being. The desirelessness preached to mankind by the Great Ones is a preparation for this higher state. It means loosening the ship from its moorings that it may sail out on vaster seas.

If we would have a well-ordered will, we must give place in our mind to cons-



tructive desire only. Like all creative things desire is dual in nature. Baneful desires are as effective in dragging downward as noble desires are in uplifting. The will follows in either direction with equally ready obedience. Only when there is conflict of desires—a war between good and evil desires—does the will grow confused in its action. We must cultivate the habit of right desire as we cultivate a taste for fine art or for the classics in literature and music. We do it in the same way—by contact with that which awakens and nurtures such desire. We must read books which will stimulate our higher impulses; we must hear teaching which helps us to re-adjust our values and gives us a right sense of proportion, and we must seek companionship with those who exemplify some exalted ideal in their daily living. Above all we must overcome the petty nervous irritability we feel now when a desire is frustrated, and we must learn to move in the serener atmosphere of lofty aspiration. This will not be difficult if we will but remember that we belong to the universe; it does not belong to us and it is not for us to try to force it into a mould of our making.

What frustrates our desires? Cosmic Law. Thwarted desire means invariably that we have run counter to the legal code of the universe. Defeat inheres in the disobedient action. Those who disobey or defy the Law are enmeshed in it. Law is a gaoler for the one who rebels against it; it does not exist for the man who swings with it. He who has no wish to steal has little consciousness of the laws against thievery. The defiant are ever bound; only the obedient go free. Every individual is free to choose whether or not he will observe the Law, but he cannot force it to obey him.

Although will is subject to desire, it can be freed. Not, however, by striving to make acquaintance with all Cosmic Law and observing it; that would be too arduous a task. Will is freed by gathering up the multitude of our desires and merging them in one supreme desire to live and act in harmony with the Great Will of the universe. Then the last fetter of desire will fall; the bondage of our little will will break; and like an uncaged bird we shall mount on high, singing and winging our way through the heavens.

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## THE BARODA LIBRARY SYSTEM

BY NEWTON MOHUN DUTT, F.L.A.

*Curator of State Libraries, Baroda*

According to the latest Census Report, literacy in the State of Baroda has in ten years advanced from 14.7% to 21%. For this very satisfactory state of things the combined effect of free and compulsory education and the popular library system is responsible.

Over the whole State is spread a network of free public libraries and reading rooms which now amount to 939. These institutions have an aggregate stock of 616,272 books, which circulate at the rate of 446,758 per annum amongst 73,281 readers. Apart from the fixed



libraries, 15,766 volumes are circulated through travelling libraries, which consist of stout wooden boxes sent out from headquarters to the most remote villages, the freight both ways being borne by the State Library Department.

When a village has succeeded in collecting Rs. 100, the Department on behalf of the State gives a similar sum, and a like sum is contributed by the district boards. It is not very difficult to collect this sum after a vigorous campaign carried on by a few enthusiasts in a village. The real problem is to ensure a continuity of the village library by collecting adequate money year after year. To carry on propaganda work a State Library Association was therefore founded in 1925, and as auxiliary thereto Taluka or country associations have sprung up in about 20 Talukas to inspect the local institutions, collect money for their support and generally to keep up interest in their working.

The centre of these activities is the Library Department located in the capital city. It consists of two sections, the Central Library and the Country Section. The latter is under the direct control of the Assistant Curator in charge of country work and of the travelling libraries.

A valuable aid to the movement is a Libraries' Co-operative Association founded by the associated libraries for the wholesale purchase of books, periodicals, stationery, etc. It also publishes a Gujarati monthly, the *Pustakalaya*, devoted to the library cause. In this magazine appear lists of new books, orders and circulars issued by the department and useful articles on library matters. The Association also publishes lists of good and useful books, the most notable one being the classified catalogue of 8,000 Gujarati books and the Gujarati Classification scheme.

