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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

NOTES OF CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

[FROM THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE]

10TH MARCH, 1922.

Doctor B. was telling a visitor (pointing to Swami Turiyananda and us), “These are all Sadhus. (Again pointing to us) They are beginners.”

Swami: (With a smile) “Yes, Sadhus in form, no doubt. But, then, Sadhuhood does not consist in clothes and dresses. The mind must be made like that of a Sadhu. And that is a very difficult task.” With this he began to recite the following song of Ramprasad : “Set fire to desires and burn them to ashes; that will make a nice washing material (for the mind).”

Then he began to say, “The name of God removes the dirt of the mind. As impurities of water settle down at the bottom, when Nirmali (a kind of fruit) is put into it, in the same way, all dirt of the mind passes away on one’s constantly repeating the name of God. ‘A very serious disease it is, O Mother

Divine; I know not whether I shall live or die : I have got a distaste for Thy name, day and night.’ To have a distaste for God’s name is the greatest danger.”

(Addressing Dr. B.) “To develop a dislike for food is a kind of disease, is it not the opinion of the medical science?”

Dr. B. : “There never comes a distaste for sense-enjoyments.”

Swami : “That is true, indeed. You eat your fill—loading your stomach to its utmost capacity, for the time being only you will have a distaste for food; but let a few moments pass, again comes the same previous hankering. Only a temporary cessation it is,—and not a permanent one. Of all enjoyments, the one possessing the greatest attraction is that of sex. All enjoyments are called Bhog, but sex-enjoyment is called Sambhog enjoyment (*par excellence*).

But that is also nothing, if one knows how to discriminate.

“The other day a doctor came—a very nice man. He said, ‘The mind gets repelled from all enjoyments, but not from that (meaning sex) till now.’ I said, ‘Pray to God.’ He replied, ‘There is no desire to pray even.’ He seemed to be a very nice man: Unhesitatingly he laid bare all that was in his mind before a Sadhu. I said, ‘All right, enjoy the sourness of hog-plum. In time it will go.’ Sri Ramakrishna used to say, ‘Hog-plum—it is all peel and stone; and the eating of it causes colic.’ But then it has got an attractive taste. Where is happiness in the world?—it is full of sufferings, an abode of misery. Sri Krishna said to Arjuna, ‘Those who take refuge in Me alone, cross over this Maya.’ Anticipating Arjuna’s question, ‘If by taking refuge in You, one can escape from the clutches of Maya, why do not people do that?’ Sri Krishna said in effect, ‘Where is the chance of that? I have, on the other hand, got My Maya, which does not allow people to take refuge in Me.’ Tulsidas used to say, ‘When there is fever in the body, one will have a dislike even for palatable food.’ In the same way, so long as one has got sin, one’s mind will not go towards God.’ Many people would come to Sri Ramakrishna. Of them some one would be discussing religious matters with him, while some other would be whispering in his ears, ‘Why not go now, why not let us start now?’ Perhaps the former would be saying, ‘Why do’nt you wait a little? How nice is the talk going on!’ On this the latter would say, ‘Then you better remain. Let me go and be waiting in the boat.’ Sri Ramakrishna would give a nice description of this.

“Mind must be made pure. An impure mind is that which has got a

great attachment to sense-enjoyments; whereas that mind is pure, which has got a great spirit of dispassion.”

12TH APRIL, 1922.

Swami: “Man’s mind generally remains stationed in the three lowest planes: it travels up and down amongst those three only. Food, sleep and sexual pleasure: mind does not generally like to rise above the thought of them. The mind of some rises up to the plane of the heart. Then one sees the vision of light. The next is the ‘throat plane.’ If the mind goes there, the world seems to be unreal. From these two planes also, the mind comes down; such is the force of the downward pull. But when the mind rises from the throat to the ‘plane of the eyebrow,’ there is no fear of a fall. The mind next goes to the ‘plane of the brain.’ ”

Swami J. who was amongst the audience, asked: “One sees the vision of light, when the mind rises to the ‘throat-plane.’ What kind of light is that?—Is it very luminous?”

Swami: “Yes, one sees light. But, then, it is not any gross light—it is the light of knowledge.

“ ‘The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars or these lightnings; what to speak of this fire. He shining, all shines after Him. By His light all this shines.’ Here, to think that Brahman is a big light, which bedins the light of the sun and the moon, will be a mistake. The passage means that He existing, the whole universe is manifested.

“Man is entirely absorbed in works belonging to the lowest three planes. Food, sleep and sexual pleasure; again food, sleep and sexual pleasure—with these rounds man spends up his whole life. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: ‘Big rice-merchants put parched rice

etc., at the very door, lest rats should enter the store-rooms. As soon as rats come, they set themselves to eating those things; beyond them are the bags of rice; of that they get no knowledge and the rice of the merchants is also saved. In the same way, the Divine Mother has kept men deluded with tempting things, gold and lust. Men cannot go beyond them to get any clue about the rice-bags, *i.e.*, God. This world is like a labyrinth. Once one enters a labyrinth, one finds no way out: the world is also similar. One finds no way to go out of the world. With human birth there comes one opportunity to go out. But of what avail is it? Man forgets all, busy with things pertaining to the lowest three planes."

28TH APRIL, 1922.

Swami : "(Addressing a certain monk) Perhaps you have marked that I did not talk with you since you came. It is not due to any hatred or anger. I was a bit out of sorts and did not also feel much inclined to talk with you. So it was that I did not speak.

"But I was thinking that I would tell you something on the day you were to leave this place. I have heard

something regarding your life in Calcutta, which made me exceedingly sad. You are our own people;—everybody is our own, but you are all specially so! So when any bad reports come about any of you, that makes the heart ache. You are no longer mere children—you are now sufficiently grown up to understand everything. You have left your home and family; but what are you doing? And what good is there in collecting funds and making friends with all sorts of people? God only is our near and dear one. To be intimate with Him is the only desirable thing. No more waste of time. Just settle down at one place and be up and doing. When we hear that anybody is doing much prayer and meditation, how very glad do we feel! You are now going to Mussoori, all right, go there. But do not wander about any longer. Be steady in one place and put your whole energy to spiritual practices. What is there in having good food and clothing? Dogs also have animal pleasure? People laugh at dogs when they are caught in the infatuation of lust. But are men better than they? Men are subject to more abject lust, but who is to laugh at them? Work hard; no more should you waste your time."

EXPERIENCE IS THE HIGHEST PROOF

BY THE EDITOR

I

A vast universe in comparison with which the planet we inhabit will be a millionth part of a sand! The majority of the stars are so large that hundreds of thousands of earths could be con-

tained in them, leaving enough room to spare. And there are stars which can hold millions upon millions of earths within their bowels. The number of stars again is so large that it defies all human calculation. According to one authority the total number of stars in the

universe will approximate to the total number of grains on all the sea-shores of the world.

In this vast universe where even our earth is something like a microscopic dot, man, infinitesimally smaller than the infinitesimally small fraction of the earth, his body consisting of a complex combination of carbon and water, found himself—nobody knows how. If we, with a little effort of imagination, compare ourselves with the vastness of the universe, all human pride crumbles to dust, and our feeling becomes one of terror instead of self-conceit. All our zest for life fades away and all human endeavour towards the building of civilization and culture, all our wars and fights, all our hankerings for progress and development seem to be more meaningless than the aimless activities of little children and we have to cry in despair.

Impelled by such feelings perhaps it was that some persons, even at the early days of the world, wanted to know what was the significance and purpose of the universe, how it came into being and what was the why and wherefore of human life. That had been the beginning of religion and a search for an answer to these questions led to its development. Some minds, however, were too impatient to probe into these problems very deeply; they took the universe as it was and sought the knowledge of laws that governed it in order to make the life on earth easy and comfortable. This led to the development of science. These two tendencies at times take such opposite directions that there has been and is at occasions great antagonism between religion and science.

People with scientific outlook and imbued with modern thoughts, which are greatly the effect of scientific development, sometimes give wide berth to

religious activities as useless endeavours and often go so far as to condemn them also. They will try to find out pathological or psychological reasons why man turns towards religion and God, why man looks towards heaven and does not confine all his activities to the things of the earth and thus to explain away facts. They will say that the religious sensibility in such and such persons is due to bad digestion, in some case it is because the subject is neurotic, in another because the sex-impulse has gone astray, that the spirit of self-sacrifice for the cause of humanity is nothing but the unsatisfied parental instinct of self-sacrifice for children and that the removal of poverty and making the struggle for existence easier will cure many of their religious impulse.

We may try to find out explanations for the religious sensibilities and build even a theory, right or wrong, by analysing facts, but shall not be able to dismiss the religious hankerings of human heart so easily. Carlyle is accused of pessimism and he was also a dyspeptic; St. Teresa saw many visions and she had also a bad constitution. This way in the life of many religious persons one or other explanation may be sought as to why they were *abnormal*, why they could not adapt themselves to the common ways of the world, but that cannot account for the whole of religion. If explanation is thus sought as to why man becomes religious, similar explanations may be put forward in regard to why one grows irreligious. But in all these surmisings we ignore our ignorance of a vast field of human experiences.

II

Science depends on observation and experiment. Whatever does not come within the purview of human senses is denied by science. Furthermore, science

does not trust individual experiences. If one person realizes a scientific truth, it must be capable of demonstration to others. Because religious experiences cannot be made the common property of all, they are viewed with suspicion by science. A religious person may have ecstasies and visions, but they are tried to be explained away as not genuine. The difficulty is that science and religion belong to two different levels of thought—two different spheres of activity. Two parallel straight lines will never meet; similarly it is impossible for science to account for facts which belong to the domain of religion.

There might be, and as a matter of fact there are, experiences of many religious persons which are not genuine and as such misleading. Nevertheless there are religious experiences which are true, though reason cannot reach their height and human intelligence fails to explain them. Every religion can name some persons who had wonderful supernatural experiences which could not be simply the effect of neurotic condition. And if we compare the experiences of saints and seers in different religions, we find that they are greatly similar. If we ignore the limitations of time and environment we find that all saints, though belonging to different religions, say the same thing. In fact, religious life depends on spiritual experience and experience is the highest proof—that God and religion are not mere empty words.

When the spiritual eye of a man opens and he sees a vision, it becomes a living reality with him. He cannot disbelieve it, he cannot shake off its effects however much he tries. It is said of St. Teresa that she had a vision of Christ while she was talking with an acquaintance. At first she thought that it was simply an imagination, but the effect of the vision gradually held sway over her life. One

may start life even with denying God, but experiences sometimes come which change one's whole life and entire outlook. There are some persons to whom God comes as if uncalled for. But as they get experiences, they find themselves incapable of denying God any longer and religion becomes with them not a matter of habit but an acute fever. Others may try to dislodge them from their beliefs, but they cannot be shaken.

The great Sufi saint, Al-Ghazzali would say: "Whoever has had no experience of the transport knows of the true nature of prophetism nothing but the name If you are to tell a man who was himself without experiences of such a phenomenon that there are people who at times swoon away so as to resemble dead men, and who yet perceive things that are hidden, he would deny it [and give his reasons]. Nevertheless his arguments would be refuted by actual experience."

We may find it difficult to believe the wonderful incidents in the life of Ramprasad—the outcome of his sweet relationship with his Mother, but still he found in God a *real, living Mother*, through whose strength he could easily look the whole world in the face. Religious experiences may take the form of visions, ecstasies or any other shape that the world has known or not known, but man must have some experiences through which the inner conviction grows that there are more things in the universe than what meet our eyes, that there is a Reality, which is eternal and everlasting though we may not perceive it. And fortunately there have been in the world, from time to time and in all religions, persons who have given clear indications of having met that Reality face to face.

We have said that there are visions and ecstasies which are false, religious experiences which are misleading, but

we can easily distinguish the genuine thing from the false stuff by its effects. St. Teresa wrote in her autobiography in reply to those who doubted the authenticity of her religious experiences : “ . . . a genuine heavenly vision yields to her a harvest of ineffable spiritual riches, and an admirable renewal of bodily strength. I alleged these reasons to those who so often accused my visions of being the work of the enemy of mankind and the sport of my imagination . . . All those who knew me saw that I was changed ; my confessor bore witness to the fact ; this improvement, palpable in all respects, far from being hidden, was brilliantly evident to all men. As for myself, it was impossible to believe that if the demon were its author, he could have used, in order to lose me and lead me to hell, an expedient so contrary to his own interests as that of uprooting my vices, and filling me with masculine courage and other virtues instead, for I saw clearly that a single one of these visions was enough to enrich me with all that wealth.”

When some person doubted whether the Samadhi and other spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna were not the outcome of a nervous disorder, he is said to have replied : “Well, I hear that you call my Samadhi a disease and say that I become unconscious at that time. You think day and night of all sorts of material things and yet consider yourself to be of sound brain, while I who meditate on the eternal Fountain-head of Consciousness appear to you as deranged ! A fine piece of reasoning !”

III

When there is a genuine spiritual vision, the character of the man is totally changed, he becomes altogether metamorphosed,—an inveterate sinner becomes a saint. He sees the world

clothed in a new light and the outlook of life becomes different.

The greatest sign of spiritual development is that the ego drops down completely and the Sadhaka becomes a mere tool in the hands of God. Only he who has got the highest spiritual vision can truly say, “Thy will be done.” For he has no separate will for himself ; he is completely identified with God. He has no selfish motive ; for he has forgotten his self, we mean the lower self which only separates us from God. Some person develops a monistic consciousness—the idea that there is only One Reality and everything else is illusion. He walks on earth as if by a momentum—himself caring for nothing. Yet wherever he goes, an ineffable peace and love fill the atmosphere and a high degree of unselfishness marks all his actions. Those who are of dualistic temperament are so much filled with the consciousness of their Beloved, that their personality is totally merged in that of their Chosen Ideal and their character also is re-fashioned accordingly.

Yet the persons do not become inert and inactive, as a modern mind will think them to be. Very often a tremendous amount of energy is released out of the spiritual development. Loss of the ego does not mean the loss of life and the resemblance of the state of death, but it means a more intense living. When we can completely forget our self and let God work through us, wonderful becomes the result.

With our narrow vision we cannot understand this and consequently think that we shall do good to the world, we shall lift up humanity, and, as a result, raise dust and smoke, create heat and tumult. If we can make ourselves a silent instrument in the hands of God, we can do work which cannot be even imagined. Out of the spiritual life of

Buddha was released a power which is in action even two thousand years after his passing away. Similar is the case with Christ. Mahomed turned the Arabian desert into a dynamo of energy which for a time vitalized mighty monarchs and nations. St. Ignatius was a mystic, his visions and experiences might be taken for an indication of his "other-worldly" temperament. But the Order he founded has been one of the greatest factors for the progress and development of the civilization of the world. It is because the narrow love of our little self does not allow us to throw ourselves unreservedly into the arms of God, we become cooped up, as it were, in a well and fail to understand God's power even when it is in action.

Another characteristic of saintliness is great purity. The purity of a saint is not the purity of a puritan who wants to live in self-protection, hedged round by a barrier of laws and rules, but it becomes the very breath of his life. When a man has completely offered himself to the feet of God, he needs no longer make any effort to keep himself pure and unsullied; it becomes impossible for him to go wrong. When there is found a man who has got visions and transports but his character does not indicate a high degree of purity, we must view his experiences with suspicion.

Another sign of true spirituality is that the man gets an unselfish love for one and all—not only for man but also for lower creations, sometimes even for the vegetable kingdom of God. We hear of a saint who could not stand the sight of persons walking over grass, he would be so much identified with the sufferings of the vegetable life. Christ said: Love thy neighbour as thyself and *there is no commandment greater than this*. Indeed it is the sign of the highest spirituality to be able to

love one's neighbour *as oneself*. The Gita also says that when the real spiritual vision dawns on a man, he finds the happiness and misery of any other person as his own.

A religious person does not become weak as is commonly and wrongly supposed from the sight of his humility. When occasion arises he becomes strong as strength itself. This is possible only because he has nothing to be afraid of in the world, because he expects nothing from any earthly power and he has nothing to lose. Perhaps such a man does not make any display of his strength, but how can weakness find room in a person whose strength is the strength of God?

We may doubt the experiences of religious persons, but those who have developed real spirituality are the salt of the earth. In them we find manifested ideal virtues—ideal qualities of head and heart—which to the rest of humanity remain merely as an ideal, a vision and a dream.

The intellectual power of the saints becomes no less. When the spiritual vision opens, the meaning of everything in the universe becomes as clear as anything. The Upanishad has truly said that if we know God, everything else becomes known to us. A saint out of the depths of his spiritual life says many things which for many centuries to come become the subject of intellectual gymnastics for innumerable commentators and annotators to find out their right meaning. It was the experience of St. Ignatius that "a single hour of meditation at Manresa had taught him more truths about heavenly things than all the teachings of all the doctors put together could have taught him."

