

# Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. XXXVII

AUGUST, 1932

No. 8



“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]

DATE NOT NOTED.

Swami Turiyananda was talking with Swami Shantinath, a disciple of Sadhu Gambhirnath. In course of the conversation, Swami Turiyananda remarked, “During the Mahomedan rule, the Mahomedans were forcibly converting the Hindus to Islam and Guru Nanak also was converting the Mahomedans to his faith—making them Hindus. The Mahomedans brought this to the notice of the Emperor and complained that if such state of affairs were allowed to continue, the Mahomedan population would gradually decrease. The Emperor consulted the Kazi (judicial administrator) and sent for Nanak. But Nanak instead of coming sent the reply, ‘Tell the Emperor that if he has got any business with me, let him come to me.’ On hearing this the Emperor flew into a rage and gave an order that Nanak should be brought to his presence

bound hand and foot. At this the Kazi told the Emperor, ‘If you do this, a great danger will follow. For, Nanak has got the strength of a large following. Rather do one thing. Just invite him to see our prayer.’ The Emperor did that, and Nanak also came to see the prayer at the Mosque in response to the invitation. When everybody had finished, the Kazi began his prayer. But during the time of his prayer, Nanak began to laugh loudly at intervals. When the prayer of the Kazi was finished, the Emperor himself began his. And during his prayer also, Nanak began to have loud laughs. This impudence on the part of Nanak greatly enraged the Emperor. Everybody asked Nanak, ‘Why did you laugh, while the Kazi was praying?’ Nanak replied, ‘Because the Kazi was not praying; he was only protecting his calf.’ All wondered what it could

mean. Nanak said, 'You rather ask the Kazi about it.' The Kazi was greatly taken aback at seeing that Nanak could read his thoughts and confessed, 'Yes, he is right. In my house, there is a well. It has no fence round it. So during the time of the prayer, frequently it came to my mind, whether my pet calf did not fall into the well.' All said at this, 'But, then, what was the cause of your loud laughter during the prayer of the Emperor?' Nanak replied, 'The Emperor was not at all saying his prayer, he was only purchasing a horse.' The Emperor said that it was exactly the case: He had seen a nice horse in the market, which he liked most. So during the prayer his thoughts were constantly about the horse. Thereupon the Emperor and the Kazi thought that they had indeed done wrong; it was not right for them to hatch a plot to turn into a Mahomedan a man like Nanak, who knew the innermost thoughts of one's mind. So the Emperor released Nanak."

Swami Turiyananda remarked, "Similar is the case with us. Do we get any meditation? Our thoughts only wander about external things. But then one has to practise. अस्मासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते —But through practice and renunciation, O son of Kunti, it may be governed. Those, on the contrary, who do not practise, will have it at no time. असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः—Yoga is hard to be attained by one of uncontrolled self. Even men of dull intellect can attain knowledge, if they daily practise a little. Swami Vivekananda would say, 'Mind should be made such that it becomes like a ball of flour; wherever you throw it, it is there—it sticks to that place. With such mind only one can have real meditation. Daily practice will steady the mind. You have indeed seen that

with the help of a rope, water is drawn from the well; through constant friction the rope wears off even the hard stone of the well.

"How many are there who seek religion for its own sake?—None. Everybody wants to serve some selfish purpose; as if to achieve some material gain is the end of religion. And God also can understand one's mind to reward in the same way. Ninety-nine per cent of people seek religion for some material gain. Their number is very few, who seek religion for religion's sake. Swami Vivekananda's was an exceptional case. When he complained to Sri Ramakrishna that he had no progress in spirituality, the latter replied, 'What do you say? I knew you to be like a *bona fide* farmer.' There may be many failures of crops—there may be a thousand droughts—but a *bona fide* farmer will not give up farming. There is another kind of farmers—too much business-minded. They take to farming for some immediate gain. And once the harvest fails, or there is a drought, they give up farming. Hriday told Sri Ramakrishna, 'Uncle, how simple must you be not to know your own interest! Just ask and get something from the Mother?' Sri Ramakrishna was simple as a child. So he went to the temple and prayed to the Mother, 'Give me something, dear Mother.' The Mother showed him through a vision that 'powers' are as loathsome as filth. On this Sri Ramakrishna returned from the temple and greatly rebuked Hriday: 'Thou wretch, giving me such advice?' He who persists in his devotional practices, is rewarded by God in the long run. At Bagbazar, Calcutta, there was a Baul. At first he was an employee in the Postal Department. Through the influence of good association, his mind changed, when he threw away his job and everything and



took to singing the name of God from door to door. He would not ask for anything. He would manage with whatever people would give him of their own accord. Wherever crowds would throng for any reason, this Baul would go there and sing to the people the name of God. At last, a rich man became his

devotee, who began to spend about Rs. 200/300 for him per month. On this the Baul gave up the practice of receiving anything from house to house. Hearing this story, Sri Ramakrishna remarked, 'Once he had hard religious practices. It is a happy news that he will not have to suffer in his old age.' "

## SURFEITED !

BY THE EDITOR

### I

Some friends are earnestly requesting us not to talk too much about religion, as religion, according to them, has been the bane of the country and stood so much in the way of national advancement. They say that a tremendous amount of superstitions that handicap life and social freedom owe their origin to religion and religion has made us averse to taking any determined interest in the earthly things. As a result, while the whole world is progressing, India stands standstill or at best is progressing at a snail's pace. Fortunately, there seems to have come a stir of life in the country and it is meet that religion should not come forward to retard all progress, if not to stop that altogether. What great harm has religion done to the country can be seen from a comparison between the condition of the Hindu society and that of other societies in the country itself. The Hindu society is falling to pieces, the strength of its members is gradually dwindling, while the caste-Hindus in the name of religion are tyrannizing their less fortunate brethren and sometimes treating them as worse than beasts. In

India we talk of religion and spirituality, and sneer at the West as materialistic, but how powerful have the Western nations grown? They are at least enjoying the world, they are lord-ing it over the earth, water and air, they show a great vigour of life, whereas we in India are pining in misery; thinking of the life to come, we are wasting the life on earth. We have had enough of religion. Now it is high time that we should turn our attention to more important things; giving up the Laputan habit of flying in the air, we should fix our gaze on things nearer at hand, on things of earthly interest and see how to live well. These are some of the arguments put forward by those who suffer from the idea of surfeit of religion.

Too much of anything is bad, is a trite saying. But there are some things of which we cannot have too much. There are some words which do not admit of degrees—comparative or superlative, according to the rules of grammar, and there are some things of which our need cannot be fully satisfied, to judge from the very nature of things. We cannot have too much of goodness, unless we use the word in an ironical sense. The need for endeavour to make

one's life better and better will be hardly satisfied. The better a man grows, the more he will be sensitive as to the points of defects in him, and the greater will be his earnestness to remove them. Failings and weaknesses which ordinary men do not even consider worth taking notice of, torment the minds of one who is making a deliberate and determined effort to build his life on a good moral basis, from the very consciousness of their existence in him. Even in the life of saints and sages, who have inaugurated new religious movements in the world and have become the beacon light to millions of people, we find instances when they suffered from excruciating pains, because they found in them this or that defect. Human life itself means imperfections, and we cannot be too much careful to improve ourselves more and more. We can hardly say, "Thus far and no further." So we cannot have too much of religion. If we think deeply and consider thoughtfully, we can hardly say that we have reached our religious goal, we have attained such a great height that no further progress is possible. Of course, much depends on the interpretation we give to the word religion.

It is argued that all rising nations of the present world, all those people who have set themselves to reorganize their countries in the light of the experiences of ages have quietly pushed aside religion, and why should India still remain clutching at religion? Communist Russia has banished religion from national life and church dignitaries have been clipped of all their powers and positions; in Turkey Khilafat does no longer hold sway over the life of the people; even in China, our immediate neighbour, national awakening is marked by a revolt against religion. Wherever national consciousness has awakened, people have

thrown overboard religion. This was the case with many modern political upheavals, this has been the case with the latest revolution—though bloodless—the world has witnessed, we mean the revolution in Spain, where as soon as the monarchy was overthrown, many churches also were destroyed.

## II

Religion stands in different footings in India and in the West. In Western countries, almost invariably religion has allied itself with the tyranny of the kings. In Russia, the main cause of popular grievances against Christianity was that the Church authorities proved faithless to the people and served as the accomplices of the Czars in their acts of tyranny. Similar has been the case in Spain. Spain is eminently a Catholic country. In the year 1851, a concordant was entered into between the Holy See and Spain by which the Church became bound to support the monarchy and the monarchy the Church. This naturally led to the ecclesiastics having a great power and relying on their influence on the ruling kings, some of the prelates took active part in politics, sometimes going against the popular interest. Naturally with the overthrow of the monarchy, the Church also has fallen in evil days and become the target of popular attack.