As to the Central Library, this is one of the largest and best organized of the libraries of India, and contains 93,849 volumes, 52,000 of which are in English, most of the remainder being in Gujarati and Marathi, the languages spoken in the State. During last year no less than 114,718 volumes were circulated in the city. The Library has the following sections—free and open access lending, reference, and ladies' library, children's playroom, newspaper reading room, bindery and general office. The most novel and interesting feature of the Library is certainly the children's playroom in which the little folk of the city can find a variety of useful and instructive games, occupations and toys as well as juvenile papers and easy books. This room is patronized by about 70 children a day. When the little patrons have advanced beyond the grade of books found in the playroom, they are allowed access to the Children's Section of the Lending Library, where books up to High School standard are provided. In due course, they "graduate" through this section and become competent to make intelligent use of the general collection.

In 1915 the Central Library launched the *Gaekwad's Oriental Series*, mainly, for the purpose of giving to the world some of the most valuable of the large collection of manuscripts which had been collected in Baroda. This venture has met with such marked success that a few years ago the Sanskrit Section was separated from the parent body and organized as the Oriental Institute, Baroda. The Institute now has some 20,000 Sanskrit books and manuscripts. Fifty volumes of the Series have already been published and many more are in the press. The Director and General Editor of the Institute is Dr. B. Bhattacharyya, Ph.D., an eminent Sanskritist



and an authority on Buddhist Iconography.

Another offshoot of the Library Department is the Visual Instruction Section founded to teach the illiterate masses and others by means of cinema and magic lantern lectures. This work has now been taken over by the Sanitary Commissioner in connection with a scheme for village uplift which he has planned.

The library authorities do not entirely confine their activities to the State of Baroda but takes a lively interest in the library movement throughout India. The late Mr. Kudalkar, formerly Curator of Libraries, presided over the first All-India Library Conference held in 1919 in Madras, a Conference in which the then Governor, H. E. Lord Willingdon, (now Viceroy of India) took a lively interest. A magazine in three languages entitled *Baroda Library Miscellany*, was run by Mr. Kudalkar and his colleagues between 1912 and 1919 and did yeoman's service in spreading the "library gospel" throughout the country. The present Curator was appointed President of the Library Service Section of the All-Asia Educational Conference which was held in Benares last December, and he there organized a library exhibition in that city. Such exhibitions, which are held very frequently by the Baroda Library organization, are found to be very effective in giving graphic demonstrations

of the value and importance of the popular library movement.

Those interested in the movement may be interested to know that a directory of the libraries of India is being printed by the writer and will appear as a special number of the *Baroda Advertiser*.

The library movement is making great headway throughout the country. Amongst the associations which have been founded may be mentioned the India Library Association and the Andhradesa Library Associations, both run from Bezwada, the Madras Library Association, whose office is the University Library of Madras, the Bengal Library Associations, Calcutta, the Punjab Library Association, Lahore, which is publishing an excellent library journal, *The Modern Librarian*, and finally the All-Kerala Library Association, Trichur, which came into existence this year and is publishing in Malayalam a quarterly illustrated library journal.

In concluding this short sketch of the Library activities of Baroda, may I ask the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata* to take a real and lively interest in the welfare of the popular libraries and the popular library movement in their own districts, organizing libraries if they do not yet exist and developing and improving such as may already be in existence?

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# ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

सन्तुष्टोऽपि न सन्तुष्टः खिन्नोऽपि न च खिद्यते ।  
तस्याश्चर्यदशां तां तां तादृशा एव जानते ॥ ५६ ॥

योगी Yogi सन्तुष्टः pleased अपि though सन्तुष्टः pleased न not ( भवति is ) खिन्नः afflicted अपि though न not खिद्यते feels distressed च and तस्य his तां तां that and that आश्चर्यदशां wonderful state तादृशाः those like him एव alone जानते know.

56. Though<sup>1</sup> pleased he is not pleased, though pained he does not suffer any pain. Only<sup>2</sup> those like him understand his wonderful states.

[<sup>1</sup> *Though etc.*—Pleasure and pain are the different modifications of the mind from which the Self is completely detached. The man of Knowledge, therefore, though outwardly appearing to feel pleasure and pain, is not at all affected by them.

<sup>2</sup> *Only etc.*—Because his external behaviour is not so different from that of the ordinary people.]