These will be some of the characteristics by which we can distinguish true spirituality from one false and counterfeit.

IV

Now the great question is, Can we, through our personal endeavour, expect to have the spiritual experiences which we admire in the life of saints and seers? One fundamental characteristic of scientific truths is that they are capable of demonstration—they can be explained to others. In the same way, can we hope, if we try, to experience in our individual life the truths which were revealed to spiritually developed souls?

When there appears a genius in any field of activity, we cannot exactly say what was the cause of the extraordinary development in him. We but vainly try to explain by saying that it was perhaps the hereditary influence or the effect of the environment or the time factor that led to the appearance and growth of a genius. All these explanations cannot stand close examination. Similar circumstances are found to be incapable to bring out the same extraordinary powers in another individual. Sometimes an insignificant incident leads to the development of an epoch-making thing and makes a man great. The falling of an apple is an everyday affair, but it was the cause of a great discovery which made Newton immortal. Similar was the case of a boiling kettle.

In the field of religion also it is difficult to find out any explanation as to what leads to the extraordinary development of spirituality in certain persons. Why was Mahomed so anxious to find out the meaning of the universe that he passed sleepless nights over this problem? Why did the misery of the world weigh so heavily upon the heart of the Sakhya Prince? In religious sphere also we find that sometimes a careless remark, an insignificant word or any trifling incident becomes the turning-point in the spiritual life of certain persons. A mild rebuke from his wife

turned the thoughts of Tulsidas towards God and made him eventually a saint. The priest's advice to the organizers of the marriage ceremony of Ramdas, the Guru of Shivaji, to be careful so that the right moment for the marriage might not slip by, set Ramdas thinking so seriously about the necessity "to be careful" about the problems of life, that he fled away from the marriage pandal and took to hard tapasya to realize God. The sight of a withered tree branching forth in spring was the cause of making a Brother Lawrence.

We find no reason why a particular event makes such a deep impression upon the mind of a particular person. This fact sometimes leads many to despair that it is not perhaps possible for them to develop their spiritual powers to any appreciable degree. But as in secular life though not fully comprehending the causes as to what makes a man a genius, others try to emulate those who have made their life a success, in the same way in religious field also average persons may try to follow the life of saints and seers whose achievements are a guarantee that others can be like them or at least be able to appease their spiritual thirst.

In every religion there is mention of a chalked-out path to be followed, for realizing Truth and developing one's spiritual life. Without undergoing the disciplines which were prescribed by persons who have trodden the path of spirituality, how can one dismiss religion altogether as meaningless and not worth striving for? Even in the field of science a certain amount of previous training is necessary to understand a scientist. Similarly a certain amount of practice is necessary to realize that God and religion are not simply mythical ideas.

When one has gone through the necessary disciplines and fulfilled the prere-

quisite conditions, one is sure to have some experiences—as is the unanimous opinion of the prophets of all religions—which will convince one beyond all doubts that God is true and that He can be realized in life. Christ said: Seek and ye shall find; the Gita says: I am easily attainable by him, who remembers Me with a single mind; a

modern prophet a few decades back said: God is much more real than the things man considers as real and He can be realized, I swear, if one be earnest.

Are not these words likely to raise fresh hopes even in those of us who are feeble-hearted? If not, let us pray more fervently for strength.

KALI-WORSHIP—I

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

I

The spot* where we are met this evening is the most sacred of all the shrines of Kali. For long ages it has been the refuge of pious souls in need, sorrow and thanksgiving, and their last thought in the hour of death, and who shall say to how many of the saints the Mother has revealed Herself just here? One she has called child, and another hero. One has been Her devotee simply, mad with the wine of Her Benediction and Her Beauty, and yet another has felt Her as his innermost self. For as the souls are numberless, so also are their powers, and innumerable are the wants that She can satisfy.

From this place Her voice goes out through the whole world sounding gently at the hour of evening and the time of dawn,—“My children, my children, I, even I, am your mother!”

The calls of the world may drown that voice in the glare of daylight, but with the return of the Hours of Peace, men sit alone with their own hearts, and then no matter how they misinterpret, come the still small tones of that com-

munion,—so small, so distant, that we scarcely hear them, though some day we shall realize that everything in the universe—every experience in life—is but a note in the organ music of the voice of Kali.

The associations of the place are sacred, the time is sacred, this very blood and dust of the shrine are holy. Let us realize that we are gathered here, where so many millions of the dead have come to pray, not to hear a lecture but to worship.

II

Those of us who feel that the search after God is the be-all and end-all of human life—that the wise man, the man of fullest living, is he who cries out, with his whole soul in the cry, “Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God,”—we who believe this will see in national customs, in national history, in national ways of viewing things, only one or other mantle in which to clothe the apprehension of the Divine.

It was so that the Semite dreaming of God in the moment of highest rapture

*The Kali-temple, Kalighat.

called him "Our Father," and the European, striving to add the true complement to God as the Child, saw bending over Him that Glorified Maiden, whom he knew as "Our Lady." But in India the conception of women is simpler, more personal, more complete. For India there is one relationship that makes the home—that makes sanctity—that enters into every fibre of the being; and it is not Fatherhood. What wonder that in India God's tenderest name is that of Mother?

This idea of the Motherhood of God has about it all that mysterious fascination that clings to the name of India for those who know it as students of history or philosophy.

In the old days, long before the birth of Buddhism, she was the land of treasures to which men must go for precious stones, and sandal-wood and ivory. Then came the time when she meant much to the Western day that was dawning in Greece: the days of Buddhism, when her Gymnosophists taught the Greek philosopher her ancient wisdom, even then, perhaps, ancient. Again came our Middle Ages, when the countries round the Mediterranean had somewhat recovered breath, and when the Crusades began. The Crusades were the meeting-ground between East and West—Eastern tendencies and interests streaming towards Baghdad, and thence being thrown on the Syrian deserts by the Saracen.

Here in the Crusades, and afterwards in the Moorish occupation of Spain, and always in the streets and by-ways of those fascinating old ports of Venice and Genoa, must have been born the true mystery of the name of India.

The wonderful tales of travellers and pilgrims, the magnificence of Indian escorts and palaces, the feats of jugglers and the extraordinary powers of endurance shown by Indian ascetics, all these

associations are called up by the name of India, for those who have never walked under the palm trees, nor seen the wild peacocks of the Motherland. And those are the associations of mediæval Europe.

Not contemporary with these surely, but belonging to the earlier days of the English occupation, is the glamour round the names of Indian doctrines. Such a delusive sheen tinges the popular reading of the word *Máyá*, and such a spirit arises when we hear that in India you talk of this—the Motherhood of God.

Not but that this is a conception that must occur in all religions that are to satisfy the soul. The Galilæan Teacher did not forget it, when he took a little child, and set him in the midst, and said, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." St. Paul wrote to his disciples as a mother greatly anguished till Christ be formed in them. Every true and tender word of help and counsel has added to the Semitic idea, "Like as a father pitieth his children," that sweeter notion of the Aryans, "Like as a mother pitieth her children." But in Christianity it has been implied—not overtly expressed, and the curious divergence between Indian and European ideals of women comes in here, further to thwart the birth of the thought of Motherhood in worship.

III

One of the most beautiful fragments of devotion that have come down to us from our Middle Ages is a little old French manuscript called "Our Lady's Tumbler." Here it might be thought, we had lighted on real Motherworship. But this is not so—for the characteristic utterance is "Lady, you are the *mon-joie* (my-joy) that lightens all the world,—

i.e., worship is not being offered to a mother, but to a queen. In India, this is never so. Behind palace walls or within her mud hut woman lives much the same simple and beautiful life of the old Aryan villages. Exquisite cleanliness and simplicity, infinite purification, and always the same intimate motherhood.

The notion of the lady is foreign to India, and those who love the country cannot be too thankful that it is so. Not that Indian woman should be deprived of anything that would make life noble and sweet and strong, but that their conception of existence is already more beautiful because more noble than any exotic notion. It must be through the intensifying of the Indian ideal of selflessness and wisdom and social power that Emancipation shall come.

And this absence of luxury and self-indulgence from the ideal conception of Indian womanhood is fitly imaged in this symbol that you make to yourselves of God, the most precious religious symbol in the world, perhaps God the Mother,—not the Queen. And of this symbol, you have made three forms—*Durga, Jagaddhátri and Káli*.

In *Durgá*, we have, indeed, an element of Queenhood, but it is the power of the Queen, not her privilege.

Emerging from amidst the ten points of the compass, one foot on the lion, and one on the *Asura*, striking with the serpent and holding instruments of worship and weapons of destruction, there is, in *Durgá*, a wonderful quality of literary interpretation. She is a wonderful symbol of the Power that manifests itself as Nature—the living energy at the centre of this whirlpool.

Dim overhead is that series of pictures of the Giving of the Gods, that brings home to us the relation of God, of our own soul, to this great Energy.

Below, all movement and turmoil, above, the calm of eternal meditation. The Soul inert, and Nature the great awakener. Behind both That Which manifests as both—*Brahman*.

Look at it how you will, could there be a finer picture than this of the complete duality? But *Durgá* is the Mother of the Universe. The Divine and resistless Energy that kills almost as many as it brings to the birth, that fosters by the terrible process of the destruction of the unfit.

Are God and Nature then at strife
 That Nature sends such evil
dreams?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life?

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear.

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar stairs
 That slope through darkness
up to God.

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
gripe
 And gather dust and chaff and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

Quivering human nerves know something that is called pain. How does *Durgá* stand to that?

For the Gods that men make to themselves will not all utter the same voice of the Universal Life, but unless they have been so realized as to feed their worshipper's hunger, some faculty of his will be starved and stunted. We must remember that all *this* is but one way of seeing God—that every act and feeling is unconscious worship. God is

its real soul, and if we hunger for love or for sympathy or for some word of encouragement and comfort, it is not in man that we shall find it—though it may be through man for the moment that our cry is stilled. And so in the symbol that we make of God, we need do no violence at all to this hungry human heart. We may and *must* satisfy it. Does Durgá do this?

If not—the great World Force, indifferent to pain as to pleasure, is clearly not the mother of the soul.

In Jagaddhátri we have some development of the notion of protection. But it is before Káli—the terrible one,—Káli, the tongue of flame—Káli—the face seen in a fire—Káli, surrounded by forms of death and destruction, that the soul hushes itself at last, and utters that one word—“Mother.”

To the children she is “Mother” simply after their childhood’s need. The mother who protects, with whom we take refuge—who says to the soul, as God says to all of us sometimes: “My little child—you need not know much in order to please me. Only love me dearly.”

And if in all that surrounds Her, there is anything to our grown-up vision terrible, their eyes are sealed that they do not know it, and they find in her—as is the case with all emblems—only what their own life and experience leads them to understand.

And to the grown man, she is “Mother” after *his* need—the mother who does not protect but makes strong to overcome, who demands the very best that we can give, and will be content with nothing less.

Not, you see that in Kali there is balm for every wound—not that for the pain she gives the sweet—not that the truth of things is to be blinked and protection to be given to one, that means the desertion of another. We

shall see that as long as we need that, as long as we in life are glad to take a place in the cool that leaves another to bear the burden and heat of the day, as long as we are thankful to possess, as long as we are cowards, even for those we love, so long we shall look for a coward’s satisfaction in our God. And we shall find it.

But when we have grown past this, we shall find the right hand uplifted in blessing, *while* the left destroys. We shall see the moment of destruction of the Universe as the moment of realization. Life will be a song of ecstasy and thanksgiving that the last sacrifice has been demanded from us.

IV

Religion, it appears, is not something made for gentlehood. Religion is for the heart of the people. To refine is to emasculate it. Every man must be able there to find bread. I must always illustrate from Christianity. I know that we have to thank God for certain elements of crudity and superstition that Christianity contains, that carry it to places that without these it could never reach.

The man who derives brutal satisfaction from life, or who sees no further than the surface of things, this man has a right to find these satisfactions, and to make for himself a worship which shall express these instincts. The man who is violent in his modes of thought, and vivid in his apprehension of life, the man who appreciates the struggle of Nature, and is strong enough to plunge into it fearlessly, that man has a right to offer to God that which he hourly demands from life. He who with precisely the same instincts as these, is full of the pity of life and of creation, will see in God the Refuge of All, the Divine Mother—pitiful and

compassionate. He will echo Her cry to the world; "Humanity, Humanity, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not!"

But consciousness will not be arrested even here. After all, what is the meaning of death—of destruction of the visible—of all these forms of horror and fear? Is it not the manifestation of that Divine Energy that carries through fire and slaughter and blind cruelty the message of love and deliverance home to us? And the man to whom once the great word of religion was "My child, you need not know much in order to please Me. Only love Me dearly. Talk to Me as you would talk to your mother, if she had taken you on her knee,"—that same man will now be able to say through every word and act and thought, "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee."

And at some infinitely distant time, perhaps, when duality is gone, and not even God is any longer God, may that other experience come of which the Master spoke when he said—"It is always on the bosom of dead Divinity that the blissful Mother dances Her dance celestial."

V

As the child is occupied solely with the counting of some few objects, and the grown man with the truths of the higher mathematics, and as even those truths are transcended in reality by the faculty which they have developed,—so here—the first symbols are as necessary as the last, if we are to reach the end. There was no ultimate importance in those early operations of counting, yet mathematics could not have existed without them. So

worship must have its feet in the clay, if with its head it is to reach to Heaven. At every stage, however, we realize something that is to remain with us. *To the children of the Mother, all men must be brothers.* Separation is not. Difference is not. There is the common Motherhood. Men speak Her words to us, supplicate with Her hands, love with Her eyes, and our part to them is infinite service. What does personal salvation matter, if God, the infinite God calls for love and service?

And we realize the *greatness of fact.* No betrayal of truth is so terrible as that of choosing what is beautiful and easy and soft, to be believed and worshipped. Let us face also and just as willingly the terrible—the ugly—the hard.

God gave life—true. But He also kills. God is Eternity, but with that idea does there not rise the black shadow of time, beginning and ending in obscurity?

I have been born in happy circumstances. He gave them. How dare I say that, when to another He gave hardship and pain and care? Shall I not worship Him in this manifestation of destruction, nay, is this not the very place where I shall kneel and call Him Mother?

But linked with this sincerity is that other which leads us to it and beyond it. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee—cut it off, and cast it from thee. Better is it to enter into life halt or maimed than having two hands or two feet to be cast out into ignorance." The God of Truth must needs be the God of Sacrifice. And, last of all, the great glory of this Mother-worship lies in its bestowal of *Manhood.* Time after time Kâli has given men to India. In the history of Protap Sing, of Shivaji, and of the Sikhs, stand the men She gave. If Bengal, the cradle of Her worship, the home of Her Saints, parts with Her

worship, she will part at the same time with her manhood. It is her part to renew that ancient worship with ten times greater devotion, for the loss would be to her lasting peril and disgrace.

It is well to remember that we seek truth, not the triumph of a party. And it is also well to remember that where

the question of authority comes in, the only authoritative fault-finder would be that man who had realized all the Kâli-Worship has to give.

And He found no fault. Rather He uttered a message in the name of the Divine Mother that is to-day going out into all the world, and calling the nations to Her Feet.

FOLK ART AND ITS RELATION TO NATIONAL CULTURE

BY G. S. DUTT, I.C.S.

THE SOUL CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH NATION SHOULD BE PRESERVED

It is now an accepted fact that individuals differ from one another in their distinctive inborn qualities of character which are the products of special peculiarities of heredity through countless ages and of differences of environment and pre-natal influences; and that the true aim of education is not to produce a dead level of uniformity by forcing all individual minds and characters into the same mould;—but to detect, ascertain and develop what we may call the special inborn "soul characteristic" of each individual, while at the same time giving all individuals the benefit of a sound education and equal treatment in the facilities for acquiring knowledge.

And just as individuals differ markedly in their "soul characteristics," so do races and nations. The world no longer believes in a theory of "a chosen people"—of a people who have a monopoly of all the finest qualities of the human race and who are ordained to impose their will and their ideals upon other peoples and

nations. On the other hand, it is being more and more clearly recognized that Herbert Spencer was right when he said that "the highest individuation must coincide with the greatest mutual dependence," that evolutionary progress is "at once towards the greatest separateness and the greatest union." In other words, the true object of civilization is not to force all races and nations into one uniform and stereotyped character, but the fabric of human civilization should be a richly variegated mosaic to which each race and people makes its distinctive contribution by developing and perfecting its own special race characteristics of mind and soul. Wherein then lies this essential difference between races and nations which marks them out from one another and which enables each of them to make its distinctive contribution to the sum-total of human culture?