In India, the case is otherwise. In this country the main charge against religion is that it preaches other-worldliness and has made the people inert, incapable of action and, as such, unfit for the struggle for existence. As regards the social tyranny, anybody knows that social customs and religion are quite different things; for social evils, therefore, religion cannot be held responsible. This is easily indicated by the fact that whereas Hinduism is one,



in the Hindu society in different parts of India different social usages and customs prevail and people suffer from different degrees of social iniquities in different provinces. So the question of social evils should be kept apart from that of the drawbacks of religion.

Much of the accusations against religion arises from the misconception and misunderstanding of the meaning of religion. Religion in its essence means the search for the Ultimate Reality and the end of religion is to realize the Unity behind all diversities. Water is set at rest when it finds its own level. All fever of life is stopped when one sees the inherent Unity of all diversities. "When he sees the separate existence of all beings inherent in the One, and their expansion from That (One) alone, he then becomes Brahman." The outward manifestation of the knowledge of the ultimate Truth will be that one will have universal love. When a man has realized the Truth, he sees the same Self everywhere and so he can hurt none, injure none; his love for others becomes of the same degree as his love for himself; he loses, as it were his identity in the Universal like water losing its existence in ocean. So it is said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no commandment greater than that." For it is the direct method of having the universal love. Rites and rituals, various worships and ceremonials are but the indirect means to reach the Ultimate Reality. Opinions may differ according to individual temperament as to the utility and purpose of different ceremonials, and many rituals may turn into mere dead forms, but there will be no two opinions on this, that the search for the Ultimate Reality constitutes the highest aim of human life and to have the universal love is the greatest virtue. There is no *other-worldliness* or *this-worldliness* in this matter. If people

forgetting this essence of religion become busy about externals, they should be taught the right thing by those who are fit to teach, and not that religion should be altogether done away with.

### III

Now, what should be the place of 'materialism' in this human search for the ultimate Truth? Has India ever given up all interest in material affairs because she has all along extolled the spiritual quest as being higher than the state of remaining steeped in selfish, earthly interest? When the life-current of India was strong and vigorous, India was great in all fields of activity, spiritual or material. India showed the ideal how the son of a king could throw off the royal possessions as cast-off garments for the attainment of Truth and India also indicated how an Incarnation could lead an army to battlefield when needs were for that. Anyone who has studied Indian history a bit deeply will testify to the fact that spiritual progress and material advancement have gone side by side in India. When religion has been at low ebb, national life in other fields also has been stagnant. In the present state of downfall, there is found decadence in every sphere of activity. And when India will rise in future, there will be again all-round development, one can almost foretell.

Very often critics say that India decries materialism. But it is not all true. Not that India decries materialism and wants to do away with that, but she wants to keep it within proper limits. Materialism cannot be an end in itself, it is only a means to an end. When this is forgotten, balance in social life is lost and there ensues a great chaos. Good health and a strong physique are absolutely necessary as a basis for the pursuit of the goal in life. But the man



who makes his body all in all and prides himself on the development of his body only neglecting all other factors, becomes a poor specimen of humanity. India wants material prosperity; for there can be no growth of true religion when the nation is not in a healthy state. Religion does not mean the wail and cry of starving millions, but it calls forth the highest effort a man is capable of. The man who has not a virility strong enough to think of earthly things, cannot be expected to contemplate upon the nature of God. The Upanishad has emphatically said that the Self cannot be realized by the weak. So side by side with reaching the highest flights of religion and philosophy, India, in the past, gave attention also as to how to keep the national life strong and vigorous. India did not preach the highest truth of religion to all—she recognized अधिकारवाद, the value of particular spiritual prescription for particular individuals according to their respective temperament, strength and capacity. And India aimed also at a social system, a form of government which could make the greatest number of people fit for the attainment of the highest in religion. But when decadence came, there was chaos everywhere. Unworthy persons aimed all at once after the highest and brought disgrace to themselves as also to religion; society became rigid and government became weak.

Nowadays to rise again India should, no doubt, begin work at the very basis, i.e., should try to develop the material prosperity of the country. For nowadays we have reached the starvation-point as far as the material needs of the body are concerned and are at the lowest level in almost all other spheres of life. But in order to attain material prosperity if we crush and destroy religion altogether, what will all other things of life avail? We may have riches and

wealth, we may have comforts and luxuries, but ततः किम्, ततः किम्,—what will it profit, what will it profit? Of course different degrees of emphasis should be given on different things according to changing times and circumstances. And one great problem of the day is how to save the starving millions of India from the immediate jaws of hunger, how to spread the light of education far and wide in order to remove the colossal ignorance of the masses. But religion also should not be altogether neglected. For otherwise when the posterity will demand its spiritual heritage, it will find that those who were guiding the destiny of the nation, had betrayed their trust.

#### IV

By a section of people we are told that India is sadly mistaken if she thinks that the West is wholly materialistic and there are no good points worth learning from the Western nations. No doubt it argues ignorance of human nature if anybody says that religion or spirituality is the monopoly of a particular people. There exist and are bound to exist good people everywhere. There are good points also in the Western civilization, which if India does not care to cultivate she will be doomed. But at the same time we should be careful that we do not slavishly imitate the West and take from her even those things which contain the seeds her own destruction.

There are many individuals in the West, who are the best type of humanity and would shed lustre to any country by being born there. But has the Western civilization as a whole found out the means of salvation of national life? Has it proved itself to be a safe guide to others by its own example? Why is there, then, the great wail and cry of misery and suffering



which are rending the sky in the Western countries?

In the West there may be individuals who are living an admirable life, but the Western nations as a whole have hardly shown good examples of higher idealism. Persons who refrain from the slightest crime in private life, go mad in acts of brutality in the name of nationalism. Everything is good in warfare, they say. The nations in the West are constantly at daggers drawn, at any moment ready to pounce upon one another. The history of European nations is darkened by the instances of exploitation of weaker races and extirpation of helpless people. In the name of the country or by the artificial stimulus of patriotism, men are trained how to turn into brutes: for, after all, what does military training mean?—Is not there a direct and deliberate attempt made to suppress and starve all higher sensibilities in men? As a result we find that war means not only fight and death among the contending armies, but infinite and untold sufferings even to the innocent civil population. People will say, this is inevitable in war and war also is inevitable. But is there not anything like righteousness in war, minimizing the horrors, if not the chances of war? It is true that all people will not be metamorphosed into Buddhas and Christs by the waving of a magic wand; but to recognize the human weakness is one thing and to foster the brute in man, to keep people in a constant fighting mood, is another thing.

Even in ordinary times is the suffering of people very small? Has the West been able to devise means as to how to ensure the greatest good to the greatest number? Even amidst the great material prosperity which obtains in the West, how keen is the problem of unemployment, how great is the suffering of the labouring hands there? Some persons

are piling up wealth upon wealth, while others are going from great to greater depths of misery. And while the people are suffering so much, the total military expenditure in Europe itself is £520,000,000, while including that of other lands is £900,800,000! It is true that governments in other countries are doing quite a lot for the people and the sufferings of the people in the West are nothing in comparison with the misery of the Indian population, still with the advantages and the opportunities the West has got, the present sufferings of the people there do not reflect great credit upon the Western civilization.

Our contention is that there are many things which India should learn at the feet of the West. We must learn from the West how to increase the material prosperity of India. But because the Western nations are not inspired by high idealism, we must be cautious not to follow the West in toto.

And when we find in the West a hue and cry against religion, we need not think, that attitude will bring salvation even for India. In India, the nation as a whole has got at its back high idealism, but that has become nowadays infructuous because the individuals are in a death-struggle for bare existence. Higher virtues develop when men are above wants. Persons in dire misery are found to behave in a way which cannot be expected of any human being; and they also become transformed when the evil days pass away. Give the people enough to eat and spread education far and wide, India will again show how materialism can be combined with high religious ideals. India has got inherent capacity for that.