कर्त्तव्यतैव संसारो न तां पश्यन्ति सूरयः ।  
शून्याकारा निराकारा निर्विकारा निरामयाः ॥ ५७ ॥

कर्त्तव्यता The sense of duty एव indeed संसारः metempsychosis ( भवति is ) शून्याकाराः of the form of void निराकाराः formless निर्विकाराः immutable निरामयाः untainted सूरयः the wise तां that न not पश्यन्ति see.

57. The sense<sup>1</sup> of duty, indeed, is metempsychosis. It is transcended by the wise who are of the form of the void, formless, immutable and untainted.

[<sup>1</sup> *Sense etc.*—It is from attachment to the worldly objects that the sense of duty arises and binds us more and more to the world, and thus subjects us to the rounds of births and rebirths. (See also note 1, verse 3, chapter XVIII.)]

अकुर्वन्नपि संक्षोभाद् व्यग्रः सर्वत्र मुदधीः ।  
कुर्वन्नपि तु कृत्यानि कुशलो हि निराकुलः ॥ ५८ ॥

मुदधीः One of dull intellect अकुर्वन् without doing anything अपि even संक्षोभात् owing to distraction सर्वत्र at all times व्यग्रः agitated ( भवति is ) कुशलः the skilful one तु but हि surely कृत्यानि duties कुर्वन् doing अपि even निराकुलः unperturbed ( भवति is ).

58. One of dull intellect, even without doing anything, is ever agitated by distraction ; but the skilful one, even doing his duties, is verily unperturbed.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> *Unperturbed*—Because his mind is ever calm and tranquil owing to the absence of any egotistic feeling even in the midst of activities.]

सुखमास्ते सुखं शेते सुखमायाति याति च ।

सुखं वक्ति सुखं भुङ्क्ते व्यवहारेऽपि शान्तधीः ॥ ५६ ॥

व्यवहारे In practical life अपि also शान्तधीः equable-minded (ज्ञानी the wise one) सुखं happily आसीत् sits सुखं happily शेते sleeps सुखं happily आयाति comes याति goes च and सुखं happily वक्ति speaks सुखं happily भुङ्क्ते eats.

59. Equanimous in practical life as well, the wise one sits happily, sleeps happily, moves happily, speaks happily and eats happily.

स्वभावाद्यस्य नैवार्त्तिर्लोकवद्व्यवहारिणः ।

महाद्द्रव इवाक्षोभ्यो गतक्लेशः सुशोभते ॥ ६० ॥

व्यवहारिणः Acting (अपि even) यस्य whose स्वभावात् through self-possession एव verily लोकवत् like ordinary people आर्त्तिः distress न not भवति is सः he गतक्लेशः with sorrows gone महाद्द्रवः vast lake इव like अक्षोभ्यः unagitated शोभते shines.

60. He who even in practical life does not, owing to his self-possession, feel distressed like ordinary people, remains unagitated like a vast lake with all his sorrows gone.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

The present instalment of the *Memoirs* is of special importance as it deals with Swami Vivekananda's plan of work for the regeneration of India. We do not mean to continue the *Memoirs* in the next year. A portion is still left; and the whole thing will soon come out in book form. . . . Many of our readers may know that Swami Abhedananda is a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and has done yeoman's service to the cause of Hinduism by preaching Vedanta in the West for a very long time. The present article is the report of a lecture he delivered in San Francisco, U. S. A. in 1921. . . . We hope Prof. Nicholas Roerich's stirring 'Address to the Youth' will not go unheeded. . . . Sister Nivedita's writings about education are al-

ways interesting and a profitable reading. The present article, we trust, will not be an exception. It has not been published before. . . . Mr. D. S. Sarma, M.A., is a professor in the Presidency College, Madras. He has already established his name as an author of books on religion, which have been well received by the public. . . . Mr. Melvin J. Vincent is an associate professor of Sociology in the University of Southern California, U. S. A. . . . Sister Devamata belongs to the Ananda Ashrama, California, a description of which was published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* in March last. She has written several books, which have been highly popular both in the East and the West. The present article will form a chapter in her forthcoming book, *CHARACTER*. . . . Baroda can well boast of a library



system which has been doing much towards the spread of education. We hope that the detailed description of the system as kindly supplied by the Curator of the State Libraries will be of benefit at least to some of our readers.