For the purpose of analysis we may here divide human activities into three main departments appertaining respectively to Reason, Imagination and Emotion. And if we do this we find that while in the sphere of pure reason

or, in other words the sphere of Science, there is nothing that is the distinctive characteristic of any particular race or nation, in the sphere of speculative imagination races and nations differ markedly from one another;—while in the emotional sphere and in that of the decorative imagination this difference becomes even more marked and pointed. As a result of this we find, on the one hand, that there is no such thing as a national system of science characteristic of any particular race or nation; but that in the world of science all nations can contribute equally and, given due opportunity, should make an equal contribution to the sum-total of human knowledge. On the other hand, in the sphere of speculative philosophy, nations develop remarkable differences of outlook and treatment. Thus the philosophy of Bacon and of Herbert Spencer, of Comte and Hegel, all display special characteristics of race-genius of their respective peoples just as the philosophy of the Vedanta displays the special characteristics of the Indian race-genius. But the distinctive soul-quality of each nation finds its most characteristic expression in the emotional field and in that of the decorative imagination; and it is therefore through the medium of Art more than in any other sphere of life that the soul-quality of each nation has found its most characteristic self-expression and it is through the medium of its national art that each nation has made its most distinctive contribution to human culture.

It follows, therefore, from what we have said above, that while the spirit of science is of a universal character and knows no difference of race or national characteristics, the spirit of a nation finds its most distinctive expression in its special philosophical outlook on life and in its distinctive art language. It follows also that in order to be able to

make its maximum contribution to human culture and civilization, it is the duty of each nation to cultivate and develop to the full its characteristic philosophy of life and its characteristic forms of artistic self-expression—by developing, in the words of Herbert Spencer, “the greatest separateness and the highest individuation” in these spheres along distinctively national and racial lines.

This is not to say that cultural contacts between races and nations should not occur or that races and nations should not be influenced by one another and learn from one another. On the contrary such contacts not only should take place and do take place, but we know only too well that in the present age cultural penetration of one nation by another is going on to an alarming extent in many cases. As in the case of individuals, however, a nation which allows impact with an extraneous culture to swamp or wipe out its own distinctive race-personality loses its value in the hierarchy of nations and drops in the estimation of the world; whereas a strong and vigorous race utilizes impact with extraneous culture by organically assimilating new principles and new tendencies in harmony with its own being and thus reacting into ever new enrichment of its own distinctive personality.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLK ART

Now we find that with the growth of the industrial civilization and the development of communication between different nations and the promiscuity of knowledge, the distinctive soul characteristics of nations tend to become masked or even lost owing to the development of a stereotyped mentality of the machine age on the one hand and a greater reliance on the material as

distinguished from the spiritual outlook on life on the other hand; and humanity is the poorer for this loss. The growth of the hyper-material, hyper-industrial and hyper-commercial outlook and the increasing sophistication of life which is a trait of modern civilization is also accompanied by a loss of the simplicity and freshness of outlook, aims, ideals and aspirations and of the directness, the vigour, sincerity and spontaneity of life which marked the pre-industrial age. In the history of each nation there arises a stage in the onrush of the process of its progress in stereotypedness and sophistication when it yearns to get back to the simplicity and directness, the vigour and freshness and the sincerity and spontaneity which marked the earlier stages of its life and to regain touch with the distinctive soul characteristic of its own race acquired through the countless ages of its evolution.

It is then that the importance of folk art is realized as the fountain for the renewal of national inspiration and for the resuscitation of national culture. For the folk art of a nation is the sincerest and most spontaneous collective expression of its essential philosophy of and outlook on life and of the distinctive moral and spiritual ideals of the race,—of its simple joys and sorrows as well as of its highest aims and aspirations expressed through an art-language specially suited to its race-genius and therefore the most effective for its purpose and one in which it specially excels—embodying the language, imagery, turn of expression, tonality and rhythm peculiar to its race-genius and evolved by it through the countless centuries of its evolution and through the operation of its special race-mixture, of its physical environments and deep cultural influences. It will now be clear that it is through the medium of

folk art more than through anything else that the national genius of a race or people maintains the continuity of its soul life and through which it can re-establish that continuity where the latter has been broken either through special historical reasons or through the growth of sophistication or materialism in outlook or through the operation of an excessive industrialism and commercialism or other disturbing influences.

Thus a nation which has lost or is about to lose its soul is enabled to re-establish contact with it through the medium of its folk art.

From what has been said above it is also obviously incumbent on a nation to discover its own true self, to find out clearly wherein lie its distinctive characteristics and to develop those distinctive characteristics with assiduity through its educational and social system. The folk art of a nation, more than anything else, helps it to discover these essential national characteristics.

So far we have looked at art as a kind of race-language or a language or a form of the self-expression of the race-spirit. But there is a second way of looking at the art of each race, and that is as a rhythmic mould or inspirational channel specially forged by the spirit of the race for its active outward functioning in life. The national art of each race is, so to speak, its own special rhythmic wave-length in which its spirit finds special scope for its self-expression, self-development and self-fulfilment. It is for this reason that for the development of the creative genius and creative imagination of the individual as well as of the race, it is imperative for it to have recourse to the rhythmic measure of its own national art which has a special potency for the quickening of its creative imagination and its crea-

tive genius. Mere copying of the art-forms of another race is powerless to supply a people with the stimulus needed for the development of its creative genius. On the other hand, such copying and imitation inevitably makes its spirit stunted and barren.

Folk art furnishes the greatest and most powerful stimulus to a race for the constant rejuvenation of its creative genius; for being completely unadulterated by extraneous influences it supplies the purest rhythmic mould or inspirational channel worked out by the race-soul for its creative activity. A constant stream of inspiration from its folk art is therefore to a race absolutely essential for its spiritual development, the development of its character and the creative functioning of its spirit.

There is still a third way of looking at art; and that is from the point of view of the spontaneous expression of the spirit of joy in life which is so needed not only for the happiness of man but for his very existence and growth.

The spirit of pure and simple joy or *Anandam*, which is at the root of universal life, is often missing in the cultivated art of a people owing to the inroads of artificiality, the growth of self-consciousness, the cramping effects of the development of rigidity and sometimes even of corruption in social life under the influence of perverted religious and social forces or through the influence of a misguided educational system. We often see examples of a people deprived of this spirit of simple, pure and spontaneous joy, as, for example, is the case with the present-day educated classes in Bengal. Now, among the simple unlettered folk in every nation, such artificial conditions do not operate and they thus retain in a marked degree the spirit of this simple, pure and childlike joy even in the face of pover-

ty, privation and want and express that joy spontaneously in their life and art. Thus folk art furnishes a nation with the means of recovering its spirit of spontaneous joy in life.

Further, unlike the cultivated arts of the over-cultivated stages of society in all countries, which are often marred by a complicated formality and artificiality, an excessive elegance, and an over-refinement of mannerism bordering on effeminacy, the Folk Art of every nation has a primitive purity, directness, vigour, vitality and robustness which serve as a perennial fund for the rejuvenation and strengthening of national life and national art from age to age.

EXAMPLES FROM EUROPE

This has been realized by the nations of Europe during the last two or three decades, and, as a result, we find a two-fold process going on there as a means of renewal of inspiration in national life from the fountain of folk art; namely, —firstly: a movement on the part of each nation of Europe to search out and discover the remaining vestiges of its own folk art, and by holding them in fond embrace to fill the national spirit with the thrill of a new life; and secondly, a movement on the part of all the nations of Europe and America to ransack the primeval woods and forests of Africa and America and by searching out the primitive arts of the Negroes and other primitive races to gather inspiration and ideals for the reintroduction of simplicity, naturalness, vigour and vitality in life and art. The same forces which at the present day are fast killing the invaluable folk arts of India have been at work in Europe for more than a century with the result that in most cases the active traditions of the folk arts have been extinguished

either completely or almost completely in European countries by the inroads of a rampant commercialism and industrialism. Thus, for example, in the sphere of sculpture and painting the living traditions of the medieval artists and craftsmen of Europe have completely disappeared and in their eagerness to introduce freshness and vitality into the soulless artificiality of their present-day schools of sculpture and painting the European races are busy closely studying the sculptural creations of the Negroes and the rock paintings of the cavemen.

In the sphere of music and dance, however, the traditions of the folk arts had not been entirely killed in many of the countries of Europe when two or three decades ago they became awakened to their value; and so we find that each nation of Europe has been busy making a systematic search for and a careful and scientific study and record of its still surviving folk music and in particular of its own folk songs and folk dances. And it was high time that they had started doing so; for, had they delayed even a generation longer and in some cases even a day longer, the traditions of those precious national arts would have disappeared completely for ever from their midst beyond all chances of recovery.

In no country of Europe has this new movement been stronger or more pronounced than in the most wide-awake and progressive country of Europe, namely England. Until the beginning of the present century the English people practically borrowed all their music from the nations of central and southern Europe, for they believed that the English nation had no music of its own. As a result there was little scope for the development of the creative genius of the English people in the sphere of music. It was

the great Englishman Cecil Sharp who started, at the beginning of the present century, the movement for the revival of old English folk dances and folk songs which has since furnished a pattern for similar activities in almost every European country. Cecil Sharp made the discovery of the fact, which was not known to his countrymen at the time, that contrary to their belief the simple unlettered folk in the English country-side had always had among them most beautiful traditions of song and dance, most of which had become already extinct, but the very last vestiges of which were in danger of being extinct in a few years' time if immediate steps were not taken to search them out in their native rural haunts and to make a careful, systematic and scientific record of them without loss of time. And so, regardless of considerations of his own fragile health and of his material prospects, he went about the fairs and markets and hamlets of the English country-side, busily recording with his own hand with every detail of their notation and wording and intonation and gesture the folk songs and folk dances of "merrie old England" that had still escaped complete extinction and of which the last and only exponents then left had reached such a hoary age that with their death in the course of perhaps a year or two in many cases, the entire tradition would have completely disappeared from England. The story goes that he once heard that an octogenarian who was the only man who knew a particular old folk song was in his death-bed and was not expected to live more than a few hours longer and so to that dying man's house ran Cecil Sharp with his note book and pencil in hand and from the lips of the dying man rescued for the English nation one of their national treasures in the shape of a folk song.

The contagion of his enthusiasm soon spread in his land and the English Folk Dance and Folk Song Societies had their birth. All those who have more than a mere superficial knowledge of the forces that go to make up the present vitality of the great English nation know how much it owes to the revival of its own old national folk dances and folk songs, in the shape of a wonderful accession of joy and vitality in national life and of the purification of the national spirit, not to speak of the impetus which it has supplied to the renaissance of the English musical genius. It has been truly said that whenever in Europe "art music" or the music prevalent among the so-called cultivated classes has gone through a crisis and was threatened by a stagnation in its development, composers have found new inspiration and fresh life from the ever-living spring of folk music. This furnishes a very striking illustration of the proposition which I stated at the outset that whether it is an individual or a nation, it is essential for the quickening and development of its creative genius that it goes for its inspiration straight to the very fountain-head and the very store-house of its national genius, *viz.*, its own national folk art.

It would be a mistake to regard this as merely an advocacy of a narrow parochialism as some so-called advocates of cosmopolitanism in knowledge and art might be inclined to characterize it. For it is an indisputable fact that while an artist's style must be ultimately a personal one, an individual being a member of a nation, the greatest and most widely known artists have been those who were most strongly national. We find this illustrated in the cases of such world-famed artists as Bach, Shakespeare, Verdi, Reynolds and Whitman. Their appeal was un-

doubtedly cosmopolitan but the origin of their inspiration was national. The works of the great German musical composers, Richard Wagner and Beethoven, were alive from beginning to end with the spirit of German folk song. We find a most striking illustration of the same principle in the case of our own Rabindranath Tagore. The beauty of his lyric poetry and his lyric genius has thrilled the world into a new spiritual and rhythmic realization; but although influences from the classical music of India as well as certain musical currents from the West have mingled in his work, his genius bears the special impress of, and has received its greatest contribution and its greatest stimulus from, the folk music of his own native soil of Bengal,—from the soul-stirring strains of the *Baul*, the *Kirtan* and the *Bhatial* songs of the simple unlettered folk-singers of Eastern and Western Bengal. Those amongst us, therefore, who see in the stupendous genius of the great Rabindranath merely an isolated figure without its vital background of the art of the humble folk-singers of Bengal and who seek to gather creative inspiration for themselves by merely trying to copy the inimitable artistic synthesis created by him make a profound mistake. The Bengali nation, if it is to gather the most potent inspiration for the renaissance of its poetical, lyrical and musical genius, must seek that inspiration at first hand from the prolific store-house of the still surviving folk-songs, folk-music and folk-literature of Bengal. It must sit at the feet of and gather direct inspiration from the humble unlettered but not uncultured rustic folk-singers and folk musicians of rural Bengal instead of leaving them as at present to die of starvation and disease and their art—which is a priceless heritage of the Bengalee nation—to perish.

NEED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
DIFFERENT RACES OF INDIA

I have deliberately spoken of the Bengali people and the folk arts of Bengal and not in more general terms of the Indian people and the folk arts of India; for although, politically, Indians aspire to a united life, and although the different races inhabiting the Indian continent are pervaded by a common culture and a common outlook on life, yet, in matters relating to art, growth and development follows racial instead of political divisions, and the synthesis of Indian art is but the sum total of the art-contributions of the different races inhabiting India. The arts of the Rajput, the Moghul, the Bengalee, the Dravidian races of South India have each their own separate distinctive character.

Let us take the case of Bengal, the native province of the present writer.

It would be idle for the Bengalees, nay disastrous for their spiritual and cultural life, to let the exigencies of political or sentimental considerations to blind their eyes to the all-important biological fact that from the peculiar race-mixture of their origin and from special geographical and natural environments as well as from the special historical and spiritual influences which have gone to form their traits of character and their outlook on life with all their virtues and defects, the Bengali people, although a component part of the great Indian nation and although sharing in and contributing to the totality of the great Indian civilization, are, nevertheless, a distinct race and a distinct people from those of other provinces. We must no longer be blind to the fact that we have our own Bengali national system of all the arts, *viz.*, of poetry, of painting, of music, of sculpture, of architecture and of dance and

our enthusiasm for a general type of Indian poetry, Indian music, Indian painting, Indian sculpture, Indian architecture and Indian dance must not blind us to the importance of cultivating our own provincial and special forms of these arts in which we excel most and in which Bengal has in the past made a great contribution and is destined in the future to make a still greater contribution to the common civilization and culture of India and to the civilization and culture of the world.

Hitherto with one solitary exception, *viz.*, that of Bengali literature and Bengali poetry, in which our educated classes have developed a race-consciousness and a race-pride and an eagerness for research into old indigenous Bengali sources of inspiration, we have been so blind to the art wealth of Bengal that even to this day we do not venture to speak of Bengali art or Bengali architecture, Bengali sculpture, Bengali painting, Bengali music, or Bengali dance; and the educational institutions and universities of our province made no provision for study and research in these spheres of our national art, far less encourage the pursuit of their traditions;—for our educated classes believe that Bengal has no distinctive national art of her own. And so we find that our architects travel to Delhi, Agra and Jeypur for their inspiration in what they call Indian architecture; our budding sculptors go even further afield; our painters scramble for the flesh-pots of Moghul and Rajput traditions and burrow among the dark caves of Southern and Western India; our musicians lose themselves in admiration of the classic Ragas and Raginis developed in the courts and palaces of Western India and our young aspirants in the sphere of the art of Dance sit for their inspiration at the feet of the temple dancers of Malabar

and the Nautch girls of Delhi and Lucknow. Not that there is not much for us to know and learn from these important sources, but we have so far shown a complete forgetfulness of the historical fact that in many of these fields the art of Bengal has in the past furnished inspiration not only to other provinces of India but to other countries of the continent of Asia and a complete ignorance of the fact that all the time we have had in the rural areas of Bengal living art traditions of unique beauty and spiritual and rhythmic qualities practised by folk artists whose art constitutes a valuable national heritage of the people of Bengal but which is fast becoming extinct through non-recognition, apathy and neglect on the part of the so-called educated classes. It would be a great national misfortune for the Bengalee race and indeed for the whole of India, if the priceless traditions of these folk arts are allowed to disappear from the country instead of being carefully recorded, practised, treasured and perpetuated by the people of the educated classes of the Province.

NOT MERE SENTIMENTALISM

Lest these views be regarded as the mere sentimental ebullitions of an ever-sentimental Bengalee, let me quote the words of Cecil Sharp—an illustrious member of the English race—which is undoubtedly among the manliest and least sentimental races of the world.