## V

But how to bring strength to the country so that the people will be able

to shake off their Tamas, will find impetus to make a determined effort to improve their condition despite all obstacles and difficulties? The strength will again come from religion—genuine religion as opposed to what is encrusted with superstitions and blind beliefs and encumbered with rites and rituals. Hinduism in its essence teaches that man is Brahman, that there is infinite power and strength hidden within each seemingly tiny human being. To this unfailing mine of strength the appeal should go. When it is clearly perceived that the same God resides within every individual, the spirit of service in the country will become strong. India has been the land of religion. People have long sought God through rites and rituals and dead ceremonials, but now they should be led to seek God within men through service and love. For, is not in man the greatest manifestation of God? When the thoughts of the general populace can be turned to this direction—namely, that service to humanity offers a no less, if not a better, opportunity to realize the Self than worship in temples and shrines, a tidal wave of the spirit of mutual help and service will pervade the country. And in this way much better result will be achieved than what can be expected of simply trying to arouse the political instinct of the people. And if the nation can be raised through this method, it will set a new example to the modern world: for its civilization will be based not on competi-

tion and greed, but on consecration and service, peace and goodwill.

No doubt, this is a hard task. And the difficulty has become greater as India at the present time coming in direct contact with the whole world through modern means of easy communication, has to contend against modern tendencies of the individualistic spirit that there is no higher law than the survival of the fittest and there is no greater virtue than the preservation of the self-interest. That being the case, we should be all the more particular to keep the banner of religion aloft, to spread the message of religion far and wide, and should not think that religion has become a burdensome superfluity.

With regard to the national problems of modern India and the means of raising her from the present slough of despair, Sister Nivedita once said, "Immense batteries may be made, by numbers of people uniting together to think of a given thought. If the whole of India could agree to give, say ten minutes every evening at the oncoming of darkness to think a single thought, 'We are one, we are one. Nothing can prevail against us to make us think we are divided. For we are one. We are one, and antagonism amongst us are illusion,' the power that would be generated can hardly be measured." And will not religion, as described above, supply with the fundamental basis for this unity? Then why this misgiving against the utility of religion?

---

*Our sacred motherland is a land of religion and philosophy—the birthplace of spiritual giants—the land of renunciation, where and where alone, from the most ancient to the most modern times there has been the highest ideal of life open to man.*

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



# SHRI KRISHNA'S MESSAGE TO MODERN INDIA

BY PROF. M. H. SYED, M.A., L.T.

## I

Modern India is passing through a stage of crisis. People have no fixed ideal to follow. They are drifting from one goal to another. Our social, political, and religious life is in a hopelessly disorganized condition. We have lost touch with our glorious ancient culture and have not even assimilated the best points of Western one. The educated Indians do not care to study their religious ideals. That is why they do not have any faith in divine inspiration or the value and utility of religious and spiritual pursuit as a means of social and political regeneration. Some of them, not knowing enough of their own religious heritage, unfairly condemn religion wholesale and hold it responsible for the present downfall of our country. They think that if there were no religious differences existing in India, the Indians of various religious creeds would not be so much divided among themselves, nor would our political and social problems remain unsolved. Nothing could be farther from truth than these unauthorized assertions. It is high time that they should be examined dispassionately.

The precious words of the Pârna Avatâr, as embodied in the *Shrimad-Bhagavad-Gita*, are rightly looked upon as of supreme importance because they are the glorious utterances of Him who is the object of adoration for all the Saints and Sages, Rishis and Munis of all ages and of all climes. All the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Smritis were given to the world by the Rishis of the various grades of spiritual evolu-

tion, whereas the *Bhagavad-Gita* was given by the Lord Himself. It is therefore looked upon as a book of sovereign consideration. Its soul-inspiring teachings hold good for all times and provide food for thought for every type of man, both on the Nivritti and Pravritti Mârgas. It is at once so simple and so profound that a mediocre man as well as an intellectual giant can draw their inspirations from it.

“Great Avataras have come in the past and will come again in the future, whose grand figures loom and names of might echo through the haze of the ages. They have come and will come to close great epochs and to open greater ones. Smaller Messiahs, Prophets, Messengers and saintly teachers have performed and will perform similar functions with regard to smaller cycles and phases of civilizations. But the innermost truth, the one burden of the teaching of all—the one purpose, of all this ever has been and ever shall be, by ever deeper yoga, to behold ever more fully the Infinite Glory of the Eternal Self.” (*Laws of Manu : Science of Social Organisation*, by Dr. Bhagwân Das, D.L., pp. 347-48).

It was in consonance with this eternal law that just before the beginning of the *Kali Yuga*, the Lord appeared as Shri Krishna to bind the hearts of men to Himself in many bonds. Narada said to Yudhishtira : “Tie your minds to Him, ye sons of Manu ! tie your minds to Him, in any way you can, but tie your minds unto the Diamond-Soul. The wise call Krishna the Attractor, because by His name He draws the souls

of all unto Himself." (*Vishnu Bhāgavata*, VII. 1. 31.)

"Worship ye the Universal Self as the One and Only Beloved . . . . For the sake of the Self alone is all else dear." (*Brinadaranyaka Upanishad*, I. IV. 8 and II. IV. 5.)

It is the Universal Self which is the indwelling spirit of all beings and it is to reveal this fact to the erring humanity, and to help mankind to realize it, that teachers of various grades of spiritual evolution visit this earth from time to time. They form among themselves a spiritual hierarchy and have always one end in view, namely, the amelioration of the material, mental, moral and spiritual condition of the people of the time in which they manifest themselves. This has been the sole purpose of the various ancient and modern religions of the world.

"As an injury done to any organ of the body injures the whole body, so is a wrong done to one member of the body of humanity done to the whole race. None may separate himself from this intimate union; none may stand apart and seek to live alone; born into the human family, we must all live in it. Brotherhood is a fact in nature and from it there is no escape," says the editor of the *Universal Text Book of Religions*.

All religions, without any exception, believe in the Fatherhood of God, as the creator and source of all beings. If that be so, then the only logical conclusion that we can draw from this faith is, that all men are equal in the sight of God. As Shri Krishna says: "The same am I to all beings; there is none hateful to Me, nor dear, they who worship Me with devotion they are in Me and I am in them."

The source and origin of mankind is one and the same, differ as much as we may in our outer form, features, and temperament. We cannot, however, deny our common origin and destiny. Some people ejaculate, "Well! whatever else religious people may be, most certainly they are not brotherly." And it is, unhappily, true that if we look into the religious history of the immediate past, we shall find there-in very little brotherhood; religious wars have been the most cruel, religious persecutions have been the most merciless; crusades, inquisitions, horrors of every kind, blot with blood and tears the history of religious struggles. We generally forget that each religion speaks one letter of the great Name of God, "the one only without a second." (*Chhandogyopanishad*, VI. ii. I.) God is so great, so illimitable that no one brain of man, however great, no one religion, however perfect, can express His infinite perfection.

The religions of the World aim at purifying the human heart and bringing it nearer God, but people in their indifference do not study their own faiths. That is why they act against them. Essentially religions are not at variance with each other. For those who sincerely believe in the Blessed Lord Shri Krishna and His elevating words this religious controversy is set at rest, if they bear in mind what the Lord said five thousand years ago, "However men approach Me, even so do I accept them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Partha," (IV-11).

"He who established in unity, worshippeth Me, abiding in all beings, that Yogi liveth in Me, whatever his mode of living." (VI-31).

"There is naught whatsoever higher than I, O Dhananjaya. All this threaded on Me, as jewels on a string." (VII-7).



## II

The\* whole purpose of the Caste system is misconceived, when it is regarded as setting up barriers which intensify personal pride, instead of imposing rules on the higher classes, designed to forward the good of the whole community. As Manu says, "Let the Brahman flee from homage as from venom : let him ever desire indignity as nectar." A man who did not show forth the Dharma of his Caste was not regarded as belonging to it, according to the teachers of the ancient days. Further, Manu says : "As a wooden elephant, as a leathern deer, such is an unlearned Brahman, the three bear only names." "The Brahman who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere, becomes a Shudra (by conduct); know this same (rule applies to him) who is born of the Kshatriya or the Vaishya." There is no social institution so much misunderstood as the Caste system. It is based on a sound principle, not only of division of labour and various grades of the law of evolution to which every human being is subject, but also on inherent, psychological facts of undifferentiated consciousness, emotion, volition and cognition, to which the four Varnas (Castes) severally are said to correspond.

There is no country in the world where the manual labour class, proletariat, the organizers of industry, the merchants, bankers, agriculturists, legislators, warriors, teachers, savants, and the spiritual teachers, occupying various grades of position and functioning according to their taste and temperament, are not found.

The blessed Lord says : "The four Castes were emanated by Me, by the different distribution of energies (attri-

butes) and actions; Know Me to be the the author of them." (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IV.-18)

Further, the Lord says : "Of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, O Prantapa ! the Karmas have been distributed according to the Gunas born of their own natures."