### MAHATMA GANDHI'S EXPERIENCE OF PRAYER

While on board the *S. S. Rajputana*, a Musalman youth asked Mahatmajī about what he had experienced as a result of prayer. We give below a short extract of the reply made by him, which is but the personal reading of a page from the Book of his life :

"Prayer has been the saving of my life. Without it I should have been a lunatic long ago. My autobiography will tell you, that I have had my fair share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair, but if I was able to get rid of it, it was because of prayer. Now I may tell you, that prayer has not been part of my life in the sense that truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight when I could not possibly be happy without it. And the more my faith in God increased, the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it. I had attended the Christian service in South Africa, but it had failed to grip me. I could not join them in prayer. They supplicated God, but I could not do so, I failed egregiously. I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and until at a late stage in life I did not feel anything like a void in life. But at that stage I felt that as food was indispensable for the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact, food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary in

order to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer-starvation. You cannot possibly have a surfeit of prayer."

### INTERNATIONALIZING RELIGION

Prof. A. J. Saunders, Ph.D., writes a thought-provoking article on the above topic in the last October issue of *The Young Men of India, Burma & Ceylon* and quotes at the very outset the memorable words of A. W. Martin :—

"Only one man there was who courageously exposed what he saw—the utter futility of the expectation that one of the seven great religions of the world would ultimately triumph over all the rest, and world unity be attained in that way. Only one man there was who caught the vision of unity in diversity, or an organic fellowship of faiths, who saw and expressed the utter futility of expecting that any one religion would outstrip all the rest and rule in their stead. That man was the illustrious Hindu, Vivekananda. At the closing session of the World's Parliament, he spoke these glowing words! 'If anyone here hopes that unity will come by the triumph of any one of these religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say 'Brother, yours is an impossible hope.' If anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own, and the destruction of all other religions, I pity him from the bottom of my heart.' "

In course of the article, the writer shows his sincere zeal for the unity of religions—for an organized fellowship of faiths all over the world. But he does not hint or suggest the lines along which the idea may be possibly carried out. Unless there is a rational philosophy which would be so wide as to include the fundamental principles of all religions—and at the



same time, so scientific and universal as to transcend the limitations of dogmatic faiths, the idea of making religion international can hardly gain any footing in the comity of nations. Rightly does the writer use the concept religion in a large sense, he does not mean any Church-organization or any set of dogmas.

### FOLK-DANCE AND FOLK-SONG IN INDIAN SCHOOLS

It is true to the letter that a race which cannot heartily laugh and merrily dance is about to dig its own grave. Mr. G. S. Dutt, I.C.S., is well-known for his manifold activities for the welfare of our country. He is not only a dreamer but also a constructive thinker. He is the pioneer of some useful movements in Bengal. Recently he has started the folk-dance and folk-song movement in several schools of Bengal. Its result has been remarkable within a short time. The details of the movement are given with all nicety by Mr. Dutt himself in a series of articles in the *Bangalakshmi*, a Bengali Monthly, and in an issue of the *Teachers' Journal*.

"It is a matter for congratulation," writes Mr. Dutt, "that the District Board of Birbhum has been quick to realise the significance and possibilities of this movement and has appointed experts from among the depressed classes, who are proficient in this priceless national art of Bengal, as teachers of the Rai-bishe and the Kathi dances in the schools of this district. From the point of view of physical culture alone the importance of the introduction of Folk-dance in schools can hardly be overestimated; particularly so in the case of the Rai-bishe which is not only one of the finest and manliest folk-

dances in the world but has, as an integral part, a complete system of martial acrobatics developed and perfected in the soil of ancient Bengal. But its real importance and significance lies in its power for reintroducing among the lives of the so-called cultured and upper classes of Bengal and other provinces of India, that spirit of *Anandam*, and that spirit of manly vigour which alone can help and sustain a nation in the world-struggle for existence. From the educational point of view, one of the chief values of the introduction of folk-song and folk-dance lies in the fact that they will liberate the spirit of the students which has been repressed and starved by an over-intellectualised education and offer a welcome release of the emotion in a healthy channel by furnishing a manly system of artistic self-expression—a system which is indigenous to the soil and genius of India and is a form of expression of its highest ideals and aspirations. And this in its turn will have a far-reaching effect on the development of character."