Speaking of England and of the system of education in that country, this is what Cecil Sharp said only twenty-five years ago: "Our system of education," said he, "is at present too cosmopolitan; it is calculated to produce citizens of the world rather than Englishmen. And it is Englishmen, English citizens, that we want. How can this be remedied? By taking care,

I would suggest, that every child born of English parents is, in its earliest years, placed in possession of all those things which are the distinctive products of its race. The first and most important of these is the mother tongue. Its words, its grammatical constructions, its idioms, are all characteristic of the race which has evolved them, and whose ideas and thoughts they are thus peculiarly fitted to express. The English tongue differs from the French or German precisely as the Englishman differs from the Frenchman or the German. Irish patriots are fully alive to this, and, from their own point of view, are quite right in advocating the revival of the Irish language.

"Then there are the folk-tales, legends, and proverbs, which are peculiar to the English; the national sports, pastimes, and dances also. All these things belong of right to the children of our race, and it is as unwise, as it is unjust, to rob them of this their national inheritance.

"Finally, there are the folk songs, those simple ditties which have sprung like wild flowers from the very hearts of our countrymen, and which are as redolent of the English race as its language. If every English child be placed in possession of all these race-products, he will know and understand his country and his countrymen far better than he does at present; and knowing and understanding them he will love them the more, realise that he is united to them by the subtle bond of blood and of kinship, and become, in the highest sense of the word, a better citizen and a truer patriot.

"The discovery of the English folk-song, therefore, places in the hands of the patriot, as well as of the educationist, an instrument of great value. The introduction of folk-songs into our schools will not only affect the musical

life of England; it will tend also to arouse that love of country and pride of race, the absence of which we now deplore."

And every word of what Cecil Sharp said twenty-five years ago of England and the English people applies to-day with an equal if not a far greater force to us in Bengal and to our own folk art and our own folk songs and folk dances. Let every child born of Bengali parents be placed from its earliest years in possession of all those things which are the distinctive products of the Bengali race, and he will thereby know and understand his country and his countrymen far better than he does at present; and knowing and understanding them he will love them the more, realize that he is united to them by the subtle bond of blood and of kinship; and become in the highest sense of the word, a better citizen and a truer patriot.

The movement for the active revival and practice of old Bengali folk songs and of old Bengali folk dances which I

have had the honour of inaugurating 18 months ago places, therefore, in the hands of the Bengali patriot, as well as of the Bengali educationalist, an instrument of great national value. The introduction of folk songs and folk dances into our schools and universities will not only affect the musical life of Bengal; it will tend also to arouse that love of country and pride of race, the absence of which we now so much deplore. The same remarks apply, although to a somewhat lesser degree, to the indigenous art traditions of Bengal in the sphere of architecture, sculpture and painting.

And what I have said of Bengal applies with equal force to the various other races with a distinctive art-language of their own which form the component units of the great Indian nation and which have contributed the products of their own distinctive race genius to the common culture of India.*

*Lecture delivered before the Post-Graduate Department in Arts of the University of Calcutta on the 7th April, 1932.

AN IDEALIST VIEW OF LIFE*

BY DR. MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR, M.A., PH.D.

The book under review embodies the Hibbert Lectures for 1929. Sir S. Radhakrishnan is the second Indian who was invited to this position of honour and responsibility.

Radhakrishnan is well known as a facile writer on Philosophy, specially on Indian Philosophy. To the author of *Indian Philosophy* the honour was legitimately due, for Radhakrishnan has made the charming presentation of the living ideas and creative

ideals of Indian Philosophy and Culture. He is a versatile writer and shows competence and mastery in the Philosophy of the East and the West. His books are generally written with free and unfettered judgment.

The present book is an able defence of Idealist view of life. Though he does not appear to have followed any philosopher, still he has not broken

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away from the Idealistic tradition. The book is a solid defence of Idealism at a time when the thoughts in the philosophical world are in a bit chaotic condition. Philosophy recently has outgrown the logical and the intuitive method; and idealistic conclusions regarding life are challenged from every direction. Radhakrishnan has, therefore, felt the call to re-establish Idealism, and point out the inspiring guidance it can give with its wide cultural and humanistic possibilities. He is not anxious to prove himself a new Messiah with a new theory of the universe. He says, "These lectures have no such pretensions. They endeavour to restate the very essence of the great philosophic tradition of Idealism."

An Idealist view of life must face, in the present-day history of thought, challenge from the Behaviouristic Psychology, Realistic Metaphysics, Freudian Psychoanalysis, the psychological study of religion, and conflicts of religion. The objectivity of human society, its sacredness and its deep intuitions have got a rude shock in the present day from the war mentality that is evidently becoming clear every day. The world history has been a menace to the foundations of religion and spiritual life and to the faith and hope that inspire the formation of a *Civitas Dei* on earth. The rise of science, the principle of self-determination of the races are indeed great forces of modern life, but the ineffectiveness of religion has been instrumental to the withdrawal of the sobering influence of religion upon life. The new forces will be more destructive without the balming influence of religion.

When life loses its synoptic vision of reality and is off the Idealistic mooring, it has to be satisfied with short and partial theories of Naturalism, Agnosticism, Pragmatism, Humanism, Modern-

ism, the cult of superman and eternal feminine. These theories are the outcome of some tendencies laid in the soul, but they do not show an adequate appreciation of the natural profundity of the human soul.

The author points out the function of philosophy. It is to "provide us with a spiritual rallying centre, a synoptic vision, as Plato used to call it, a *Samanvaya* as the Hindu thinkers put it, a philosophy which will serve as a spiritual concordant, which will free the spirit of religion from the disintegration of doubt and make the warfare of creeds and sects a thing of the past."

The author then deals with the religious experience, intuition and intellect, and the spirit in man. These three chapters have almost the same kind of matter to deal with. In the chapter on religious experience the author has distinguished the nature of religious experience from all other forms of experience. Religious experience is unique—it is as Whitehead says, "what the individual does with his own solitariness." In this sense Kant and Hegel have not the right appreciation of religious consciousness, inasmuch as the one has laid emphasis upon the consciousness of moral values, the other upon the synthetic vision of the metaphysical view of the universe. Religion may presuppose it; but the heart of religion does not lie therein. Religious experience is the highest form of experience and the richest fruition of life. "It is the reaction of the whole man to the whole reality . . . Such functioning of the whole man may be called spiritual life, as distinct from a merely intellectual or moral or æsthetic activity or combination of them." Since in spiritual life the whole man gets its satisfaction, all tension of normal life disappears, giving rise to

inward peace, power and joy. The Greeks call it ataraxy, the Hindu, Santi, the positive feeling of joy, sincerity and confidence which attend the visitation from the living truth. Such experiences, according to the author, carry their own convictions, and for which no other proof is required. And when utterances proceed from realizations they have strange simplicity and authoritativeness. "These experiences are also ineffable. They transcend expressions while they provoke them." The author quotes numerous authorities to show the uniformity of realizations and the unanimity of expressions amongst the mystics about the ineffable experiences. The mystical experiences have a wide range from the most personal to the most impersonal. The Hindu thinkers are hospitable enough to accommodate them, since the Hindu can see the truth of both the philosophical idea of God as an all embracing spirit and the devotional idea of a personal God. This correspondence of the personal and the impersonal in man corresponding to the personal and the impersonal in the Absolute makes it possible for the Hindu mind to embrace and enjoy the personal feelings in devotional and practical mysticism as well as the impersonal delight of the philosophical or transcendent mysticism. The Hindu is anxious to react to Reality through all the aspects of his being. He apprehends it through all his faculties, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and spiritual—he apprehends it in silence. God is all-absorbent. His touch fills our being. He won't come when the soul has not its right choice. He won't allow the least deflection of the soul when He comes. "He is the soul's delight, the soul's food, the soul's all." This chapter exhibits the author's deep sympathy with all the religions of the world and

his absorbing interest in the dignity of spiritual life.

Next the author proceeds to examine the nature of intuition and its various kinds. He seems to think that there is no conflict between intellect and intuition. Intuition is the finest flowering of the intellect. "Though intuition lies beyond intellect, it is not contrary to it." Intuition is not alogical. It is supra-logical. The author narrates the views of Hegel, Bradley, Bosanquet, Croce and Bergson on the relation between the intellectual and intuitive knowledge and quotes at length Samkara and agrees with him in asserting "that there is no real but only a logical distinction between subject and object in the immediate awareness of self as real being."

In the next Chapter the author shows how all creative geniuses of the world—in all fields of life—have the inception of their work in intuition. Intuition is the starting point. In the sudden flushes the whole scheme stands revealed, which subsequently intellect develops. The initiative flushes are divine, the construction is human. He quotes Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Pascal, Kant, Croce and others in his support. But this divine faculty in man does not work in a uniform way. It moves the whole being of man but it does so in rarely fit souls. Intuitive impress is always relative to the receptivity of the soul, and this receptivity is not uniform in all parts of our being. This explains the different kinds of intuition—aesthetic, moral and artistic.

The author then examines the nature of the different kinds of values, and shows how in the soul of man they are organically united and connected. The author recounts the forces working in man and shows how in the best lives all the creative ideals and values have their places. But the central note in man is

spiritual. It absorbs all the forces, and transforms and unifies them as the dominant note in the rhythm of the soul. The author then examines the psychoanalytic theory that religion is the expression of the repressed forces and wishes in the unconscious. According to the author "it is right in so far it admits that religion is not due to conscious reasoning of the type with which we are familiar in science. The psychoanalysts are wrong in their assumption that what scientific reasoning deals with is reality and all else is a phantasm." He challenges—and most rightly—the assertion that the libido can be identified with the deeper nature of our being.

The author then passes on to the examination of some of the fundamentals of the Modern Philosophy—Matter, Life and Mind. He introduces Alexander, Whitehead, Jeans and Eddington and examines their systems and points out their incompatibility with the great tradition of Idealism.

The author then considers the nature of human personality and its destiny. He believes in human personality and criticises the Behaviourist and the Gestalt theories. Professor Watson reduces conscious behaviour to a derivative of reflex action. But the author rightly points out that "a conditioned reflex is not an intelligent adaptation." The Gestalt psychology affirms self to be a unity "more than a sum of its subordinate parts." "It is an active living whole, a body-mind, the latest term in the evolutionary process." The author then passes on to the consideration of the self as subject and favours the view of Plato that "mind in man is the offspring of the world-mind." Behind the empirical unity there is the transcendental self. This is Atman amongst the Hindus. The human soul enjoys in it an each-ness (uniqueness) and a universality (all-

ness). It can consciously join and work for the whole and embody in its life the purpose of the whole. In other words the human soul comes to feel the fellowship with a universal mind. His own consciousness carries with it the consciousness of a universality. The author then examines the doctrine of Karma and freedom and accepts the familiar doctrine that "freedom is not caprice nor is Karma necessity." Human motives are not uncaused, but self-caused. Self is free. "And will is the self on the active side."

The author next enters into the question of destiny of the human soul, and in this connection examines the problems of personal and conditional immortality, rebirth, salvation or Moksha. Salvation is not survival. Liberation is the deliverance from durational continuance. "It is not a life only fruitless or endless, but a new mode of being, a transfigured life, here and now." "When the Hindu thinkers ask us to attain release from rebirth they are asking us to transcend the standpoint of mere individualism and rise to an impersonal universalism."

Then he proceeds to consider liberation in the theistic sense. He describes it as the continuous, permanent, unclouded communion with God."

The author then advances the view of Samkara. He says: "Samkara is generally regarded as favouring the hypothesis of the *absorption* of the individual in the eternal Brahman." And he says: "We find a large number of passages in Samkara which indicate that while the soul attains at the very moment of release a universality of spirit yet it retains its individuality as a centre of action as long as the cosmic process continues." "The freed soul, so long as the cosmic process continues, participates in it and returns to embodied existence not for

its own sake but for the sake of the whole the freed souls touch the fringe but do not enter the cloud." The learned author then refutes the idea of progressive perfection—"the question of a perpetual travelling." "There must come a time when all individuals will become sons of God and be received into the glory of immortality."

The last chapter deals with Ultimate Reality. Here he examines Smuts' Holistic Evolution, Alexander's and Lloyd Morgan's Emergent Evolution and Whitehead's Ingressive Evolution. He traces the naturalistic taint in Holistic Evolution. Smuts is, according to the author, right in tracing the order of evolution as matter, life, mind and personality. Idealism does not deny evolution, and when Idealism affirms the primacy of mind, it is not the mind of this or that individual that is so posited, but the Supreme Mind. The description of the reality as a stream of Holistic tendency does not clear Smuts' position, for he does not clearly lay down its *distinctive nature*. He defines it as a force which makes for wholes in the cosmic process. It has a tendency to pass into naturalism.

If holistic evolution "accepts a synthetic, ordering, regulating activity in this universe," emergent evolution traces all the complexities of creation and life from the space-time stuff. The 'emergents' are the complexities at the higher level of existence. Material configurations, life, mind, emerge in the course of evolution from the primordial substance. Even God is a creation of time. Alexander finds a *nisus* or thirst of the universe for higher levels. This *nisus* is creative. But unless the *nisus* is accepted as the spiritual power, it is difficult to see how the primordial space-time and a blind driving force can account for the order ever in emergence. Lloyd Morgan, unlike Alexander, ex-

pressly holds this *nisus* as God—as the directive and regulative Activity. "God is not the emergent deity, but an Activity within which qualities emerge and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed." The author then explains Whitehead's Ingressive Evolution. Whitehead suggests an eternal order and a creative reality. But he is not definite about this ultimate creativity which is pure indetermination without a character of its own. And how this purely indeterminate reality becomes a determinate freedom is not clear in Whitehead. The professor adds: "unless the ultimate creativity is conceived in more satisfactory terms, on the lines of the absolute Mind which has ideal being and free creativity, it becomes a non-logical abstraction."

The professor then gives the conception of God and the Absolute. These are the closing chapters of his book—and they seem to be the best and the most eloquent. Here he seems to give something of his own philosophy and vision. He is a believer in God—and is opposed to naturalism and many modern "isms." He holds that God is prior to the world, but not in any temporal sense. He is the logical prius of the world. He believes in the immanent purposiveness of the world and with McTaggart holds that the deficiencies, moral and aesthetic, are "not too bad to be true or actual." But God is not only this. The moral and spiritual experiences reveal that God is not only the goal but the spring and the sustainer of the moral effort. God is the *primordial mind*, the loving redeemer, and the holy judge of the universe. But the order in the world is not to be supposed as pre-destined. God creates and shapes events every moment. He works as a creative genius. "Throughout the process there is an unrealised residuum in God, but

it vanishes when we reach the end." If predestination is true, the creation of novelties, the loving trust and surrender of man to God and the grace of God are illusions. "The theory of predestination is repudiated in favour of the love of God and the freedom of man."

If the idea of God as creator and redeemer meets the religious need, the idea of the Absolute gives us the sense of completeness, rest and fulfilment. "The Absolute," according to the author, "is pure consciousness and pure freedom and infinite possibility, it appears to be God from the point of view of the one specific possibility which has become actualised . . . The Absolute is the foundation and *prius* of all actuality and possibility. . . . The Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God, and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view."

The book under review is more a critique of the modern phases of thought than a resumé of the author's position and views. The author's own standpoint is to be gathered by the reader; the author's standpoint is synthetic. He seems not to deny any form of experience, for it is set in the whole. He protests against the partial views and theories and seems to think that the failure to appraise life from the standpoint of eternity is what constitutes the shortcoming in life. This synthetic attitude has enabled him to see life in its infinite possibilities as well as its definite actualities and their values.

This key-note is found in his synthesis of intellect and intuition. Intuition is not opposed to intellect. It is not non-intellectual, but rather supra-intellectual. It is the finest flowering of intellect. This again, has induced the author to see the value of the different forms of intuition—artistic, moral,

spiritual and aesthetic—in the setting of life. Led by this instinct he synthesises the God of Religion with the Absolute of Philosophy.

Professor Radhakrishnan seems to think that life has an indefinite possibility in its transcendence and definite actualities in its expression, where it is necessarily limited. God who is actuality is, therefore, limited by its ever creative, redemptive and judicious activities.

It is difficult to follow him wherein he lays emphasis upon the Absolute as the centre of infinite possibilities. "The Absolute is the infinite possibility and the pure freedom, and God is the one possibility 'actualised.'" It is very difficult to understand how in this Absolute the yearning soul has "the sense of rest and fulfilment, of eternity and completeness." It appears that there is a centrifugal tendency in the Absolute to realise its possibilities, and a centripetal tendency in finite being to overcome its limitation and to realise the rest in the Absolute. But in professor Radhakrishnan's philosophy the rest cannot be fully enjoyed and permanently stabilised, for the Absolute is on the point of self-expression, of making a possibility actual. The dance of life has a fall, a rest and quiet to rise again in periodical activity. The rest is then as it were a sleep and a forgetting of the actual and the concrete. The highest state surpasses the concrete actualities of life. But what it is is not made clear. He seems to avoid the extremes of theistic realisation and transcendent intuition. The former is a form of devotional experience in which the Absolute has no place. The latter is supposed to be empty. He is anxious therefore to retain *freedom* and *possibilities* in the Absolute—but his Absolute happens to be dynamism in a state of apparent equilibrium.