The way in which the Shudras are treated in modern times is against the spirit of the ancient culture. To look down upon the depressed classes and to treat them as untouchables is a sin against the holiness of humanity. To say that head and foot are differently made and have different functions is not to insult the one and adulate the other. On the contrary, to try violently to make them perform the same functions, is to violate the common sense. Who could deny that nourishment and affectionate treatment and protective care are not equally due to both head and foot, twice-born and non-twice-born, child and sage?

It has already been stated that the Lord Himself is the originator of the four Castes. How could He enjoin that the Shudras be treated so cruelly as they are done nowadays in some parts of India? Has He not said elsewhere, "The foolish disregard Me, when clad in human semblance, ignorant of My supreme nature, the great Lord of beings,?" (IX.-11).

"I, O Gudâkesha, am the Self, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings."

"And whatsoever is the seed of all beings, that am I, O Arjuna; nor is there aught, moving or unmoving, that may exist bereft of Me."

Could there be anything clearer than these priceless words? Do they not point out without any ambiguity the holiness of humanity? Is the dweller in an untouchable's body essentially

\*An Advanced Text Book of Hindu Religion, p. 244.

different from the soul of a Kshatriya or a Brahman?

Does an untouchable or a pariah not share divine life?

These are the plain questions that confront us when we look at the condition of our less fortunate brethren in the light of the Lord's very words.

### III

The world is full of desirable objects, filled by Ishvara Himself with objects that awaken desire; Ishvara Himself is hidden within every object; giving to each object its attractive charm, its alluring power. That is why so much stress is laid by the Lord upon action. The reason comes out very strongly when we turn to the third Adhyaya called: "The Yoga of action." All depends upon action. "From food creatures become, from rain is the production of food; rain proceedeth from sacrifice, sacrifice ariseth out of action; know thou that from Brahma\* action groweth." (III. 14-15). There is the chain of life. Creatures from food, food from rain, rain from sacrifice, sacrifice from action, action from Brahma, Brahma from the Imperishable; the whole life of the world, the whole reproduction of beings, all that depends upon activity.

The Lord's constant urge: "Perform thou right action, for action is superior to inaction, and, inactive, even the maintenance of thy body would not be possible," is the highest *rationale* of activity. The logic of His argument is so irresistible that even a materialist dare not deny its force. To a materialist his body is all in all. If he does not work, "the maintenance of his body would not be possible."

This consideration leads us on to another aspect of the same question,

\*The Vedas.

namely, devotion to one's own duty. In two words Swa Dharma the Lord has conveyed a volume of meaning. The whole fabric of social, political, economic, and religious organizations will fall to pieces, if the Lord's words are not fully acted upon. The world is like a machine or a public school. So long as every part of the machinery is in a fit condition and does its particular work assigned to it its harmonious motion is not interrupted. Similarly in a school no student can ever profit by his studies if he does not study carefully the course prescribed for his particular class. It is by doing his own duty which lies nearest to him that he would really make steady progress. In some of the really advanced countries of Europe the secret of individual and national progress lies in the fact that they are very prompt and devoted in the performance of their own duty that falls to their lot. It is often said that we Indians have very little sense of duty. We do our work under compulsion and fear. This charge is not wholly wrong, but religion is not responsible for this dereliction. Shri Krishna has taught us in clear and unmistakable words a very lofty ideal of duty. He says; "Better one's own duty though destitute of merit, than the duty of another, well-discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." (III-35).

### IV

Soul-force admittedly exercises more abiding and vital influence in moulding and regenerating national life than any other forces known to mankind. One single individual endowed with this power does more to help humanity than all the material resources of the world put together. The core of moral life



consists in self-denial and self-control. Those leaders and workers who have learnt to subdue their lower self in the form of anger, passion, and desire, give better account of themselves than those who are lacking in this virtue. Without self-denial and self-control no soul force could be acquired by any individual, however clever and intelligent he may be. In the political struggle that we are carrying on to-day in winning freedom for our country no moral virtue is so badly needed as the practice of self-control and non-violence. In putting people in responsible positions and calling upon them to carry on the onerous duties of administration and national organization one of the highest tests that we have to apply to them is to see whether they are sufficiently endowed with the capacity for self-control or not.

This is how the Lord has taught us : "Let him raise the self by the Self, and not let the self become depressed; for verily is the Self the friend of the self, and also the Self the self's enemy. The Self is the friend of the self of him in whom the self by the Self is vanquished; but to the unsubdued self, the Self vari-ly becometh hostile as an enemy." (VI. 5 & 6.)

It is said that Hindu religion is so stupendous and encyclopædic that it is

not possible for an individual, if he so desires, to study it. How can one master all the Vedas and the Upanishads in the modern time when the struggle for existence is so keen that that most of our time is devoted to earning our livelihood? They are not only difficult to learn, but they are so bulky that a lifetime is needed to grasp their meaning. This is partly true, and yet it is not wholly without a remedy.

As has already been pointed out at the outset, *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* is the *Bhagavân Vachana* (words of the Lord Himself), therefore its importance is the highest. It is not bulky nor difficult to learn. It is translated into all the vernaculars of India. It is so cheap and easily available. Its teaching holds good for all times and all types of people, for the highest as well as for the lowest. Thus there is no other sacred scripture which is so eminently fitted to be the Bible of Bhârata-varsha, as the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the priceless teachings of Shri Krishna. It is under His divine banner that modern India with her multifarious castes, classes, creeds and colours, can be united into a virile and progressive nation.

May His divine flute inspire us to listen to His immortal song of peace and harmony.

## SANKARA AND HIS MODERN CRITICS\*

BY V. SUBRAHMANYA IYER, B.A.

Among the great teachers of Vedanta, who are being studied by the modern

scholars of the West as well as of the East, Sankara seems to have claimed a

\*Summary of two lectures delivered at the Bangalore Sankara Mutt on the 23rd and

24th May last, in connection with Sankara's birthday celebration.

larger share of attention than others. Some of his admirers and critics have been drawn to him by his religion, some by his theology and scholasticism, some others by his mysticism. Excepting a few, whose number could be counted on one's fingers, none appears to have realized the significance of his *philosophy*, though in reality he is first a philosopher and then the rest. For, his entire life and whole attitude towards the world have been determined by his philosophy. Now, some of the most recent observations of his critics seem to offer an opportunity for placing before you a few thoughts of mine regarding his philosophy for your consideration. In doing so, I hope to present an aspect or two of Sankara that appear to me to have been incompletely understood, if not entirely misunderstood. As representatives of these critics, I have taken two, one from the West and another from the East, both sincere admirers of Sankara and both accredited Sanskrit scholars. From a study of their and others' criticisms, I am led to think that the most fruitful source of misunderstandings has been the confusion that still prevails in this country in regard to the distinction between Religion, Theology, Scholasticism and Mysticism, on the one hand, and Science and Philosophy on the other, *i.e.*, between 'Matam' and 'Tatwam,' the former comprehending Faith, Karma (Nitya, Naimittika, etc.), Upasana, Yoga and the latter dealing with Tatwa Vicharam. All of them go under the name 'Philosophy' in ordinary Indian literature. Men, whether of the East or of the West, who are wedded to any one of these attitudes, see in Sankara only that aspect in which they are specially interested. Dr. Otto's standpoint is the mystic and he believes that to be the highest. For, as a true theologian, he relies upon intuition and belief based upon it. He

therefore naturally undervalues philosophy as well as science but gives Sankara in all fairness of mind the rank of a mystic. From the mystic's or the theologian's standpoint one may set the highest value upon what pleases one. Inasmuch as it makes reason subordinate, it is convenient for a mystic or a theologian to assign to another (like Sankara) any place or value he chooses without finally appealing to Reason, on which science and philosophy take their stand.

Sankara deals with a world of thought in which we find a variety of elements corresponding to the several attitudes referred to above. How all these are comprehended under his philosophy is a subject on which I shall not enter here, though as a matter of fact his philosophy appraises the worth not only of Religion, Theology, Scholasticism, and Mysticism but also of Science as means or steps leading to the Ultimate Truth.† With Sankara Science does not reveal the Ultimate Reality or Truth, which is the special concern of Philosophy. But Science prepares the way for philosophic enquiry.

Some twenty years ago, when I had the honour of speaking in this very hall on a similar occasion I had to contend that Sankara is not merely a theologian inasmuch as the then extant literature and the best authorities on Indology, as well as the accounts in the

†In Sankara there is no antagonism between Philosophy and Religion. Nor have they each the independent status which Europe and America are still fighting about. In his Vedanta, Religion is the child that passes through the stages of theology, scholasticism, mysticism and science for growing into the adult called philosophy or Tatwa Vicharam. All these are on the high road to Ultimate Truth or Reality. But philosophy is directly concerned with this goal. Let it not be thought that Religion is outside the province of even Science; for Science studies Religion also.