We are glad that the movement has met with the unqualified appreciation of the Department of Education in Bengal. We hope that the noble example of the schools in the district of Birbhum will be followed by all the schools in the province as well as outside it.

### CHASING THE SHADOW

One great effect of the last War has been that many people have become alive to the horrors of the war. Many are now actively thinking as to how to end war. Disarmament is believed in many quarters to be the only method of combating war. And as a plan of a worldwide campaign for Universal Disarmament, a movement has been set on



foot to get a petition printed in many languages, signed by millions of men and women in every nation and to present that before the Disarmament Conference, to be held next year.

It is said that Great Britain has already obtained a quarter of a million names and the United States are out for millions of names. Many people of other countries also have joined the movement.

But will pacts and agreements serve any purpose until the outlook on life is fundamentally changed? The modern age whets human passions and greeds in every possible way and then shudders at the sight of its brutalizing effect on human society and civilization in general. To bring about real peace in the world man's outlook on life should be changed. Man should live more an inward life than let his senses go outward and astray. Peace is within and not without. When majority of men—

at least a good number of them will look for happiness within themselves by controlling their appetites and senses, then the real peace will come on earth. Cannot humanity be trained that way? At least cannot that be held as the only goal which is worth striving for? Otherwise what is the use of trying to propel the boat, while it is lying at anchor?

By disarmament, if that is at all possible, warring nations may be clipped of their power to do harm. But then there is difference between a man with tools removed from his hands and a tiger with claws cut off from his feet : whereas the tiger cannot get his claws to grow again, man at will can make arms and weapons and prove himself more dangerous than before. The real question then is not to make it impossible for man to commit harm, but to change his very nature so that the desire to do harm will not arise in him at all or at least that will be minimized.

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## REVIEW

AWAKENING OR THE ESSENCE OF THE DETERMINATION OF THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION. *By Swami Jnanananda Abadhut. Translated by Swami Nityaswarupananda Abadhut, Mahanirvan Math, Kalighat, Calcutta. 202 pp. Price Rs. 1/12.*

The book is an English rendering of a Bengali work entitled *Chaitanya Ba Sarva Dharma Nirnaya Sara*. Spiritual truths belong to the seers of the world, for they are not things of study or intellect or imagination, but of realization. Only such persons have right to speak on religion. The illustrious author has tried to convey to his reader the nature of ultimate realities like Brahman, Maya, Iswara, Jiva, Incarnation, Perfection, etc., with the authority of one to whom Truth has been revealed. His expressions are terse, pithy and ana-

logical, for super-sensuous truths can be suggested only through similes taken from common life.

The book has been written with two distinct motives :—(1) to rouse in man the latent spiritual forces, and (2) to dispel all discords among religious sects by referring to a common synthesis of life and truth.

God is the only reality. He is to be attained by all means. Herein lies perfection. God has got various aspects, Sakara and Nirakara (with and without form), Saguna and Nirguna (with and without attributes). Brahman, Iswara and Avatars have been compared to seed, tree and fruits respectively. The Absolute when manifested, becomes Sakara and Saguna and before manifestation remains Nirakara and Nirguna. So these attributes do not deprive the Absolute of the possibilities of form and

quality, only they do not appear at that stage.

A Jiva is separate from Brahman. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi he loses his separate consciousness, but remains separate still. In Nirvana or Laya he is one with Brahman, the separate existence being altogether lost. So the lifelong endeavour of an individual soul that is separate by creation, should be to merge itself in the Supreme goal by proper spiritual practices.