He seems to think that Moksha is a state in which our being is free from all discord and full of harmony—this harmony is the expression of the cosmic life. Moksha is a form of existence which can see and feel the cosmic harmony, which cuts the egoistic chords and allows us to enjoy the life of the whole and to live for the whole. “The freed soul enters this light, but does not touch the flame”—lest it is completely lost in the light. Moksha is then the loss of the ego-centric vision of life; it is the institution of the cosmo-centric insight.

But it should not be forgotten that the finite souls do not lose their individualities—they become centres of cosmic impulsion. This, no doubt, gives a freedom, but it does not give the rest and the quiet in the Absolute. Radhakrishnan's liberated soul is liberated from the finite impulse and finite life. It has a direct connection with the perpetual spring of life, and it occasionally falls in sleep in the Absolute. This is no complete freedom from life, though there is an aspiration towards its completeness. The stress which the professor lays upon the spiritual harmony, makes the ideal of silence in the Absolute almost a remote goal of life. The philosophical absolute so far as the life of spiritual realisation is concerned, remains a far-off goal, which may occasionally induce us to a *Sapor Pacis* in the Absolute, but which cannot be the actual and active spiritual ideal. The learned author seems to be struggling between the attractions of concrete spirituality and the dignity of transcendence. Hence he has not been able to sacrifice the one to the other. He sees life's activity and life's silence—and seems to enjoy the one and throw a distant glance

on the other. He does not seem to appreciate the installation in silence amidst the dance of life. He cannot, for he does not see the *timeless present* as transcending the continuous duration of life.

The fact is Radhakrishnan's Absolute does embrace as well as transcend life. It is not the Absolute which denies relativity. It may transcend relativity but does not deny it. Values of the concrete are to him real, just as the silence in transcendence. Hence the difficulty arises of a happy synthesis. The values of the creative ideals cannot compare to the value of silence. These are not states that can be set in one synthetic whole. The Absolute is unique. Its realisation is unique. Before this uniqueness, everything vanishes. Happily in the essence of our being at the point where it rises above time, it finds itself ever immediate. The relative life in time cannot be synthesised with the timeless Absolute. The one vanishes before the other, though it always appears to be supported in the other. This is the riddle of existence. The riddle is not solved by equal emphasis laid upon the Absolute and the relative but by concentrating upon the one in preference to the other. Herein lies the possibility of enjoying the freedom of transcendence. It is possible to be with life, yet still to be without it. This is the secret deep laid in our being. This gives freedom here and now.

Professor Radhakrishnan's Absolute is full of infinite possibilities, which are being made actual in time. It is difficult to reconcile this with the idea that the Absolute is beyond possibility and actuality. It is what it is. Possibilities and actualities are characteristics of growth, movement and life; they produce limitations in the Absolute.

MAHENDRA NATH GUPTA

BY SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA

(Concluded from the last issue)

The present writer visited him in 1908. He has seen him, since then, for the last 28 years off and on and has found him the ever-welling fountain of spiritual inspiration. What he has enjoyed in his company cannot be adequately described. In the sweet and warm months of April and May, sitting under the canopy of heaven on the roof-garden of 50, Amherst Street, surrounded by shrubs and plants, himself sitting in their midst like a Rishi of old, the stars and planets in their courses beckoning to us to things infinite and sublime, he would speak to us of the mystery of God and His Love and of the yearning that would rise in the human heart to solve the Eternal Riddle, as exemplified in the life of his Master. The mind melting under the influence of his soft sweet words of light would almost transcend the limits of finite existence and dare to peep into the Infinite. He himself would take in the influence of the setting and say, "What a blessed privilege it is to sit in such a setting (pointing to the starry heavens), in the company of devotees discoursing on God and his love." Those unforgettable scenes will long remain imprinted on the minds of his hearers.

The present writer had the advantage of close and intimate association with Mahendra Nath for the last 4 or 5 years of his life and he would gladly give this tribute to his memory, to lay as a wreath on his Samadhi. What he owes to him cannot be adequately repaid and he is one of the

Masters whom he has reverently loved and served.

Mahendra Nath visited the birth-place of Sri Ramakrishna nine or ten times. He urged us to visit the scenes of the Lord's boyhood and early youth, and when we showed a little lukewarmness, he whipped us with the words, "A sluggard in war and laggard in love will win the bride of Lochinvar? With such sluggish love can we hope to attain to love of God?" We carried out his wish later and visited the places, and he, with great interest, followed our pilgrimage and took minute and detailed accounts of our wanderings. After his Master's Ascension Mahendra Nath visited Benares, Vrindavan, Ayodhya and other places. At Benares he visited the famous Trilinga Swami, whom he fed with sweets, and also Swami Bhaskarananda with whom he had a long talk. At Ayodhya he visited the Raghunath Das Chowni and the Sadhus living there. In the year 1912, he went on a pilgrimage with the Holy Mother to Benares and spent eleven months in Benares, Hardwar, Kankhal, Hrishikesh, Vrindavan in the company of Sadhus. After some time the idea of seeing the places of the Lila of his Master so powerfully drew his mind that he abandoned the project of staying in those parts longer and returned to Calcutta.

We shall conclude by noticing a few outstanding traits of his personality. The writer noticed in him first a wonderful capacity of idealizing things, of sublimating things human into

divine. Everything, to his eyes, was coloured with tints of Divinity, nothing was small or commonplace to him. He had a wonderful capacity for extracting the soul of good from everything, covering it with a divine glow. This trait he got from his Master, who possessed it in an abundant degree. He related to us about his first visit to the birth-place of his Master at Kamarpukur, when the Master was living at Cossipore; how everything seemed to him appavelled in glory. The road, the temples, the way-side villages, the peasants, the neighbours, even the road-side dust all appeared interesting to him, and he saw them with a different eye. All places where his Master travelled and lived in his boyhood and afterwards, he visited, lovingly touched them and bowed before them. When he returned from his peregrinations and narrated them to his Master, he asked, "How could you go into such out-of-the-way places, infested by robbers?" And when he learned how M. had carefully visited the places and scenes of his childhood, he was almost in tears at the manifestation of his love and said to a person near by, "Look at his love! Nobody has told him and he out of his own accord with infinite care and love has gone over those places and scenes simply because *this person* (pointing to himself) has walked in those places. His love is like that of Vibushan, who, when he found a human form, at once dressed it in rich apparel and worshipped it by waving lights saying, 'This is the form of my beloved Ramachandra.'" Any one who saw how reverently he stood before Prasad (Sacramental food of any Deity) and took that in his hand and put on his head, how he would worship any memento of any holy person or holy place like Dakshineswar or Belur Math, keep that long before him and lovingly look at that day

after day, how, whenever any Word of God was being read, he would sit up reverently, leaving his slippers, would realize the infinite ocean of love and reverence that lay at the bottom of his heart and manifested themselves in these forms. If the idea of seeing Brahman in everything is the last word of Sadhana, then that ideal can be realized only by such reverential attitude; Brahman is seen in everything only through such loving eyes.

His great love for Sadhus and Bhaktas was phenomenal. He would idealize Sadhus and their life above all and could not bear to class them in the same category with householders. Sadhus—those who are trying to devote their whole time and energies to God—without giving their energies to anything else, he would consider the *beau ideal* of life. If the realization of God is the end of life, then that realization is possible only to those who give their all to God—who, leaving all other preoccupations, with single-minded devotion wait upon God for a spark of the Divine Fire which will set their hearts aflame with Divine Love. Householders, even if they are Bhaktas, have a thousand distractions, a hundred necessary set-backs, which put a limit to their allegiance to God. They cannot be compared with those who have set their whole mind and face towards Him,—that is what he would say. He would say again that all the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna tended towards Sannyas, even in His teachings to Grhasthas, he sowed the seeds which will ultimately sprout up in the form of Sannyas either in this life or another. According to him without Bahih-Sannyas Antah-Sannyas was not possible and without Antah-Sannyas realization of God was impossible. Thus he would idealize Sadhus—whole-time men, as he would call them—and set them apart in a

category by itself and would resent the least slight shown to them or their life and would always preach the glory of Sadhu-Sanga—the only practical means of spiritual realization. When a Sadhu would come, he would sit near him for hours, forgetting everything and say,—“A Sadhu has come, the Lord Himself has come in one form as it were, and shall I not postpone my eating and bath for him? Absurdity can go no further if I cannot do that.” He would love to feed the Sadhus and sit by them and watch and say, “I am offering food to Thakur, I am partaking in and seeing a Puja.” He would paint in brilliant colours the life of the Sadhu, his great ideal and mission of life, his great sacrifice for the highest end and would show infinite regret if any Sannyasin neglected his rare opportunity of realizing the *summum bonum* of life. Sadhus learnt from him the glory of their mission.

His deep unspoken humility was very touching. A great spiritual personality with a face beaming with the light of heaven, having made the acquaintance of and enjoyed intimacies with such great souls as Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and many others, he acted and behaved as if he was nothing, as if he was an insignificant person. His Master told him to live like a servant in this life, and he literally carried it out. He considered himself the servant of all. He would be infinitely pained, if any one advanced to render him any little service, and he would go forward enthusiastically to serve the least of us. So long as his body was not rendered incapable, he would perform all necessary works himself. Even during the period of suffering from nerve-spasms, which incapacitated him for a while, as soon as the spasms would

leave, he would be up and doing, be his old self again, as if nothing had happened. Although teaching and speaking for more than forty years of his life about God and religion to several generations of young men, he never assumed the role of a teacher. He taught indirectly, and his words would pierce the most adamant heart and work wonders. He never ordered any person to do or not to do anything while guiding persons who had come under his spiritual influence (some Bhaktas lived with him latterly). He never used compulsion or rebuke. *His was a commission of love* and yet his soft and sweet words would pierce the stoniest heart, make the worldly-minded weep and repent and turn Godwards. He would in his talks hammer and hammer the truths till they were engraven in the minds of the hearers and they were converted.

His great love for all, like that of a fond mother towards her son, was very striking and spontaneous. Yet he had wonderful control over his feelings. Bhaktas were to him the life of his life. He would say that Bhaktas made his life bearable, without them life would be a desert; that in the great darkness of the world, the devotees of God were the only shining lights. He would find infinite pleasure in their company. Whenever they would come, he would almost start up and say, “Come, do come,” as if he was very much graced with their coming. He would feed them, look after them, enter into all their family troubles and difficulties, sympathize with them and show them the way out. He would enquire into the details of their life and show his interest in all their affairs. He would also see how they would advance Godwards. Sometimes, if they would be absent for a long time, he would send messengers to enquire after them.

He would take interest in the affairs of the Bhaktas and try to order them in such a way as to conduce to their spiritual welfare. In this he did not show the least annoyance. The infinite love and care and solicitude which he showed, can only be explained as a spontaneous manifestation of the truth,—‘Bhagavat, Bhakta and Bhagavan are one.’

His temper was phenomenally calm and unruffled. Rarely did we find him use a harsh word. The calm placidity of his mind remained undisturbed even in most provoking circumstances. Even when suffering from the most excruciating pains in fits of attack of his nerve-spasm, he was as kind and loving to the Bhaktas as ever, and anxious for their service as ever. He attained to the perfect conquest of the flesh.

The abstemiousness and the extreme simplicity of his life struck his visitors forcibly. Although able to live more lavishly, he limited himself to the strictest frugality. In food and dress and external surroundings he was very simple. He would say that one of the great teachings of the Master was the simplification of life; otherwise the external incidents of life would increase, engross the mind and completely smother the spirit, leaving no time for thinking about God. Thus living in simple, almost tattered garments, on food simple to bareness, in surroundings the most commonplace, he lived the life of absorption in God, and was an example of high thinking and plain living. His food was the simplest—only rice and milk. This he continued for many years and did not ask for any variation. He was truly “devoid of Rasa.” He completely controlled the craving of the palate. Living this simple life and being merged in God, he was a blessing to innumerable souls and

a hope and stay to many a lost wanderer in this planet.

Three months before the finale, he came to humbler rooms in 13/2, Guruprasad Choudhury Lane, to pass his days in the midst of Bhaktas and Sadhus, personally attending to the worship of Sri Ramakrishna, conducted in this place for the last 40 years. Here he lived as before, but still more abstemiously,—cooking his own simple Havishya food, doing all his things with his own hand, and writing the fifth part of *Kathamrita* which he had taken in hand in January last. He looked more tired than before, but his nerve-spasms, though frequent, were not so acute now. His enthusiasm for Bhaktas and love for talking about God were unabated; they rather increased. His face wore a greater brightness. When he would dictate *Kathamrita*, Part V (now published) from his Diary, many would cluster round him to listen to his words. Sometimes he would get up at dead of night, say to any Bhakta to be found near by, “Let us listen to the words of the Master in the depth of night as he explains the truth of the Pranava,” and the dictation and writing of the book would proceed for more than an hour. This happened once also three or four days before the end. There were discourses every morning and evening. In the morning he would get up and sit in the shrine in deep meditation,—the eyes half-closed and the beautiful face beaming with heavenly light. Then he would sing some songs, the sweet refrain and tune of which still linger in and haunt our mind. Every evening he would come up, take his accustomed seat on the roof, listen to the even-song, and bow down to the Lord; sometimes he would talk to the assembled Bhaktas and sometimes listen to the hymns, sung by the Bhaktas after Aratrika. Some-

times he would request some particular hymns to be sung.

A few days before his passing away a Bhakta was singing some song, the tune of which he heard from his room below. This was a song of the devotees of Nuddea bewailing the departure of Sri Chaitanya previous to his Sannyas. M. called the singer to his room and had the song sung in his presence. But he fell into deep meditateness and asked the singer to retire. Alas, the song cruelly proved prophetic of the finale!

Some time ago, when one of the Bhaktas was meditating in front of the shrine, all at once he saw a vision: He saw M. in leisurely gait was mounting a very elevated position and from there trying to jump into the Infinite Vastness; at this he started up and catching him said, "Where are you going?" He narrated this to other Bhaktas; but all in fun made light of it, thinking that the end would not be so near.

The even tenor of his life went on till the fell night of June 3rd arrived. That day he was exceptionally bright and active. He visited his family house once in the morning and then returned and had a talk. He prepared and took his meal as usual and retired for a little while. He was found in the afternoon to be sweeping a room in the basement. Questioned by a devotee he said, "I am cleaning this place a little." Then he sat down and said, "I have a little spasm now." The devotee hoped it would not become serious. Then the devotee said, "It is a wonder that rats

go even into the midst of filth—rather unusual." Then he said in a little moody way, "No, they are showing us that everywhere is Brahman," and sat silent for a while.

Then in the evening he visited his family residence a second time and returning at the time of Aratrika bowed before the shrine and retired. That being the night of a special Kali Puja, the Bhaktas asked his permission to visit Dakshineswar and Gadadhar Ashram (a monastery in Calcutta) where the Puja was performed. He said, "Certainly you should go. Should you not visit the Puja!" He visited the shrine a second time before retiring. Then he sat looking over the proofs of *Kathamrita* Part V for an hour, when he had a violent attack of nerve-spasm. He called the Bhakta and had his bed made on the floor and lay down. Information was sent to his family members. They came, and called in a doctor who examined him and found his pulse good. The Bhakta wanted to inform other Bhaktas; but he would not let him go, saying, "No, do not trouble any one." The attack did not abate. Then in the Night of Kali, when everything was covered in dark mantle, and the Mother brooded over the Universe in silent and loving thought, the prayer broke forth from the lips of the Child in heart-felt tones, "Mother—Guru Deva—take me up in Thy Arms." The Mother took up the Child in Her arms and the curtain was rung down.

Shantih, Shantih, Shantih.

ASUTOSH AND HIS AMBITIONS FOR YOUNG BENGAL

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

CONTACTS WITH THE YOUNG

For a long time people have known Asutosh as having had an address in the University Buildings at College Square. But now that eight years have passed away from the date of his death it should be possible for our countrymen to obtain a new orientation in regard to his achievements and get used to crediting him with a permanent address in the "Creation Avenue" of Young Bengal.

Hundreds of young men used to have intimate contacts with Asutosh, and Asutosh used to feel quite at home in the midst of his young chums. It should be observed that not every young man who visited him approached him with a prayer for a job or other material favours. And even those who had this materialistic motive in black and white or at the back of their brains he used to treat as equals, as full-fledged "persons," from whom he would learn and derive fresh tips for subsequent programmes of work. It is likely very often to be ignored that it is in the midst of hearty *tete-a-tetes* with the rising young men that the personality of Asutosh grew up from point to point.