Encyclopædia Britannica described him as a theologian, and not as a philosopher. To-day the world seems to have made some further progress. Dr. Otto of the Marburg University, one of the greatest of Sanskrit scholars of the West, thinks Sankara to be a mystic and that of the classic type. The other is Professor Nagaraja Sarma of Kumbakonam, whom I consider a representative of those that devote most of their criticisms to scholastic interpretations, be they of Sankara's own statements or others' presentations of Sankara's thoughts. The professor sees in Sankara more of the scholastic theologian than of the philosopher. My object to-day, therefore, is to show as far as I can that Sankara is primarily a philosopher, but not a mystic or a scholastic.

Turning first to Dr. Otto, we find that in his recent work on *Mysticism East and West*, he reveals a most profound study of Sankara's theology, perhaps a much deeper study than that of Dr. Deussen who is still unquestionably the greatest of the Western expounders of Sankara's system. It must, however, be acknowledged that so far as the system of Advaita Vedanta is concerned, Dr. Otto is a more sympathetic critic than Dr. Edgerton of America who considers it to be no more than a 'magic philosophy' of the primitive mind. (*Vide* his recent Presidential address at the Oriental Congress.)

Among Dr. Otto's observations in this work are: (1) Sankara is "not so much a philosopher as a theologian; for, his impelling interest is not 'Science' . . . . He is not concerned for knowledge out of curiosity to explain the world, but he is impelled by a longing for salvation. . . . His interest is not a scientific interest in the ultimate, in the Absolute and its rela-

tion to the world resulting in some extraordinary statement about the soul and its metaphysical relationships, but he is guided in his interest by something which lies outside scientific or metaphysical speculation. . . . It is the idea of salvation, of Sreyas etc; and of how this is to be won. . . . That the soul is eternally one with the eternal is not a scientifically interesting statement."

(2) "When Sankara is asked about the origin of Avidya," says Dr. Otto, he quietly ignores the insoluble problem or answers it roughly and incompletely." "This is," he adds, "by the bye, a new proof of the fact that the interest of his teaching is not a scientific one but is an interest in salvation."

Thirdly, "For Sankara the world remains world—painful, miserable, to be fled from and denied. Samsara and Brahmanirvana stand in sharp contrast to one another. Nirvana is a condition purely of the beyond. Samsara could never be Nirvana and therefore salvation in Brahman is for Sankara realised only after death."

The grounds on which Dr. Otto bases this estimate of Sankara are that Sankara in the main agrees, as the learned Doctor thinks, with what he seems to consider as the doctrine of the Gita that salvation is attained by Grace. Next, he holds that Sankara's Brahma-jnanam is attained by means of 'intuition' which is the most distinguishing characteristic of mysticism. Scientific and philosophic knowledge is attained, as he believes, through the intellect which can give only a "theoretic" explanation of the world and of life. The ultimate truth in Sankara is therefore attained, according to Dr. Otto, only through Grace and through intuition.

His other noteworthy criticisms are :



(1) "The goal for Sankara is the stilling of all Karmani, all works, all activity or will; it is *quietism*, it is *Tyaga*, a surrender of the will and of doing, an abandonment of good as of evil works, for both bind man to the world of wandering."

(2) "Sankara's (conception of Brahman) is the Indian 'static' conception."

(3) "Sankara's teaching has no ethic because the background of his teaching is "India" and not Palestine. The evils which torment Sankara are the vexations of Samsara—wind, gall, slime, old age, endless rebirth but not sin, unworthiness, unrighteousness."

(4) The proper expression of the feeling of at-one-ness is not a mystical pleasure, but *agape*, a love of a kind which neither Plotinus nor Sankara mentions or knows. "Sankara could never be the profound discoverer of the rich indwelling life of the soul, which is only possible on a Christian basis."

Now, turning to the subject of salvation or Moksha, or Sreyas and of the world being full of sorrow and suffering, there are certainly innumerable references to them in Sankara's teachings. But these words are only intended for those who are of a theological or mystical frame of mind. When Sankara is in his philosophic element, his goal, he repeatedly says, is the attainment of that *knowledge* which removes all doubts (*Chhidryante sarva samsayah*) and which when attained or understood, everything in existence becomes understood (*Tasmin vijñate sarvam vijñatam bhavati*). One of the stumbling blocks in the way of grasping Sankara is the difficulty due to the non-recognition of the fact that Sankara follows the tradition and adapts his teachings to the different classes of

students. He uses language suited to the instruction to be given to each of the several kinds of such Adhikaris. Therefore Moksha and the like terms are meant for those who approach philosophy through the portals of Religion and Theology. But for Sankara, Moksha and the highest truth mean the same and Moksha or the highest truth is a thing attained in 'this' world.

Turning to his contention that the essential or the most characteristic doctrine of the Gita is that of Grace and Bhakti based upon intuition and that in so far as Sankara agrees with it his thought is based upon intuition, we find that he refers to Sloka 54 of chapter 18 of the Gita. He could have added Slokas 58 and 62 also. This doctrine is no doubt maintained by a school of thinkers and its value is fully recognized by Sankara. But this view is different from that of Sankara's school of Jñanam. The main subject of the enquiry in the Gita commences from the 7th verse of chapter 2nd, wherein Arjuna starts the subject by saying that he is overcome by confusion of mind as to what he should do. (*Dharmasammudhachetah*). With him, 'to act or not to act,' that is the question. And he adds that he is already a Bhakta of Sri Krishna: he only prays that his confusion may be removed. Next, the very last words of the Gita with which the subject is wound up are contained in the 78rd verse of chapter 18, in which Arjuna says, 'My confusion of mind (Moha) is gone and my doubts (Sandeha) have disappeared.' What Sri Krishna, therefore, appears to have done in the eighteen chapters is that He has removed Arjuna's doubts. How has he done it? What is it that removes doubts and confusion and gives knowledge of certainty? Sri Krishna answers



this question repeatedly in almost every-one of the eighteen chapters by pointing to the supreme importance and significance of what is known as '*Buddhi*.'

(1) In 2. 49 He says, "Seek refuge in *Buddhi*."

(2) In 2. 51 He says, "The wise possessed of *Buddhi* go to that state which is beyond all evils."

(3) "When thy *Buddhi* . . . . has become immovable and firmly established in the Self, then thou shalt attain Self-realization." 2. 53.

(4) "And from the ruin of *Buddhi* he perishes." 2. 63.

(5) "Superior to all faculties is *Buddhi* and superior to this *Buddhi* is only *Atman*." 3. 42.

(6) "It is the *Buddhi* in That, that takes one to the supreme goal." 5. 17.

(7) "This infinite joy of Brahman can be realized only by *Buddhi* which keeps one steady in the Highest Reality." 6. 21.

(8) "And what he has to attend to in attaining Brahman is the discipline of *Buddhi*." 6. 25.

(9) "What does not die with this body but is continued in the next birth is the *Buddhi* which seeks Brahman." 6. 43.

Of all the faculties of man, the most adorable is *Buddhi* because "I am the *Buddhi* of intelligent men." (7. 10.) The greatest gift that God himself can or does bestow on the man that worships Him with *Bhakti*, is not *Bhakti* itself, is not *Brahma-jnanam*, but only *Buddhi-yogam* (*Dadami Buddhi-yogam tam yena mam upayanti te*). (10. 10.) If one wishes to live always in God or Brahman one must apply one's own '*Buddhi* to the object of devotion.' (*Mayi Buddhim nivesaya*). (12. 8.) Above all the most secret science taught in the Bhagavat Gita is that the man that knows the Highest Truth is made by God not a *Bhakta* or *Yogaván* but a

*Buddhimân*. (15. 20.) The attainment of *Buddhi* is the secret of all the secrets. Lastly at the very end, Arjuna is asked to resort *finally* to *Buddhi-yoga* that he may not perish. (18. 57.) On the other hand, those who are devoid of *Buddhi* cannot attain to the Highest Brahman. (7. 24.)