The relation of Spirit to matter has been beautifully illustrated thus: "The dark room is not lighted, if the lamp, the wick and the oil only are put there either separately or together. But it is lighted when these three are associated with light. The lamp, the wick and the oil are unconscious things and fire is the Spirit, so to speak. No action of the Spirit can be manifested except with the association of insensate things. And we see the manifestation of the activity of Spirit where it is associated with the visible (coarse) body which is an insensate thing." (p. 85.) Spirit depends for its manifestation on matter, while matter derives its attributes and usefulness from Spirit.

The above considerations show how Monism and Dualism, Idealism and Realism have been harmonised.

There is always a danger of translating such books into a foreign tongue; for many Indian notions cannot have their corresponding English equivalents. But the theme is

noble and proceeds from a life of inspiration. We commend it for a wide circulation and proper assimilation.

**MY SONG GARDEN.** By Sister Devamata. Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, U.S.A. 71 pp. Price not given.

The book is a nice bouquet of sweet and simple child-songs. The author has given some tunes and drawings too. The songs will no doubt be a happy welcome to the little ones. They are so sweet, at the same time so lively and lovely! The book has a superbly beautiful get-up.

**MAHATMA GANDHI'S SAYINGS.** Selected by Priyaranjan Sen, P. 49. Fern Road, Ballyganj, Calcutta. 27 pp. Price 2 As.

Mahatma Gandhi's words are serving as a great spur to thousands of persons working in the field of politics or religion. As such we feel no doubt that this brochure will receive a great welcome from the reading public.

**THE ORIENT.** An illustrated bi-monthly Magazine. Published from No. 5, Military Square, Fort, Bombay. Annual subscription Rs. 4.

It aims at interpreting the best in the Western and the Eastern thoughts and represents the spirit of India's Renaissance. We congratulate the enterprising editor on his choosing altogether a new way in the field of Indian Journalism.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### MRS. FRANCIS B. LEGGETT

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Mrs. Francis B. Leggett, one of the most ardent American admirers of Swami Vivekananda. This melancholy event took place on the 1st October last at her English home Halls Croft, Stratford-on-Avon, where she was staying with her sister Miss MacLeod. They first met Swami Vivekananda in 1895 when he was lecturing and preaching on the western side of America after the Parliament of Religions. From the very first both the sisters became attached to the

Swami and he was often their guest in New York and at their country residence Ridgely Manor, Stone Ridge, Ulster County, New York. She first married Mr. William Sturges of Chicago, who died in 1894. By him she had a son Mr. Hollister Sturges and a daughter, the present Countess of Sandwich. She later on married Mr. Francis H. Leggett of New York, who died in 1909, leaving one daughter Mrs. David Margesson. Both Mr. and Mrs. Leggett became the Swami's intimate friends and helped him in various ways. Mrs. Leggett recognized in him what she aptly put as "He was a



Grand seignior". "There were but two celebrated personages whom I have met, that could make one feel perfectly at ease without themselves for an instant losing their own dignity—one was the German Emperor, the other the Swami Vivekananda." In 1900 when the Swami was at Paris for the Congress of the History of Religions he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Leggett at their handsome residence in the Place des Stat Unis where it became possible for the Swami to meet numerous distinguished people who had come for the Paris exposition.

Mrs. Leggett was in India twice since the passing away of the Swami and during her stay in Calcutta put up at the Guest House of the Belur Monastery for sometime, a place which she loved very much. Her regard for the Swami and her love for the cause for which he gave his life prompted her to donate munificently towards the various activities started by the Swami for the regeneration of India. She also would show great solicitations for the Swamis of the Order who have been preaching Vedanta in America since the passing away of Swami Vivekananda.

The funeral took place on the 3rd October at the parish Church at Stratford-on-Avon. May her soul rest in Peace.

#### THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF CHICAGO, U.S.A.

Visiting the City of Chicago in July, 1929, on his way to California from New York, Swami Gnaneshwarananda felt very keenly the need of having a centre of the Vedanta Society in Chicago. It seemed indeed strange that the city, which for the first time, witnessed the signal triumph of the message of Vedanta through the great messenger Swami Vivekananda during the time of the World's Fair of 1893, did not have a Vedanta Centre.