This is a remarkable characteristic and should appear to be rather exceptional if we remember that perhaps not more than two other leaders among the elder statesmen of Bengal can be singled out from the last generation as having possessed this spirit of youth and cultivated these joyful friendly relations with the youngsters. One was Surendra

Nath Banerji and the other was Chittaranjan Das. Surendra Nath, Chittaranjan and Asutosh constituted, during the two decades of the glorious Swadeshi period from 1905 to 1925, a spiritual trio of the first magnitude, in whom, notwithstanding the fundamental differences in the fields and methods of work, *l'elan de la vie* was derived from one common source, namely, constant and active intercourse with the never-halting, ever-expanding demands of the raw, the new, the inexperienced. All these three great men placed their talent and energy at the service of Young Bengal in its career of adventures into the unknown and conquest of new realms.

ASUTOSH THE STATESMAN

Asutosh was known chiefly and to a certain extent almost exclusively as a schoolman and a Universitarian. But he was first and foremost a nationalist and a patriot. Rather, it is the life's urges of Asutosh the nationalist and the patriot that found positive expression in the activities of Asutosh the schoolman and the Universitarian. He was not an educationist in the conventional and stereotyped sense of the term. His educational policy and programme were but planks in a larger scheme of constructive statesmanship.

To him the one problem worth energizing for as the maker of schools and colleges and as the reformer of higher learning was nothing short of elevating the culture of the Bengali people to the rank of a creative world-force, original,

assimilative and self-determined. The one ambition of his life as a schoolman and as a patriot was to see Young Bengal function as a power among the powers of the world, on terms of equality and in co-operation with the living spiritual, scientific, economic and social agencies in the two hemispheres. And in this ambition Asutosh has had but one colleague among the great men of contemporary Bengal. This is none other than Rabindranath, who, however, be it said *en passant*, hardly ever came into official or close social intercourse with the great academician in any of his perambulations.

ASUTOSH'S MODERNISM

The reference to Rabindranath brings into the boldest relief a signal feature of Asutosh's personality. Of all the leading men of Bengal since the days of Rammohan, Asutosh is perhaps the only publicist of the front rank who never crossed the seas and never saw with his own eyes the structure and rhythm of the modern world. And yet of all the social reformers, politicians, culturists and educators nobody was more convinced than Asutosh as to the necessity of modernizing the life and institutions of the Indian people.

About a quarter of a century ago, in the year 1907, the writer of these lines enjoyed the privilege, although yet within his teens, to enter into warm discussions with Asutosh on several occasions. The themes were "national education," "swaraj," country's welfare and the entire socio-economic complex. On one occasion the following sarcastic remarks fell from his lips: "*Eksho dersho bachhar age amader thakurdadara ki korto janish? Tara du pata pharshi porto ar kharam paye diye berato! Eito chhilo shekale amader daur!*" (Do you know how our fathers

and grand-fathers used to live a century or a century and a half ago! They used to read a page or two of Persian and moved about with wooden sandals on! This was the limit of our life's interests and experiences in those days.)

Asutosh was not the man to be bamboozled by idealistic and roseate pictures of ancient Hindu or medieval Hindu-Moslem civilizations. His brain was that of a realist, like that of Vidya-sagara, for instance, who in spite of his special interest in old Sanskritic culture, was not prepared to ignore its limitations as a discipline for the modern mind. And while the trend of the discussion referred to above was neither anti-ancient nor anti-medieval,—while indeed the conversations turned on topics of scientific researches into and sympathetic approaches to India's past history,—Asutosh's whole spirit was fired by the enthusiasm of enriching the people of Bengal with modern institutions, and what is more, with modern outlook in learning as well as in life.

The simple Bengali "Ashu Babu of Bhawanipur," as known in those days, keen as he was on modernism, was necessarily a serious student of world-forces. And so, as soon as opportunities presented themselves, Asutosh knew how to utilize for Young Bengal the resources of Eur-America and Japan as available at Harvard, London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and Tokio. The foundations of the Bengali culture of tomorrow he sought to lay broad and deep in the international discoveries and inventions of to-day. The emissaries of Asutosh, scientific as well as literary, were in evidence in every nook and corner of the academie world, so to say, and he did not neglect to invite the men of science and learning from here and there and everywhere to the banks of the Ganges.

EQUALITY WITH FOREIGNERS

The ambition of Asutosh went further. It was not enough that the world-forces were being brought into contact with the creative spirits of Young India, and that the exchange of cultures was being established in a direct manner. He wanted to see all this intercourse established on a basis of equality. It is the insistence on equality in scientific and social dealings with the foreigners, both at home and abroad, that was an ingredient in his very life-blood and really furnished the spiritual foundations of his being.

A bit of another conversation of those early Swadeshi days will illustrate the mental and moral make-up of Asutosh. In one of his fighting moods he declared, as usual, again, in Bengali, in part as follows: "It is your nationalist leaders, the *Swadeshiwallas* of to-day, who dare not appear in public in the streets of Simla and Darjeeling or even in Calcutta with their *dhoti* and slippers on in the fear lest they be observed by their foreign acquaintances. But I, the son of a Brahman, have never in my life felt ashamed to expose my *paita* (sacred thread) to the gaze of these foreigners. Cowards at heart as these leaders are, how can they command respect from foreigners or emancipate the mind of Young Bengal and inculcate in young men the spirit of independence and equality in regard to the ruling forces of to-day?" These words contain a very bitter truth and exhibit the spirit which years later pervaded his epoch-making plan and measures in connection with the organization of higher education at Calcutta.

It was a part of his ambition to see the intellectuals of Young Bengal spurn the attitude of *kowto* and carry their heads high before the intellectuals of Europe, America and Japan. He

wanted to exorcise the inferiority-complex out of Young Bengal's mentality by a continuous series of first-class achievements in every sphere.

This was his ambition. But he was fully conscious of the intellectual and moral shortcomings of his countrymen. He knew that Indian youths and adults used to look upon foreign intellectuals as geniuses, as demi-gods, as *avatars*, or what not, and behave with them as juniors to superiors and masters, of whom one ought only to beg for certificates and letters of recommendation. It was too well known to him, besides, that Indian intellectuals generally considered their chief or exclusive function to be that of summarizing the publications of foreign book-makers. It did not take him long to realize that his ambition was yet too premature for the common run of Bengali and other Indian academicians, who, constituted as they were in brain stuff, were incompetent to emancipate themselves from their spiritual imbecility and hence incapable of asserting their claims to equality of treatment in the world's republic of sciences and arts. The same cowardice that he discovered among his peers in regard to *dhoti*, he found also in the more or less universal attitude of his countrymen in regard to their own intellectual worth. The measure of Asutosh's greatness is the height of his ambition or rather the depth of the country's degeneracy and diffidence.

Asutosh did not live long enough to take more than the preliminary first step towards the fulfilment of his dream. His ambition in this direction was indeed shared by a few of his contemporaries like Rashbehari Ghosh, Taraknath Palit and some other founders and benefactors of the National Council of Education. But, on the whole, the sentiment was not more than vaguely felt and indistinctly realized by these contem-

poraries. The next step in the realization of Asutosh's dream of Bengal's equality with the great powers of Eur-America and Japan, in so far at any rate as a large number of individual achievements is concerned, can become a reality of every day only when the country is prepared to organize regular post-M.A. and post-M.Sc. studies and investigations on an extensive scale and in a systematic manner. The admirers of Asutosh and lovers of Young Bengal will have to ponder over this question for quite a while.

BENGALI MEDIUM

Another serious shortcoming of his countrymen of which Asutosh was painfully conscious was the disrespect, nay, contempt with which our mother-tongue was treated in the institutions of higher learning and centres of social importance. This was another item in the inferiority-complex prevalent among his colleagues, high and low. It was therefore but a part of the measures calculated to strengthen the backbone of the Bengali people and compel the international recognition of Bengali culture as a modern world-force when he fervently espoused the cause of the Bengali language like that of the Bengali *dhoti* or of the Bengali intellectual. To set the ball rolling, the mother-tongue of the Bengali people was elevated by him

to the dignity of a subject of highest instruction in Bengali.

The revolution was thereby only initiated. But in order that man-to-man relations of mutual respect might be established between the scholars and scientists of Bengal and those of other countries the Bengali language would have to be made the medium of highest instruction, research and publication in every science and every art in all the urban and rural nuclei of culture. That end of the revolution remains yet to be consummated. It is this aspect of Asutosh's ambitions for Young Bengal, however, which should appeal to every Bengali in a powerful manner, because it is on the consummation of this revolution that the heightening of our intellectual efficiency, the economy of time and energy in matters educational, and last but not least, the expansion of democracy in Bengali life and thought would in a large measure depend.

In his noble ambitions for Young Bengal Asutosh was marked by the loftiest idealism combined with the boldest will such as have characterized the nation-making enthusiasm and efforts of all great men of action from Epaminondas to Mussolini. In the annals of the twentieth century he is destined to have a conspicuous place as a tremendous dynamic force, as an embodiment of revolutionary energism and as a mighty marker of modern mankind.

MEMORIES OF INDIA AND INDIANS

BY SISTER DEVAMATA

(*Latu Maharaj*)

Christ said: "He who is greatest among you, let him be your servant." By this measure of values, Latu Maharaj was among the greatest of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples, for he was a living embodiment of the spirit of service. He was always the servant. He began life as the servant of man; contact with Sri Ramakrishna made him the servant of God, and after the Master's passing he became the servant of the servants of the Lord. Even his plain, thick-set body seemed built for carrying loads and lifting burdens. He never tried to cast aside his humble duties or change his *Dharma*. When in later years he began to expound the Bhagavad-Gita and talk informally to the young men who daily gathered round him for spiritual instruction, I feel sure he did it less as a teacher than as a servant of men. Some of his more scholarly brothers smiled lovingly and indulgently at this sudden departure from his usual habit of life, but one of them said to me later that after listening to him unperceived, he smiled no more, for he was deeply impressed by his wisdom and his simple manner of setting it forth. In reality, Latu Maharaj was teaching from the time he joined Sri Ramakrishna; for more than one of the immediate disciples told me they had learned to serve by seeing him care for the Master.

It was as a servant, not as a disciple, that he came to Sri Ramakrishna. He was employed in the family of a rich householder, who was a devout follower of Sri Ramakrishna. The gentleman

was in the habit of sending frequent gifts to Sri Ramakrishna, and Latu was the one chosen to carry them. Sri Ramakrishna saw, through the boy's rough exterior, the glowing fervour of his soul. He noticed also with what devotion he brought his master's offerings and how reluctant he was to turn homeward again; so one day he said to the gentleman: "You are always asking to do something for me, why do you not give this boy Latu to serve me?" The gentleman went home delighted and sent the boy as he might have sent a Chuddar or a fine-spun Dhoti. Latu took up his new service with overflowing heart. The joy of it lifted and lifted his thought until all unaware he passed from consciousness to super-consciousness and attained Samadhi. It was scarcely a month after his coming to the Temple that this happened.

Master and disciple were on terms of the greatest familiarity. Sometimes Latu would scold his master as he might scold a little child, because he had not taken sufficient food; or he would squat beside him like an anxious mother and coax him to eat a little more and still a little more. He guarded him when he was in Samadhi and watched over him when he slept. He was disciple, mother, guardian, and watcher, but above all he chose to be the servant. After he took Sannyas and became known as Swami Adbhutananda, even then he held fast to his desire to count as the least among the disciples.

My first meeting with Latu Maharaj was at Calcutta in Balaram Babu's house. I had gone to see Swami

Premananda, who had come from Belur Math and was stopping there temporarily. Swami Premananda told me Latu Maharaj had been asking for me. I rose and walked down the long front room where we were sitting, meaning to send word to him that I was in the house. At the door I met a strange Swami. I felt intuitively that it was Latu Maharaj and bent forward to touch his feet. He raised his hand in protest and stepped back. Then he stooped to touch my feet. I raised my hand and stepped back. A stranger might have taken it for a mystic dance. After several unsuccessful attempts we gave it up and never tried again. It was wholly unfitting that he should touch my feet, and his habit of always taking the lowlier place made him unwilling that I should touch his. My first words to him were: "I am so happy to meet you Swamiji, because I know that Sri Ramakrishna had a special love for you." "My Master loved all equally," was his brusque reply. I was a little discouraged. I seemed to be making so many blunders. He must have noticed my discomfiture, for suddenly he grew most cordial and affectionate in his manner toward me.

From that moment we were warm friends. He had not lost the habit of carrying gifts and every few days he would stop at the Girls' School in Bosepara Lane and leave an orange or a green cocoanut or some other little gift for me. Once, I remember, he brought me a miniature Bengali Gita. He knew I could not read it, but he thought I would like to have it as a curiosity. On these visits I never saw him. I only slept and ate at the School. The day was spent with Holy Mother in the upper rooms of the Udbodhan Office in Mukerji Lane. But whenever I went to Balaram Babu's house we spent a short time together—

he was living there. We never had a long conversation. He would express pleasure at some little thing I had brought him, ask me how I was doing, I would ask him how he was doing; then he would speak for a moment of Sri Ramakrishna or Holy Mother, and the visit would be over.

In English, at least, Latu Maharaj was a person of few words. He was also a person of few needs. His room bore witness to it. It lay immediately to the right of the house-entrance; the door was nearly always open; and as one passed, one could see the large empty space with a small thin mat on the floor, at the far end a low table for a bed; on one side a few half-dead embers in an open hearth, and on them a pot of tea. I suspect that that pot of tea represented the whole of Latu Maharaj's concession to the body.

Those who battle for the high places can learn a salient lesson from this humble disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who brought honour to the lowliest place. He found delight in servitude and to him came the vision, to him came the close daily association with a mighty Master. He shone with the glory of his humble task and he glorified it. St. Francis of Assisi spoke often of himself and his friars as "servants of God," and he charged his followers again and again to go about their labour in all humility and gaiety of mind. "What are the servants of the Lord," he said, "but His minstrels, who should lift up the hearts of men and move them to joy of the spirit?"

Latu Maharaj may not have had a voice for minstrelsy, but his whole life was a glad song of service; and when he met death, it was with a smile on his face and a song in his soul. That song of humble labour is now muted, but I believe it sounds on in vaster worlds and he is still minstrel and servant of God.

NAYAR WOMEN OF KERALA

BY CAPTAIN A. R. PODUVAL, B.A., C.M., M.D. (Hamburg), L.R.C.P.,
M.R.C.S. (London)

From the frequent references by foreigners, to the very inferior position that the women of India hold in society, one would be tempted to think that there is some deliberate purpose behind such statements. It is not my object to disclose what those purposes are. To the Indian, it is obvious that the wide sweep of such remarks carries its own falsity with it. The standards by which we judge superiority or inferiority or equality in the case of women may be entirely different from those of the West. Thus in Europe and America, the conception of equality of women may be a metamorphosis of behaviour, in which a woman thinks, acts, and generally conducts herself like a man. The Occidental would have us believe that the division of the sexes was an original freak of Nature, which we have by our vastly increasing intelligence overcome to a considerable extent, and that anatomical and biological characteristics do not necessarily underlie functional peculiarities.

In stating this, I am perfectly conscious of the nature of a custom that still prevails in many parts of India—the Purdah among certain Hindus and Mahomedans in Hindustan, and the Namburi Brahmins of Kerala. But I believe that the resistance to liberation from this custom, when the women once take it into their heads to do so would be nothing when compared with the episodes of the Suffragette movement in the West. There are, however, women of several races in India, who have always been free; freer than the Suffragette, for the purposes of life. It

is a freedom possessing all the advantages of opportunities, with a modest, natural reticence, for blatant demonstrations. It is a condition which does not tend to run into extravagance for its novelty, like a puppy in chains, set at liberty. For, the world is not quite agreed to think that liberty for women means license to do all that men have been hitherto doing. Perhaps there is no harm in educating oneself up to the position of a professorial spinster, an aeronautical acrobat, a Justice of the Peace, a member of Parliament, or even a channel swimmer, when women are concerned. If this is the freedom, the equality or the absence of inferiority emphasized upon, all that I can say is, that India has a very old civilization, with a social polity that has passed through several experiences, and which has been tempered by age and a sustaining philosophy of life. The civilization of Europe is not six centuries old.