This is enough to show that to Arjuna the Gita teaches the doctrine of *Buddhi* as the highest lesson. Further when we consider the Bhagavat Gita as teaching *Brahma-vidya*, we find it inculcating the lesson that it is through *Buddhi* alone that we can attain *Brahma-jnanam*. This lesson of the Gita is based upon the rock of Upanishadic statements. The Kathopanishad says, "It is realized by the sharp *Buddhi* of wise men." (1.3.12.) Further, the sharpness required is described as being greater than that of the edge of a razor. The Mundakopanishad says, "Through the grace of knowledge one attains the purity of mind. Then through meditation that Absolute is realized." (3. 8.) Other Upanishads also speak in this way about the supremacy of *Buddhi*. It is for instance said in Kena that the *Dhirah* alone reach Brahman in this life, in this world, where *Dhi* means *Buddhi*. In other Upanishads are found such term as '*Guha*,' '*Hridayam*,' which are also interpreted as *Buddhi*, the abode of Brahman. Should it be argued that these are only external authorities and that Sankara himself may have held a different view, it may be pointed out that in this commentary on the Gita but particularly on VI. 12 of Katha Upanishad he most clearly states what his own conviction is. "*Buddhi* is our sole authority in comprehending the real nature of existence and non-existence."

Now, does *Buddhi* or *Jnân*am mean intuition leading to mysticism, or intellect leading to science; or does it imply



something else leading to philosophic knowledge? Dr. Otto himself says that intuitions are varied in their character. His intuition gives him a knowledge which places Christianity on a higher level than Vedanta. We know that Bergson's intuition tells him that change is the Ultimate Reality, Kant's intuition gives him his categorical imperative. A Vedantin's intuition reveals, as it is said, a Brahman unchanging or 'static' as Dr. Otto prefers to call it. An Eckhart's intuition posits a dynamic Godhead. A Croce's intuition presents special aesthetic values. Were the question asked which of these intuitions is *ultimate* or whether all of them are equally true, seeing that psychological investigations show that intuitions are fallible, it is not to intuition by itself that we can appeal for solution but to something else like the intellect which can distinguish one kind of intuition from another and assess the worth of each. And if a difference arises between intellect and intuition themselves, we can only fall back upon a co-ordination of the two as did Fichte and Schelling in Germany. But in Vedanta we appeal to what is called 'Buddhi,' a concept peculiar to Indian philosophy, especially Vedanta. What then is 'Buddhi?' Is it different from Intuition or Intellect? What is its place in philosophy?

It has been said however that Sankara is not a philosopher inasmuch as his interest is not a 'scientific' one. We shall have to enquire what relation there is between Science and Philosophy before we proceed to questions regarding Buddhi. And here comes the need for considering the criticisms of men who ignore the Scientific Value of Sankara's thought.

Professor Nagaraja Sarma, no doubt, refutes the theological arguments of Dr. Otto and defends Sankara as a theologian. The learned professor in his

latest article on Sankara attacks other interpreters of Sankara's teachings holding that the professor's own version of Sankara is the true one. May we not ask on what grounds the professor holds his own interpretation of Sankara's words to be *true*? If he had given us anywhere in his writings on Sankara an indication of the nature of his test of the truth, that justifies his interpretations, we should have thought his interpretation of Sankara the most reliable. I do not refer to the Mimamsic rules of interpretation. I am asking for a test of the truth-value, which is the same as the philosophic value, of interpretation. His criticism of Otto and of other Indian writers on Vedanta mark him, no doubt, as an excellent Sanskrit scholar. His theological and scholastic arguments are splendid. But as a philosophic critic aiming at truth he has yet to show that his interpretation reveals Sankara correctly. Only when he publishes to the world his test of the validity of his interpretations one can know whether his contentions as regards Sankara's teachings are true to Sankara. Till then we shall not be in a position to accept his statement that "Sankara's doctrine of Adhyasa is the rock on which the entire structure of Monistic Metaphysic is grounded: that Adhyasa is fundamental and foundational in Sankara's system." For, there are others equally, if not more authoritative, who hold that Avasthatraya and Causality form the bases of Sankara's Advaita.

How far critics of Professor Nagaraja Sarma's school take the scientific standpoint is thus a most relevant question. For, he gives no evidence either of appreciation or condemnation of Sankara as a scientific thinker. If Sankara's mind be unscientific, both Dr. Otto and Prof. Nagaraja Sarma would be perfectly justified in making Sankara



no more than a mystic or a scholastic theologian.

Nor can we say that Science has nothing to do with Philosophy as it was once held and is still being held by many. It is Theology or Mysticism that undervalues or ignores Science but not Philosophy. In many a modern university, Philosophy which ignores Science fails to attract men, not because Philosophy bakes no bread, but because scriptural authorities, quotations and grammatical or other interpretations of words or phrases do not convince or satisfy the enquiring mind of to-day. The theological or scholastic defence of Sankara that so frequently appears is more a condemnation of him as a Philosopher than an appreciation. Whether such critics like it or not, Science is making itself recognized in Philosophy. Here are some of the latest views in regard to the attitude of 'Philosophy' in modern thinkers.

One of them says, "Philosophy must be scientific in the sense, that it cannot but accept the proved results of science. These results are both a starting point and the crucial test of the validity of its speculations. But philosophy because of the innate limitations of pure science must soar above the formulations which are presented to it by science. It must also return to the same formulations in order to check up the truth of its own thought constructions. In both ways, therefore, science aids and even controls philosophy: for first of all it starts philosophy on the right road to truth, and it calls her back to this road, whenever she strays into the bye-paths of error and falsehood or what is worse into blind alleys which lead nowhere." (J. H. Ryan.)

Another modern philosopher says:—

"In the historic role of philosophy, the scientific factor, the element of correctness of verifiable applicability has

a place, but it is a negative one. The meanings delivered by confirmed observation, experimentation, and calculation, scientific facts and principles in other words, serve as tests of the values which tradition transmits and for those which emotion suggests. Whatever is not compatible with them must be eliminated in any sincere philosophising. This fact confers upon scientific knowledge an incalculably important office in philosophy." (John Dewey)

A third philosophic thinker of a different school says:—

"It cannot accept either the extreme of experimentation or the extreme of deductionism. Taken as an exclusive method of approach to problems of philosophy, both views are inadequate and false. Each, however, has a great deal to contribute to an ultimately achievable synoptic view."

Yet, another authority says:—

"In philosophy we take the propositions we make in science and in everyday life and exhibit them in a logical system."

A fifth, a modern philosophic author says:—

"Philosophy is the attempt, by use of scientific methods, to understand the world in which we live." (Patrick)

A sixth, an accredited historian of philosophy says that philosophy is a summary of scientific knowledge and a *completion* of it. (Weber)

A seventh, a most popular as well as an authoritative writer on philosophy, of our own day declares: "Modern science is its (philosophy's) starting point and *pre-condition*. . . What is not in accord with this thought lies outside the sphere of modern philosophy. The modern definition of philosophy rejects two errors, which result from a wrong conception of it: the error that philosophy can exist without science and the

error that science can exist without philosophy." (Paulsen)

An eighth, a well-known philosophic thinker and writer holds that "The first characteristic of the new philosophy is that it regards philosophy as essentially one with science. . . It conceives all knowledge as scientific knowledge to be ascertained and proved by methods of science. . . . It regards knowledge as a natural fact like another, with no mystic significance and no cosmic importance." (Bertrand Russell)

This error (that philosophy can exist without science) has almost entirely disappeared. We may find the remnants of it in the opinion which is occasionally advanced that a special study is possible without a study of the sciences... however instructive such a study may be in itself, it cannot fail to be barren and empty unless it is supplimented by scientific studies in other fields. "A purus putus metaphysicus (without a knowledge of science) is a chimera or an empty babler." "It remains a settled fact that a man is the better fitted to be a professional philosopher, the more familiar he is with...fields of Scientific Research" (Paulsen).

In his latest (1931) articles on

*Philosophy* Dr. Wolfe of the London University, not only combines philosophy and science but also says, "The original union of Philosophy and Science became loosened...In the course of the nineteenth century, there emerged something like a definite antipathy between Science and Philosophy... This was largely due to some of the German Idealists...This kind of hostility gradually disappeared."

These are enough to show that in the *modern world*, that Philosophy that is not co-ordinated with Science is not of much value. It would be relegated to the region of Religion, Mysticism, Theology or Scholasticism, in so far as it does not get the support of scientific method of enquiry. If Sankara be not a scientific thinker, he must be called either a mystic, as justly pointed out by Dr. Otto, or a theologian. Critics like Prof. Nagaraja Sarma only make Sankara a scholastic theologian which is no better than Dr. Otto's estimate.

A more fundamental question therefore, is : Is Sankara a scientific thinker? This alone could help us to answer the question whether he is a *philosopher* in the modern sense of the word.

(To be concluded)

## HINDUISM: WHAT IT IS

BY PROF. AKSHOY KUMAR BANERJEE, M.A.

### FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF HINDUISM UNDENIABLE

In my article, last month, I discussed what Hinduism is not. It is apparent that Hinduism is neither a particular system of religious discipline, nor a particular system of social customs

and habits, nor a particular system of philosophical doctrines, nor a particular system of political or national organization. But an intelligent inquiry into the essential ideas, sentiments and practices of the different religious systems passing by the name of Hinduism, the fundamental assumptions and the ulti-



mate purposes of the various systems of philosophy evolved within it, the general principles underlying the diverse manners and customs of the social organizations within its fold, and the final goal always kept in view by its peoples in determining the course of their political and economic development, furnishes us with unmistakable evidence of the living unity behind all its diversities,—a common bond of fellowship uniting together all these social, religious, political and cultural institutions. Read any book of permanent value,—to whatever religious sect or social organization it may belong, and whatever may be the central subject-matter of its discussion,—and you cannot but be struck by an undercurrent of thought, which exhibits the universal Hindu attitude of mind. There is a common tune, a common underlying spirit, a common ulterior end everywhere. Discourses on Chemical, Physical, Pathological, Astronomical, and Economic subjects are all bound up by a living bond of unity of ideal and unity of spiritual attitude with the discourses on Religious, Ethical, Sociological and Philosophical topics.

Now, the question is, what is this Hindu spirit? What is the character of the essence which is immanent in all the diverse forms of Hinduism and which gives unity to them and leads them all to the same ultimate goal? But before we enquire into this fundamental truth of Hinduism, let us examine what common characteristics are found in the external features of those different forms. From the external features we should gradually make our way to the inner spirit.

#### COMMON FEATURES OF THE HINDU SECTS

##### (a) *Respect for national culture*

One common feature of all Hindu

organizations has been already noted in the foregoing discussion. All sections of Hindus have an undying faith in the Vedas, which are believed to contain the fundamental truths revealed by God Himself to the most ancient Rishis or the earliest ancestors of mankind for the benevolent purpose of inspiring the human soul in all ages and countries with the noblest intellectual, moral, æsthetic and spiritual ideals, and exercising a regulative influence upon all kinds of human activities, with a view to lead the soul to its final blissful destiny. But they do not take the Vedas in the form in which they are available as the sole authority for setting up the ideals and determining the duties. They have also a high regard for the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Smritis and the Tantras, the Puranas and the Darshanas, which are later productions of the best talents of India and which are believed to be the proper channels through which those revealed truths of the Vedas, being progressively developed into a variety of forms without losing the essential spirit, have flowed continuously to our planes of thought, feeling and action, and become suited to our tastes and capacities. Thus there have all along been developments of ideas and ideals in all the departments of Hindu life and emergences of many branches and sub-branches in course of these developments, but these have never cut themselves off from the root and the trunk. They have never disowned the glory of the past history of their origin and development. The faith and regard mentioned above may quite appropriately be interpreted as a deep reverence for and free submission to all the highest religious, moral and cultural achievements of India from time immemorial to the most recent periods of her history. There is a laudable sense of honour and pride associated with



such reverence and submission. The feeling is common to all Hindus and is a strong bond of union among them.

*(b) Regard for national saints and heroes*

To the above is added a high personal regard for the national saints, heroes, teachers and reformers of India. Every great man or woman who has exercised any powerful influence upon the religious, moral, social, political or cultural life of India at any stage of her development, is remembered with deep respect by all classes of Hindus. The ancient Rishis of India, such as Vashistha, Viswamitra, Manu, Kapila, Narada, Parashara, Goutama, Yajna-balkya, Vyasa, Shuka, Charaka, etc.,—the great saints and thought-leaders of different ages, such as Buddha, Mahavira, Shamkara, Goraksha-Natha, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Kavir, Nanak, Tulsi-das, Tukaram, etc.,—the illustrious national heroes and royal-sages, such as Rama, Krishna, Bhishma, Arjuna, Yudhishtira, Harishchandra, Dhruba, Prahlad, etc.,—the ideal women of India, such as Satee, Seeta, Savitree, Damayantee, Maitreyee, Gargee, etc.,—they all have established a spiritual dominion in the hearts of all men and women who call themselves Hindus. In spite of all differences of opinion and mode of life, the Hindus in general draw their inspiration from these common sources and thus feel themselves as belonging to the same joint family.

*(c) Respect for places of national historical importance*

Thirdly, the Tirthas or the sacred places of pilgrimage constitute another strong bond of union among all sections of Hindus. These Tirthas are scattered over the whole of India, in the hills and dales, in the cities and forests, in the rivers and lakes. Every Hindu thinks

it a principal duty of his life to purify his outer and inner self by visiting as many of these Tirthas as his circumstances allow. And in paying visits to the Tirthas, the Hindus do not draw any essential distinction between a Shaiva and a Vaishnava Tirtha, a Shákta and a Soura and a Gánapatya Tirtha. All Tirthas are Hindu Tirthas, and they are sacred to every Hindu. And what are these Tirthas? Ayodhya, Mathura, Kashi, Kanchi, Avanti, Puri, Dwaraka, etc., were at one time or another celebrated capitals of the most illustrious ruling dynasties of India, and retained their glories for a long period as the great centres of Indian culture and civilization, exerting potent influence of permanent value upon the different aspects of Hindu life. Many of them, though long deprived of their political significance, carry to this day living memories of the glorious past of India, and continue to be the most important centres of social, religious and intellectual culture, from which all classes of Hindus of all religious creeds and all social habits draw their inspiration.

The important rivers of India, distributed among the different provinces, constitute another class of Tirthas. The Ganga, the Jamuna, the Godavari, the Saraswati, the Narmada, the Sindhu, the Kaveri, have to be daily remembered by every Hindu, at least at the time of bathing or using water for the performance of any sacred duty; in whatever petty village a Hindu may reside, he is to imagine that the water he is bathing in or drinking or offering to his deity or his departed ancestors, is the water of all the sacred rivers of India put together; he is taught to bear in mind that he is a resident, not merely of the poor village, but of the whole of India.

The great mountains all over India are



also sacred to the Hindus. The Himalayas inspire the Hindu mind with the memories of Amarnath, Kedarnath, Badarikashram, Kailas, Pashupatinath, Kamakhya, Chandranath and many other holy places. The Vindhya range, the Gaya hills, the Nilagiri, the Sahyá-dri, etc., are all sanctified by inspiring spiritual associations. The large forests of India rouse in the Hindu mind the memories of Tapovans (forests of spiritual discipline), and great forest-universities. The notable Indian lakes like Dwaipayana, Pushkara, Manasa, etc., are also of great spiritual significance to the Hindus. The important battlefields of Kurukshetra, Nasik, Rameshwar, Lanka, etc., bear also great spiritual associations.

Whatever places have been sanctified by the Tapasya or spiritual culture of the venerable Rishis, Munis, Yogins, Bhaktas and Sadhus of India—no matter, to whatever particular sects or schools they might belong,—or have been associated with the noble activities of the great national heroes and royal sages, or have been made memorable by some occurrences of historical importance from the political, social, moral, intellectual or religious point of view, or have become notable by their own æsthetic beauty and sublimity,—they are all regarded as sacred Tirthas by all classes of Hindus, irrespective of their differences in other matters. In this way, Mother India as a whole with all her historical and geographical associations, with all her natural and acquired glories, with all her past, present and future, has got a spiritual significance in the eyes of every Hindu. It is easily imaginable what a great potent factor it is in unifying all the sects and societies within the fold of Hinduism and giving a definite mould and direction to the mentality of all Hindus.

#### HINDUISM MEANS INDIANISM

From the above points of community in the external features of the diverse sections of the Hindus, shall we be far from truth in arriving at a general conclusion that Hinduism practically means Indianism? Does not Hinduism evidently mean the sanctification and spiritualization of all that is great and good, sublime and beautiful, valuable and useful in the political, social, moral, intellectual and religious resources and achievements of India? Would it be wrong to assert that whoever accepts India, so spiritualized, as the presiding deity of his soul, has a legitimate claim to be regarded as a Hindu? It admits of no doubt whatsoever that this spirit of Indianhood has all along been exercising a supreme inspiring and unifying influence upon all branches of Hinduism ever since the beginning of its life's course.

The etymology of the name Hindu also supports the same conclusion. It is generally known that the terms Hindu and Indian are both derived from the term Sindhu, which was the most important river supplying the needs of the country inhabited by the earliest ancestors of the Hindus or the Indians. 'Hind' is the Persian form and 'Indo' the Greek form of the term 'Sindh' or 'Sindhu.' The names 'Hindu' and 'Indian' are both given by the foreigners. The ethical and social institutions, the political and economic organizations, the religious and philosophical systems, the scientific and literary pursuits,—all the aspects of human culture, which have been developed in this vast country called Hindusthan or India, *i.e.*, the land of the Sindhu or the Indus, have been known to foreigners as Hindu or Indian. But it is also demonstrably true that there is one real Hindu or Indian spirit, which pervades the whole



atmosphere of India and gives a distinct orientation to all the various forms in which this life and the genius of the Indian people have exhibited themselves.