Late in December, 1929, Swami Gnaneshwarananda arrived at Chicago from New York, taking upon him the great task of opening a new centre there. Trusting on the greatness of the message and the protection of the Divine Masters, all alone in that enormous city, having nobody to sponsor the cause, Swami Gnaneshwarananda interviewed some of the very prominent persons of Chicago amongst whom were, Miss Jane Adams of international reputation, Dr. Arthur Compton, the Nobel Laureate, Prof.

E. Hayden and such others, and explained to them the purpose of his mission.

On Sunday, January 19, 1930, a mass meeting was held at the Masonic Temple in which Prof. Archibald Baker of the University of Chicago introduced Swami Gnaneshwarananda to the public, explaining briefly the need for the message of Vedanta in modern America, and welcoming the Swami as the representative of the much reputed Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Order of India, once more to that historic city of Vivekananda memories. The Swami gave a fitting reply and the Vedanta Society of Chicago was duly inaugurated with great enthusiasm.

Since then the Society is having regular Services every Sunday at the New Masonic Temple, and the interest of the people is gradually increasing. The average attendance during the first season (Jan. to June, 1930) was 60, and that of the second season (October, 1930 to June, 1931) was 90.

During the first season the Society had a suite of three rooms in the business districts of the Loop for its Office and Headquarters, where three classes were held every week, interviews and private lessons were given, and a reading room was maintained for the benefit of the members. The classes grew considerably within a very short time and the class room proved too small to accommodate the growing seekers of truth. Consequently the meditation class had to be divided into two batches, meeting at different times, thus making the number of classes four. Besides the two classes of meditation, one class was given for the systematic study of Hindu Philosophy and another for teaching the Sanskrit language.

More than fifty persons joined these classes during the first season and twenty more have been added during the second.

In February, 1931, the Society has moved to a much bigger and more convenient quarter in a very respectable neighbourhood near the Lake, at 120 East Delaware Place, where all the classes, social activities, birthday celebrations of Sree Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and such other functions are held.

Over and above these regular activities in connection with the Society, Swami Gnaneshwarananda was invited by various churches, clubs, forums and universities to speak on India and her Philosophy and culture. Some of these lectures were broadcasted over the radio, thus carrying the message to a vast number of people. As



many as 48 such lectures were given during the season from October, 1930 to June, 1931.

In course of its very short period of existence, the Society has gained for itself a wide circle of friends drawn from very highly cultured Americans. With their interest increasing and spiritual need supplied, the Society has a very vast field of work before it.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

The report for 1930 gives an account of the activities done by the Home under the following heads:—

I. IN-DOOR GENERAL HOSPITAL. There are 145 beds in various wards. The total number of new cases admitted was 1,569, of whom 1,037 were cured and discharged, 131 left treatment, 91 left protection or were discharged otherwise, 126 remained till the end of the year and 184 died.

II. REFUGE FOR THE AGED MEN. The Home has 25 beds for poor invalids. At present, there are 7 permanent inmates for this refuge.

III. REFUGE FOR WOMEN INVALIDS. There are 14 members in this refuge. The entire expenses for food, clothing and other necessities are met from the funds of the Home.

IV. GIRL'S HOME. Seven girls belonging to respectable families have been accommodated in the women's department of our Home, who, under the guidance of a competent Lady Superintendent, are receiving education, and helping the work of the Female Hospital.

V. HOME FOR PARALYTIC PATIENTS. During the year under review, the Home accommodated 14 paralytic cases in all.

VI. DHARAMSALA FOR THE POOR AND THE HELPLESS. About 200 people were given shelter and food or either during the year under review.

VII. OUT-DOOR DISPENSARY. In the year, 29,074 new cases attended the Out-door Dispensary as against 31,526 of the previous year and the number of repeated cases was 45,569. The daily average attendance was 205 and the total number of the Operation cases was 306.