One of those provinces in India where women have been entirely free, from the time of any historical record, is Kerala. I have already stated that the Namburi Brahmins are an exception. Among a large number of the Christian population, the degree of freedom among women would appear somewhat limited, but there is no rule to restrict any of their movements. But the type of womanhood that sits exalted in her own realm, like a queen, is the Nayar lady of Kerala. She has never known what it is to be an inferior sex, any more than she can conceive of Eve in the Garden of Eden as inferior to Adam. But there is a certain demure

simplicity about her which instinctively disfavours the idea of getting desexed in a scramble for the fruits of the world with men. At least it used to be so till very lately, when they too have partly begun to get infected with the exciting thrills of the emancipation movement from the West. In such cases, we have invariably found that they have been obsessed by false conceptions, believing wrongly, of course, that what applies to the women of the West applies to them also.

However, when women in Kerala wanted to take University degrees; to get employed in the services; to become doctors, and School Inspectresses, and members of legislative councils, the process went on without creating so much as a ripple on the surface of the social current. Nobody ever questioned their right to do so, or their powers to achieve their aims. There was no necessity in their case to stand in knots in the public streets, with arms up their sleeves, ready to break open post-boxes and shop windows. No policemen formed a cordon around them. It was as if the course of the current was very insidiously altered, without producing any rush or overriding of banks.

I believe, most sensible Nayar women even to-day have no misconceptions about the pride or power of office as in any way comparable to their queenly dignity at home. We might expect in the course of a few years a few upstarts in society, who have stumbled into some position on the accident of an academic career, to become renegades to the domestic spirit; especially if they have not known the refined chastening influences of a decent home. But those who have felt their power in the domestic circle, the sovereignty in their homes, acquired through generations, will not commit the folly of thinking that serving in an office is in

any way a substitute for reigning in their houses.

For the Nayar gentleman at home is, at best, a dignified non-entity. Not that he can be swayed about and imposed upon by the lady of the house; but he soon enough understands that he has to reserve his uncouth roughness for use outside the home. The Nayar women of Kerala are a privileged class, who legally, morally and traditionally have the sole right of the family property. There is no partiality for a son which a daughter cannot equally share. So that we in Kerala do not raise a cry of lamentation, if we have no male issues in the line. A daughter is as good to us as a son, and sometimes immensely better, for she would have the means and the will to look after us, when we are broken down physically or materially. A scapegrace of a son in a family can at best demand to be fed in the house, and clothed perhaps, if the other parties are agreeable; but a woman has a privilege, and will have to be taken proper care of, by the family. This power of woman in Nayar families of average respectability explains the scarcity of drunken husbands among them. I do not mean to say that all Nayar husbands are teetotallers; but drunken demonstrations, and violent toperish behaviour with the poker, the walking-stick, the kitchen stool, and the dhobi's iron, are exceedingly uncommon among them. If a man comes reeling from his club, or place of entertainment, a good wife will hold a warning finger at him for the first offence. But if it is repeated, she could shut the door against his entering, and leave him out in the cold or the rain, to learn reason and good behaviour, and society will always take the side of the wife. It is assumed that the home is the sacred domain of the woman, in

which men are allowed a sanctuary on a decent understanding.

One might say, without much exaggeration, that the Nayar home of Kerala is permeated with the woman's atmosphere. But it should not be understood that men in such families are always henpecked, and under the thumbs of the women. It is traditionally accepted that women with their practical instinct for the actualities of life are better equipped to conduct the several details of home management. They say that man at best is a clumsy animal, and a bachelor's den is the best example of a house under the management of a man.

Among Nayar girls, early marriages are unknown. Although to a large extent the selection of the would-be husband is a matter of parental concern, the would-be wife is always consulted about her likes and dislikes in the matter. It is seldom that accidental love-making launches one or the other of the couple into precipitate unions—to marry in a hurry and repent at leisure. Divorces are exceptionally rare in Kerala; for it is a free union, in which both the husband and the

wife have sufficient freedom to exercise their personality. And this would probably account for the rarity of divorces; for though there is no social ban against it, man is so made that he takes particular care of that which he is most likely to lose.

It is, however, sad to reflect on the insidious change that is coming over the 'Educated Generation,' with their extravagant notions of the importance of woman in public services and in other capacities. I believe, the world has got on very well without such an unnecessary substitution of duties and functions; and it has not suffered to any appreciable extent, because women did not shoulder the responsibilities of men. Although we are all agreed, that women must be given every facility to develop themselves into complete women, we are not quite agreed that the completeness consists in that kind of emancipation which allows them the license to rub their flesh against men's flesh in the markets of the world. Freedom for women is an expression that covers a multitude of sins, but how many virtues it can unfold, is a question that we can hardly decide at present.

ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

CHAPTER XX

LIBERATION-IN-LIFE

जनक उवाच ।

क भूतानि क देहो वा कन्द्रियाणि क वा मनः ।

क शून्यं क च नैराशं मत्स्वरूपे निरञ्जने ॥ १ ॥

जनकः Janaka उवाच said :

निरञ्जने Taintless मत्स्वरूपे in myself भूतानि elements क where देहः body क where वा or कन्द्रियाणि organs क where मनः mind क where वा or शून्यं void क where नैराशं despair क where च and ?

Janaka said :

1. Where are the elements,¹ the body, the organs, the mind, the void, or despair in my taintless² Being?

[The disciple is now describing in this chapter the state of a free soul which follows, even while in life, from repose in Self.

¹ *Elements*—the five primary elements underlying the cosmic evolution are *Akāsha* (ether), *Vāyu* (air), *Agni* (fire), *Ap* (water) and *Prithivi* (earth).

² *Taintless etc.*—the Absolute which is free from all determinants.]

क शास्त्रं कात्मविज्ञानं क वा निर्विषयं मनः ।

क तृप्तिः क वितृष्णत्वं गतद्वन्द्वस्य मे सदा ॥ २ ॥

सदा Ever गतद्वन्द्वस्य devoid of contrarities मे for me शास्त्रं scripture क where कात्मविज्ञानं self-knowledge क where निर्विषयं not reflecting objects मनः mind क where वा or तृप्तिः contentment क where वितृष्णत्वं desirelessness क where ?

2. What is scripture, what is self-knowledge, what is mind not reflecting objects, what is contentment, or what is desirelessness, to me who am ever devoid of contrarities?

क विद्या क च अविद्या काहं केदं मम क वा ।

क बन्धः क च वा मोक्षः स्वरूपस्य क रूपिता ॥ ३ ॥

विद्या Knowledge क where अविद्या ignorance च (expletive) क where वा or अहं 'I' क where इदं 'this' क where मम 'mine' क where वा or बन्धः bondage क where मोक्षः liberation च (expletive) क where वा or स्वरूपस्य of the essence of Self रूपिता definableness क where ?

3. What is knowledge or what is ignorance, what is 'I', what is 'this' or what is 'mine', what is bondage or what is liberation, what is definableness, to the Self?

क प्रारब्धानि कर्माणि जीवन्मुक्तिरपि क वा ।

क तद्विदेहकैवल्यं निर्विशेषस्य सवदा ॥ ४ ॥

सवदा Ever निर्विशेषस्य of the Undifferentiated प्रारब्धानि 'commenced' कर्माणि actions क where जीवन्मुक्तिः liberation-in-life अपि even क where वा or तत् that विदेहकैवल्यं liberation-at-death क where ?

4. What¹ are *Prârabdha* ('commenced') *Karmas*, what² is even liberation-in-life, or what is that liberation-at-death, to the ever Undifferentiated?

[¹ *What etc.*—The fruits of the 'commenced' (*Prârabdha*) actions may be enjoyed only by being born, and are therefore quite inapplicable to the Self which ever is and is never born.

² *What etc.*—*Jivanmukti*, liberation-in-life, is the usual Vedantic ideal and the *summum bonum*. It is attained when ignorance vanishes. In this state the adept realises his identity of being—the undifferentiated existence.

The author refutes here the conception of *Jivanmukti*;—for to him liberation-in-life is a contradiction and is as much a creation of ignorance as bondage. He denies life itself as well as liberation altogether. Liberation also presupposes bondage; but the Self is ever existent, ever unborn, ever free; It has never been born, never been in bond-

age. The idea of even liberation is consequently a serious limitation to the seeker of wisdom, as it screens from him the true nature of the Self.

The same truth applies to liberation-at-death, in which state the Self is permanently dissociated from the body. But the idea of such an emancipation also presupposes the truth of body and that of bondage, and therefore goes direct against the true nature of the Self as described above.]

क कर्ता क च वा भोक्ता निष्क्रियं स्फुरणं क वा ।

कापरोक्षं फलं वा क निःस्वभावस्य मे सदा ॥ ५ ॥

सदा Ever निःस्वभावस्य impersonal मे for me कर्ता doer क where भोक्ता enjoyer च (expletive) क where वा or निष्क्रियं motionless स्फुरणं expression क where वा or कापरोक्षं psychic intuition क where फलं immediate perception क where वा or ?

5. What is doer or enjoyer, what is motionless¹ expression, what² is psychic intuition or immediate perception, to me, the ever Impersonal?

[¹ Motionless etc.—This is a fine state of the psychic being,—a state of complete equilibrium in *Mâyâ*. This is a state of knowledge in which there is depolarisation of the subject and the object but which is still not transcendent knowledge.

² What etc.—Both psychic intuition and immediate perception are called *Vrittijnâna* in Vedanta Philosophy. The former is abstract and the latter is concrete. The former is a kind of psychic state that immediately starts after the instruction on *Tattvamasi*. This psychic state destroys all other kinds of psychism from the mind and establishes the psychic continuity of *Aham Brahmâsmi*, which destroys the primal ignorance and is then itself destroyed. The latter is a kind of concrete transformation of the mind in the form of the presented object. In this external perception the mind goes out and takes the form of the object. The consciousness underlying the object becomes identified with the consciousness underlying the mind, and the object is revealed.

Perception in either of the above forms is not to be identified with transcendent intuition, though in each case it is direct. They have reference to an object or to the negation of objects ; but Truth transcends both of them.]

क लोकः क मुमुक्षुर्वा क योगी ज्ञानवान् क वा ।

क बद्धः क च वा मुक्तः स्वस्वरूपेऽहमद्वये ॥ ६ ॥

अहमद्वये स्वस्वरूपे For me who am undivided Essence लोकः world क where मुमुक्षुः aspirant for liberation क where वा or योगी the contemplative man क where ज्ञानवान् man of Knowledge क where वा or बद्धः the soul in bondage क where मुक्तः the liberated soul च (expletive) क where वा or ?

6. What is the world or what is the aspirant for liberation, what is the contemplative man or what is the man of Knowledge, what is the soul in bondage or what is the liberated soul, to me who am undivided Essence.

क सृष्टिः क च संहारः क साध्यं क च साधनम् ।

क साधकः क सिद्धिर्वा स्वस्वरूपेऽहमद्वये ॥ ७ ॥

अहमद्वये स्वस्वरूपे For me who am undivided Essence सृष्टिः projection क where संहारः retraction क where च and साध्यं end क where साधनं means क where च and साधकः seeker क where सिद्धिः success क where वा or ?

7. What are projection and retraction, what are end and means, what are seeker and success, to me abiding in my own non-dual self?

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Kali-worship is a lecture of Sister Nivedita delivered at the Kali-temple of Kalighat, Calcutta, on the 25th May, 1899. The outer appearance of the Goddess Kali has scared away many people and deprived them of an opportunity to receive Her blessings. Will the present article remove misconception regarding Her at least from some minds? In the next issue will be published the continuation of this lecture, in which Sister Nivedita will answer some objections to Kali-worship. . . . The writer of *Folk Art and Its Relation to National Culture* has become almost a household word in Bengal for his great labour towards the uplift of women in the country. Mr. Dutt has further widened the sphere of his activity. He has been recently busy trying to revive the Folk Art and Folk Dance of Bengal. And whichever work he undertakes, he throws his whole heart and soul into that. We hope his services to the cause of rural arts of Bengal will be as valuable as that done in England by Cecil Sharp—a name, to which Mr. Dutt warmly refers in his article. . . . Last year Dr. Sarkar wrote the review of *The Religion of Man*—the Hibbert Lectures of Rabindranath Tagore. *Asutosh and His Ambitions for Young Bengal* is only an indication as to what should be one's ambition for India. . . . In her short article Sister Devamata gives a very vivid pen-picture of Swami Adbhuta-

nanda, familiarly known as Lata Maharaj,—who was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and was a source of great spiritual inspiration to not a few persons. . . . Swami Vivekananda was all praise for the women of Malabar. Dr. Poduval gives here a glimpse of their culture and enlightenment. The learned Doctor has experience of the societies of both the East and the West, and as such he can well compare the condition of women in the two places. Dr. Poduval is a new-comer to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. We hope to publish more of his writings in future.

CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO DEMANDS

While the country is suffering so much and undergoing the throes of a rebirth, should a scholar remain cloistered in his room buried in his books and enjoying a sort of intellectual luxury?—this is a question that may be asked by one engaged in active life and this may also disturb the peace of mind of the scholar himself.

Mr. Walter Lippmann, a great critic of American life discussed this problem at length in an address given some time back at the Columbia University. According to him, the scholar who raises much hope while living a life of isolation, will, in all probability, disappoint all, including himself, when he actually engages himself in public activity. For, public work requires the

experience of a man of affairs, and not the scholarship of the learned. A scholar judges things by some standardised ideal, whereas in actual life human nature is found to be so much varied and volatile. But, then, has not the scholar's life any earthly utility? Mr. Lippmann answers :

"The true scholar is always radical. He is preoccupied with presumptions, with antecedents and probabilities, he moves at a level of reality under that of the immediate moment, in a world where the choices are more numerous and the possibilities more varied than they are at the level of practical decisions. At the level of affairs the choices are narrow, because prejudice has become set. At the level of thought, in the empire of reason, the choices are wide, because there is no compulsion of events or of self-interest. The immediate has never been the realm of the scholar. His provinces are the past, from which he distills understanding, and the future, for which he prepares insight. The immediate is for his purpose a mere fragment of the past, to be observed and remembered rather than to be dealt with and managed.

"This view of the scholar's life will seem to many a mere elegy to a fugitive and cloistered virtue. Yet I doubt whether the student can do a greater work for his nation in this grave moment of history than to detach himself from its preoccupations, refusing to let himself be absorbed by distractions about which, as a scholar, he can do almost nothing. For this is not the last crisis of human affairs. The world will go on somehow, and more crises will follow. It will go on best, however, if among us there are men who have stood apart, who refused to be anxious or too much concerned, who were cool and inquiring, and had their eyes on a longer past and a longer future. By

their example they can remind us that the passing moment is only a moment; by their loyalty they will have cherished those things which only the disinterested mind can use."

What is true of a scholar, is true, to some extent, of a recluse. The ascetic who withdraws himself from the worldly life to concentrate all his energies on the realization of the Self, becomes very often the butt of attack as not serving the interest of the nation or of humanity. This view proceeds from the misunderstanding as to the meaning of action. It is a mistake to suppose that the play of simply the muscular energy is action and that that is the only way of serving a nation or humanity. The man who finds out the Ultimate Reality in the depth of his meditation serves no less the cause of mankind. And from that standpoint should be judged the life of also those who *sincerely* strive for the above ideal, though they have not as yet been successful. And many will think it useless to throw themselves into the whirlpool of action unless the goal and the end of all actions is determined : "before living he will like to know how to live."

Is there not a chance that one who lives on this idea will spend his whole life in preparation and the benefit of his service will be lost to the world? Well, those also serve, who stand and wait; and the world will be saved from the disservice of some because they refused to add to the babel of the world by plunging into action without knowing the why and wherefore of things.

STUDENTS IN JAPAN

It is not in India alone that the problem of the educated unemployed has become very keen. We understand from *Present-day Japan* (1981) that the problem is as serious in Japan.

About 10 years back, every Japanese student, coming out of the college, could expect to get a decent position in life. Now things have changed.

"At present more than sixty per cent. of the youthful men and women annually graduated from the various colleges and special schools, who number some 85,000, cannot get positions however hard they try." Even brightful and promising students fare no better. That means that an investment of some 10,000 Yen has been practically lost.

This has naturally turned the thought of the students to make deeper study of the social science as a preliminary step to remove social iniquities. And as many of them turn to Marxism and Leninism, the Ministry of Education is taking steps to keep them safe. One of the devices adopted to keep students away from undesirable influences is to encourage sports and keep the students engaged. "But sports are not always pursued only with their primitive objects, the training of bodies and the fostering of sportsmanship, but with the secondary object of keeping students from treading into dangerous ways, by fatiguing them and leaving them no time to care for other things."

Western games such as baseball, rugby, football, etc., have found their ways amongst the Japanese students also, whose imagination has been captured by them as is the case in India. And in Japan also these sports are practically monopolized by a few athletes and the rest are simply spectators; and as such the main utility of sports, namely the physical development, is lost.

The student life of the present Japan is greatly disturbed by frequent strikes for their legitimate or fancied grievances against the teachers and the authorities. The writer regrets that

"Whatever the cause of the strikes, they are maintained like the ordinary strike labourers. Doubtless, the strike tactics are learned from labourers."

Japan is an independent country and noted for the patriotism of its people. But unfortunately many of the ills of the student life in Japan can be traced to the Western influences and to the imitation of the darker aspect of the life in the West. Our young men may take a good lesson from their brethren in Japan.

DANGER OF IMITATION

While in Persia, Poet Rabindranath Tagore gave a sound note of warning to modern Persians who want to copy America in culture. He asked them to read Spengler's book on European civilization which raises searching questions about the destiny of the modern civilization. He pointed out how America herself is faced to-day with impending crises. "We in the East," said he, "must ponder seriously before we go in for hasty imitation of Western life in its totality. There is a profound maladjustment somewhere at the very basis of European life. Everywhere there is material well-being, but happiness has vanished." The Eastern nations have really before them a dangerous problem, on the careful solution of which depends the future of the modern civilization.

THE SIGN OF THE TIMES

The world is now a more united whole with all its nations than what it was several centuries ago. The present times have, as it were, brought the world closer, so far as co-operation and interdependence of nations is concerned. Men there are, who now try to look upon the interests of nations as those

of the world itself. This angle of vision has been widened due to the necessity of the times. Mr. Nicholas. Murray Butler, the Nobel Peace Prize Winner for 1931, observes that "the fundamental fact of our times is that we are living in a new kind of world, a world of independent, if you please, but also of interdependent nations, no one of which can long prosper or gain influence without the co-operation and concurrence of its fellow-nations. Until men generally get this fundamental fact in their heads they will have no understanding of our times and can make no possible or practical contribution towards the solution of the really appalling problems which confront us on every land." This deep-seated remark gives us a clue to the real happiness of the humanity at large. The world can progress further and nations can be more friendly, if the intellectual, economic, political and religious affairs of countries are directed with the above fundamental fact in view. Without sacrificing the peculiar interests of a nation, men at the helm of affairs can, if they please, do some substantial good towards the well-being of the fellow-nations.

THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY LEADS

The system of imparting education through the medium of a foreign tongue, that is in vogue in India, Lord Ronaldshay calls a unique experiment without any parallel to it in any part of the world. Yet that is the method that has been followed since the introduction of English education in the country. It is a happy news that the Calcutta University has decided to

change this pernicious system as far as Secondary Education is concerned and henceforth all subjects except English are to be taught through the medium of the vernacular. As was expected, this new decision has been universally welcomed with great enthusiasm. No doubt this will remove a great burden from the shoulder of the young boys of Bengal and conduce not only to their intellectual but also physical well-being. For, innumerable are the boys who yearly sacrifice their health to the University because they have to undergo Herculean labour to learn a subject through a foreign tongue. After the new system has worked for some time, people will wonder why it had not been introduced so long.

Though the new decision has been arrived at years after the death of Sir Asutosh, the main credit of it will go to him, for it was he who first found "the place for his mother-tongue in step-mother's hall."

We hope vernacular as a medium of instruction will be gradually introduced in imparting Higher Education also and the lead of the Calcutta University will be followed by other Indian Universities.

"VANISHING INDIA"

In June last, an exhibition of about 180 paintings took place at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington. The paintings were drawn, showing typical scenes of Indian life—from Maharajas down to the lowest strata of the society. It was Mr. Hubert Stowitts who made all the paintings. He was astonished at the rapid Europeanization of India during this century. So, he gave to the exhibition the name of "Vanishing India."

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE BODHISATTVA DOCTRINE IN BUDDHIST SANSKRIT LITERATURE. By Har Dayal, M.A., Ph.D. Published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London. 392 pp. Price 18s.

This book is essentially a book of research. The author seems to have closely studied his subject from all available sources, for he says nothing which is not supported by accurate authorities. He has frequently—almost in every page—cited authorities and freely quoted from them. This has made the volume a weighty book of reference but has at the same time taken away much of its freshness. The volume is a compendium of information. It is a Buddhist digest.

The book, as the title indicates, develops the Bodhisattva ideal. The Bodhisattva ideal holds up before us the unfoldment of life as conceived by the Mahayana Buddhism. The great attraction of Mahayana system lies in the promise it holds up before humanity—the possibility of attainment of the Bodhisattva stage by all and the freedom from the chords of spiritual individualism and separateness and of being actuated by the nobler instinct of helping humanity to reach this stage of life.

The Bodhisattva ideal inherent in every soul has been the inspiring message of Mahayana Buddhism and the author has helped the understanding of this ideal by his volume. He has begun with a clear definition of the Bodhisattva ideal and has traced the history and orientation of the ideal. He has given the full meaning and implication of the truth of the ideal and has narrated very definitely the steps through which the ideal is actualised in life. He has indicated how the ideal of enlightenment which first attracts and influences, gradually realises itself through a rigorous discipline of will, purification of thought and habits of concentration. The author has given a detailed analysis of the Dhyanas preliminary to enlightenment. He then advances an explanation of the *Pāramitas* and the *Bhumis*—the perfections and the stages, or more properly the spiritual perfections and aspects of life which reveal themselves to the adept and also narrates the conflicts and the struggles that inevitably try the strength of the

longing for enlightenment. The most appealing chapter is the chapter of the *Pāramitas* and specially that portion of it which discusses the *Pragnā Pāramita*. Nirvana has been the most promising as well as the most perplexing ideal in Buddhism. No two teachers agree as to its true import and significance. The author has quoted almost all the authorities on the subject, but he has not ventured any opinion himself. *Prajñā-Pāramita* is the finest flowering of the life's tree of wisdom and the final fruition which is reared up by ethical and meditative perfections. The author has given detailed analysis of the *Pāramita*, and his discussion of the *Pāramita* has been very interesting inasmuch as it exhibits the contradictory conceptions to it. The conception of Nirvana has been positive, negative, and neither-positive-nor-negative. The author has also in this connection explained at length the doctrines of dependent origination (*Pratitya-Samutpāda*) and shows how the Bodhisattva understands the truth of dependent origination and becomes free from all delusion. The author has indulged in a long discussion regarding the meaning of *Sunyatā*, and has freely quoted diverse authorities. But we think that no new light has been thrown upon it. It is not the author's fault. The fact is that understanding in logical terms of what is from the nature of the case non-logical or aconceptual will always defeat itself. Life's complete flowering and fruition transcend the bonds of conceptual thinking and there always remains some inexplicability of the Ultimate Truth.

The author has given a description of the *Bhumis*—stages, psychical perfections and realisations revealed in the way to Nirvana; these stages put forth the finer phases of the psychic being that reveal themselves to the aspirant soul. They are the invariable consequence of a purified and chastened being. The psychical perfections and powers are consequent on the fineness and the subtlety of the psychical being. The author has given complete descriptions of the *Bhumis*.

The book is a mine of information. The author has refrained from giving any conclusion upon the fundamental problems discussed therein. The book is written from

the standpoint of life and its ideal, but the living touch of life is absent from it.

THE RURAL COMMUNITY AND THE SCHOOL. The Message of Negro and other American Schools for India. By G. S. Krishnayya, M.A., Ph.D. *Association Press, 5, Russell Street, Calcutta. XXIV+161 pp. Price cloth Rs. 2/- ; paper Re. 1-¼ as.*

There is great need in India for an adequate Educational Philosophy, that will shape the schools of to-morrow. What is wanted is an analysis of the needs and ideals of the community and the formation of methods by which the school may directly serve those ends by training the future citizens on right lines.

We welcome Dr. Krishnayya's book which is very suggestive and thought-provoking and recommend it to all lovers of education. Here are recorded the results of a thorough study of three typical institutions developed in America to meet conditions similar to those prevailing in most of the villages in India. The study is followed by an illuminating discussion of the ways and means of applying these lessons to our own country.

It is recognized that there is no better or cheaper agency possible than the village school for leavening the nation as a whole, since nearly 90 per cent of the people live away from cities. As such the importance of the problems discussed herein will be fully understood and appreciated.

The account of the Penn School is the study of "how rough men and women of the fields, ignorant of the ordinary practices of society were led first from their distress and ignorance and later from their pathetic yearning for Latin and Geometry and taught to identify education with home-making and diversified cultivation." The motto of "Berry Schools" is "Be a lifter, not a learner" and the education imparted therein is true to this ideal. The most interesting part of the book is that which deals with "Extension Work" among the Negroes, initiated by the late Booker T. Washington and copied afterwards by the U. S. A. Department of Agriculture. The 'Movable School' carrying a gramophone, a lightning plant, a moving picture outfit, a stock of farm implements and home conveniences travelling all through the year and visiting all parts of the State, especially regions difficult of access by railway, has achieved

wonders among the Negroes and has "changed a crying race to a trying race." As has been rightly observed, it gets down where people can understand, touches bottom and lifts.

To indicate how much needs to be done in our own country before the Rural School can become a vital agency for rural service and improvement, the author points out the main defects of present-day Indian village education. These are "inadequate schooling facilities, unsuitable buildings, casual attendance, the short duration of school life, maladjustment to rural conditions, inefficient instruction, an irrelevant and literary curriculum, indifference to the cultivation of desirable attitudes and customs, a lukeworm and under-paid staff, poorly equipped and badly trained teachers and the failure to emphasize community leadership in the preparation and work of the teachers."

A perusal of the book brimming with ideas will not fail to give an intelligent guidance in the solution of the problems before the Indian Educator.

A NEW MODEL OF THE UNIVERSE (PRINCIPLES OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD IN ITS APPLICATION TO PROBLEMS OF SCIENCE, RELIGION AND ART). By P. D. Ouspensky. *Published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd. 68-74, Carter Lane, E. C. London. 554 pp. Price 25s.*

The book provides a very interesting reading and gives a clear insight into the working of the human mind in various climes, both in ancient and modern times. The author pursues the psychological method of study, which he defines as "nothing other than the revelation of all values from the point of view of their own psychological meaning and independently of the outer and accompanying facts on the basis of which they are generally judged."

The book is very ambitious in its scope which ranges from the old symbolism of the Tarot to the modern theory of relativity. But on account of this very extensiveness, the thoughts presented in certain places seem to lack the necessary precision and profundity, which detracts from its otherwise high merits.

For example, the author says: "Ramakrishna was both a Yogi and a monk at the same time but more a monk than a Yogi. His followers so far as can be judged by information to be found in literature, have gone partly in a religious and partly in a

philosophical direction, although they call it Yoga." We cannot make out what he means by the phrase, "more a monk than a Yogi." Does he imply that Yoga is something different from religion and philosophy?

Again with regard to the problem of sex he says many things which will hardly find general acceptance.

SANSKRIT

THE ISAVASYA UPANISHAD WITH SRI SANKARA'S COMMENTARY. Edited by Y. Subrahmanya Sarma. *The Adhyatma Prakash Press Book Depot, Chamarajpet, Bangalore City.* 48 pp. Price 6 as. or 9d.

This neatly printed edition contains Sankara's commentary with short notes supplied by the Editor to help a beginner in the study of the original in an appreciative way, 'unencumbered by commentaries and sub-commentaries.' It gives also references to parallel passages in the other works of Sankara, a Summary of the Upanishad and two Indices—one, of the lines in the text, the other, of the important words in the commentary. Indeed this is one of the nicest editions of the Isopanishad we have come across, and would like to request the Editor to bring out other Upanishads also in this plan.

BENGALI

Advaita Siddhi, Vol. II. Translated by Pandit Yogendranath Tarka-Samkhya-Vedantatirtha of Sanskrit College, Calcutta, and edited by Pandit Rajendranath Ghose. *Published by Kshetrapal Ghose, 6, Parsi Bagan Lane, Calcutta.* 804 pp. Price Rs. 10 (with Vol. I.).

As in the first volume, the author has given his own commentary to the famous work of Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati in the present edition of Vol. II. He has given a literal translation of the original in chaste Bengali and added a lucid explanation thereof. The learned Pandit has brought out this edition with equal mastery over the abstruse points of the Advaita Philosophy. The way in which he has tackled the issues under discussion is highly admirable and convincing. In this volume also is appended the text of *Nyâyâmrita* of Vyâsatirtha. It has also been translated in Bengali by the author. The volume is enriched by a learned introduction by Pandit Rajendranath Ghose who has so ably refuted some of the popular ideas that stand in the way of studying the Vedas and the Vedanta Philosophy. A student of the Advaita Philosophy will undoubtedly be highly profited by this introduction and the masterly handling of the subject-matter by the erudite author.

NEWS AND REPORTS

A COVETABLE DEATH

A letter from the Advaita Ashrama, Benares, dated 19th August, says:

Yesterday at 5-15 p.m., Swami Sridharananda of the Advaita Ashrama passed away in a wonderful way. The manner of his death so much astonished us that we cannot sufficiently express our feelings, and hence also I cannot resist the temptation of giving you the details.

Since the night of the 14th Swami Sridharananda had been ailing. As it gradually took a serious turn, he was removed to the indoor hospital of the Sevashrama. From the night of the 15th his condition became alarming. Sometime he betrayed anxiety

for his life, i.e., showed as if he was afraid to meet death. But soon this attitude passed away. On the 17th afternoon in presence of many he said, addressing H., "Brother, now is the time of a great test in life." On the 18th at about 10 in the morning he said to R. and many others: "The body will drop off at 5 p.m." We altogether dismissed such ideas, thinking them to be the imagination of his mind. For though we gave up all hope of his recovery, we did not think that the end would be so near. When it was about three, his hands and feet began to be cold. The news was whispered round in both the Ashramas and all began to gather round his bed. It was found that he was repeating the name of God and alternately trying to

raise himself up and then again resting on the bed. This restless attitude continued from the very beginning. But now, when rising, he at times took almost to the meditation posture. He then uttered the word 'Gurudev' and asked for the picture of Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda). That was given to him. He looked at it steadfastly and touched his head with it. His hands and forehead were cold, but his head was perspiring. We thought that the death might occur at about 9 or later. Then he asked for the picture of Sri Ramakrishna, and with that touched his head. From now till the end, he continually uttered the name of God—at intervals touching the head with that picture with his own hands—and asked others to do the same. He showed signs of great annoyance, if anybody talked of anything else. One of us asked him, "Do you feel much pain?" "What pain!" he replied with firmness. It was about 4-45. But even then nobody thought that all would be over in about a quarter or half an hour. Now he made an effort to sit up which an attendant resisted. At this he made a piteous appeal to allow him to sit. He was helped to do so. Two or three minutes later he again laid himself on the bed. A few moments after 5, without giving others to understand it, with a sudden jerk he rose, holding the hand of one near by, and was in a meditation posture. Even now nobody imagined that he was going to die presently. In another two minutes he felt difficulty in breathing. The room was packed up with a crowd of people. Two attendants supported him from behind, but they felt, to their great surprise, that he was not resting on them. At times his body reclined, but again he sat erect. Seeing this condition, none thought it advisable to put him in a lying posture. Gradually his eyes became steadfast on the brows. Twice or thrice there was the moving of his lips and muscles on the face, and to our great astonishment we found that his hands folded themselves together, touched the forehead and then were at rest at the breast as in a posture of prayer. Just at that moment, the two attendants supporting him,

felt that the weight of his body fell on them: It was all over.

As we were seeing this sight the verse of the Gita constantly came to our mind:

He who meditates on Him thus, at the time of death, full of devotion, with the mind unmoving, and also by the power of Yoga, fixing the whole Prana betwixt the eyebrows, he goes to that Supreme, Resplendent Purusha.

Swami Sridharananda joined the Order at a good old age—when he was past fifty. For some time he worked at the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Vrindavan. For the last fifteen years or so he was at the Advaita Ashrama, Benares, living a quiet life of meditation, radiating peace and sweetness around. His steadfastness to the daily duties was remarkable and an outstanding trait of his character was his great Guru-Bhakti, which made him dauntless under all circumstances.

THE RAMAKRISHNA SEVASHRAMA, SHYAMALATAL, DEORI, ALMORA

The Sevashrama has served the poor patients in the midst of deep Himalayan jungles for the last seventeen years. Its annual report for 1931 gives a brief account of the work done there. The total number of patients treated during the year was 1715, of whom 1701 were outdoor patients and 14, indoor ones. The patients came from Kumaon, Garhwal, Nepal and various other distant places.

Owing to the prevailing economic depression, the Sevashrama has suffered a good deal from a remarkable fall in subscriptions during the year under review. This has greatly hampered its work and depleted its limited stock of medicines which have to be replenished immediately. This may cost Rs. 250 at least. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Virajananda, the Secretary, Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Shyamalatal, P.O. Deori, Via Champawat, Dt. Almora, U. P.