VIII. OUT-DOOR HELP TO INVALIDS AND LADIES. Besides relieving the extremely helpless cases by admitting them in the Refuge for Invalids, the Home distributes

weekly doles of rice and money to respectable men and women, some of whom almost entirely depend upon this charity. There were 197 permanent recipients of Out-door relief this year and it cost the Home Rs. 2,845-2-0 in money and 162 mds. and 32 srs. of rice and atta besides clothes and blankets.

IX. SPECIAL AND OCCASIONAL RELIEF. In the year, almost daily people came to the Home for special help of one kind or another. In all, 714 persons were assisted under this heading.

The income and expenses of the General Fund of the Home during the year under review were as follows: Subscriptions Rs. 8,294-8-0, Donations Rs. 5,820-3-0, Interest on Endowments and other invested Funds Rs. 11,014-12-7, Paralytic and Dharamsala Funds Rs. 621-14-0, Sale proceeds of garden and other articles Rs. 1,462-6-3, Endowment Fund Rs. 8,154-7-6, Self-Diet and Cremation, etc., Rs. 852-0-0, House rent and Land Revenue Rs. 1,056-0-0, or a total Receipt of Rs. 37,276-3-4 in all. The total expenses of the General Fund under various headings as per particulars in the Balance Sheet come to Rs. 51,106-15-0, showing a deficit of Rs. 13,830-11-8 which is due to the purchasing of G. P. Notes and has been met from the Endowment Funds specially raised for the purpose in the previous years.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, KHAR, BOMBAY

The report for the period from 1928 to 1930 gives the activities of the Ashrama as follows:

During the period under review there were regularly held weekly religious classes at the Ashrama and nine other places. The number of such classes in all were 262, 234 and 153 in 1928, 1929 and 1930, respectively. On invitation from the different quarters of the city and its suburbs, as well as several other Districts of the Presidency, and outside, the Swamis delivered in all 128 lectures during the period.

Besides these, the Ashrama undertook and helped various humanitarian activities, such as, Gujrat Flood Relief Work, Assam Flood Relief Work, Pegu Earthquake Relief Work and Sind Flood and Loot Relief Work. Attached to the Ashrama, there is a well-equipped Dispensary which was utilised by men and women of all castes



and creeds. A public free reading library has been started with a sufficient number of books on varied subjects and numerous periodicals. The Swamis granted private interviews to earnest seekers of truth and spiritual aspirants of all creeds on seeking an appointment to discuss their personal doubts and problems in life.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASRAMA, TAMLUK, MIDNAPUR

The report for 1928 to 1930 shows that the Sevasrama did its best in relieving the sick and distributing medicine among them. The number of patients was 921, 811 and 908 in 1928, 1929 and 1930, respectively. Treatment was, from time to time, made in the houses of the patients themselves. The Sevasrama conducted relief works in time of epidemics during 1928 and 1929. Poor families and indigent students were granted monthly and occasional help during the period under review. Religious classes and lantern lectures were held as usual. A library consisting of a large number of books and periodicals was made good use of by the reading public.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK

The Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission has sent us for publication the following appeal under date 22-11-31:

The public are already aware from our previous reports that we have been conduct-

ing flood relief operations at twelve centres in the districts of Pabna, Dacca, and Mymensingh. The final distribution of rice was made in the first week of November from the centres of Dacca, and in the third week of the same month from the centres of other districts. At present relief operations have been confined to the distribution of cloth or building of houses at those centres except at that of Khalsi in the district of Dacca. Relief operations have been closed at the centres of Khalsi in Dacca, Goyhatta in Mymensingh and Salap in Pabna after the distribution of rice and cloth. The distribution of cloth has just been begun at Sthal, Mulkandi and Gopalpore centres in Pabna. But the quantity of cloth we have received is very insufficient and the cold season has already set in. It would be an immense relief to the distressed people if immediate offers of new cloth and blankets be forthcoming.

It has already been intimated that we have run short funds. So in spite of urgent need at certain centres, lack of means has forced us to close them. We appeal again to the generous public in behalf of the distressed. Contributions of money, cloth and blankets will be thankfully received and acknowledged at any one of the following addresses:

1. President, Ramakrishna Mission, Celur Math, Howrah.
2. Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.
3. Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mookherjee Lane, Bagbazar, Calcutta.