It is to be observed that the unity of Indianhood that is so very striking in all Hindu organizations cannot be regarded as a political unity, nor can the consciousness of this unity be designated as patriotism, in the modern senses of these terms. The whole of Hindusthan had never been under the administration of a single political authority, and the different political powers ruling different portions of the country had often been in relations of hostility with one another. There had been change after change in the ruling dynasties. But this absence of unity in the political administration and the frequent political vicissitudes did not stand in the way of the continuity and development of the spirit of unity among the different sections of the Hindus and the general attitude of reverence for Mother India as a deified spiritual organism and her varied culture. The unity lay so deep in the region of the spirit, that it was only superficially affected by the politics of the country. It is not so much the political India that the Hindus worship and receive their inspiration from, but the cultural and spiritual India, that supplies them with the most highly cherished ideals of their life and in whose greatness they have immortal faith.

#### GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG HINDU SOCIAL SYSTEMS

##### *(a) Division of society into four Varnas*

Let us now direct our attention to the uniformity in the general structure of the social systems that have grown and developed under the banner of Hinduism. Here we find some essential points

of community and certain common ideals and principles underlying them. One of the most striking features which attracts our notice is the ordering of the society according to the distinctions of Varna. Varna means characteristic—that which gives a distinctive character to any being and thereby places it in a particular class. It is in accordance with some fundamental differences in the essential characteristics of men that the Hindus formed the grand conception of dividing the human race into four original classes. All men are born and brought up as members of the society, and the society is entitled to arrange for their education, self-discipline and self-development in harmony with their respective inborn characters and capacities (Guna) as well as to entrust them with the corresponding duties and responsibilities (Karma) best suited to them. On this principle the Hindu society organizes itself as composed of four essential parts or organs, with four kinds of duties and obligations to the society, suited to four types of human beings, having four different kinds of fundamental characteristics as ordained by God. Those whose inner nature and inborn capacities are particularly suited to the culture of the higher and subtler ideals of human life are provided with opportunities and privileges conducive to their advancement in that direction and are entrusted with the charge of the preservation, development and distribution of the intellectual, moral and spiritual treasures of the society. They are classed as Brahmans. They are expected to be so trained as to voluntarily give up all ambitions for material prosperity, set examples of plain living and high thinking and devote their time and energy to the loving service of all classes of people with their intellectual, moral and religious attainments. There is another type of men who by their



natural tendencies and capacities can be most profitably trained for and placed in charge of maintaining peace, harmony and justice among the different classes of people in the society, protecting the society from all internal and external forces of disorder, and preserving the rights and liberties of as well as enforcing the respective duties and obligations upon every individual and group within it. They are classed as Kshatriyas. There is a third type of men similarly fitted for undertaking the no less responsible duty of the production, development and distribution of the material wealth of the society. They are classed as Vaishyas. All the rest whose physical, mental and moral resources can be usefully employed in dependent service are placed in the general class of Shudras, and they are required to serve the society as subordinate assistants of the Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. These are the four main divisions, upon the harmonious relationship of which the life and progress of the Hindu society is believed to depend. They are described as the four essential parts or organs of the social body,—the Brahmans representing the head, the Kshatriyas the trunk and the arms, the Vaishyas the hips and the thighs, and the Shudras the legs. The Hindu social systems do not recognize any fifth Varna (पञ्चमी नोपपद्यते).

Though this organization of the people into such a living whole, or this division of the social organism into such organically related parts, was essentially based upon the recognition of distinctions and relations arising out of four different, but mutually complementary, types of human characteristics, the element of birth could not possibly be ignored. Heredity, family traditions, immediate domestic and social environments are quite reasonably recognized as potent factors determining the charac-

teristics of the individuals. People feeling proud of the culture of their family coming down from generation to generation think it their pleasant duty to train their children in accordance with that culture. In this way the system naturally becomes hereditary, and no inconsistency with the original principle is perceived till the mode of education and discipline becomes divorced from the cultural history of the family and the group to which the individuals belong.

#### (b) *Supremacy of Brahmans*

All the Hindu social institutions agree in this also, that the highest place of honour is allotted to the Brahmans. Here again we meet with the operation of an immanent social ideal of the Hindus. When a society is allowed to be governed by natural laws as common-sense finds them, it is the political and the economic powers of the country—the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas—that gain the upper hand in all matters and rule the society by the might of their arms and wealth. The military and the wealthy classes may have to settle their accounts with each other, and each in its turn may acquire the power of exerting a controlling influence upon the other; but they cannot be made to bow down before any other class, poorer in respect of earthly prosperity and political authority, simply on the ground that it is culturally and spiritually superior. But the Hindu social organization is based on the fundamental assumption of the supremacy of spirit over matter, of spirituality over animality, of moral and religious and intellectual culture over political and economic and materialistic grandeur of self-imposed poverty over the enjoyment of inherited or acquired property. The greater the willing sacrifice of earthly position and power and enjoyments and the higher the kind of service rendered



to the society from this point of view, the greater the worth in the estimation of the Hindu society. It is on this principle that the Brahmans, who are in duty bound to be materially poor, but culturally and spiritually rich, receive the homage of all other sections of the society. The Kshatriyas occupy the next place, because they, by the exercise of their military power and wisdom and by making adequate provisions for suitable organizations and institutions, have to look after the peaceful and steady development of the cultural and spiritual life of the society. The Vaishyas, who from the materialistic point of view ought to occupy the highest place, and upon whom the industrial, agricultural and economic development of the society depends, get the third position in this spiritual design. The Shudras, who supply labour—general as well as technical, skilled as well as unskilled—to all the departments of the society's work, and who contribute such a good deal to the existence and advancement of the life of the society, are given the lowest, but not the least important, position in this spiritually conceived organization. Each Varna has its distinctive rights, distinctive duties, distinctive courses of discipline for self-purification and distinctive forms of education and training for self-development. All these are intended for its self-fulfilment through the proper exercise of its distinctive powers and tendencies, and for making it fit for the service it is expected to render to the society.

The observations that are being made here are merely interpretative, and not critical. But it is to be remarked in connection with the principle of social organization of the Hindus, that the creation of the innumerable castes and the artificial social distinctions among them is no essential part of the organi-

zation itself, but is the result of the degeneration of the system. There can be no question of untouchability or unapproachability among the organically related parts of the same living body. Originally it was only an extreme form of penalty, allied to exile or social boycott, inflicted on particular persons or families or groups for gross violation of moral principles and social laws. It is impossible to regard any class of persons as belonging to Hinduism, and at the same time permanently untouchable to others of the same social organism. The detailed discussion of this matter must be reserved for a future occasion.

In every social organization the distinctions of higher and lower, better and worse, superior and inferior, are inevitable. It is human nature to draw idealistic distinctions alongside with naturalistic distinctions. In drawing such idealistic distinctions, there is scope enough for differences of opinion. Different men—and for the matter of that, different societies—form different conceptions about the ideal of human life. On account of such different standpoints, their judgments upon men and their modes of life naturally differ. Judgments of value or utility are always deductive. They refer to ideals, from which the degrees of value or usefulness of things are deduced. Of two things one may appear more valuable from one point of view, and another from another point of view. Of two classes of people devoted to the pursuit of two different kinds of objects or employed in making two different kinds of contributions to the well-being of the society, either class may be judged as higher or lower, superior or inferior, according to the conception of the highest standard of well-being or the highest ideal to be realized. However the different societies may differ in their conception of the ideal and their corres-



pondering judgment, no human society can altogether wipe out these distinctions from its system. These distinctions of superiority and inferiority among the different branches of any social organism give an unerring indication of the ideal immanently operating in that particular society.

In the social organizations of the Hindus in all times and places, the highest position has, as mentioned above, been allotted to the Brahmans. This implies that the ideal operating in them is chiefly cultural and spiritual, and only secondarily political and economic. There is, as we have noted, at the back of the Hindu mind a recognition of the supremacy of spirit over matter, of the soul over the body and the mind, and consequently of intellectual, moral and religious culture over physical, political and economic aggrandisement. The contributions which the Brahmans make to the general good of the society, and the influence which they exert upon all other sections, are almost wholly cultural and spiritual. The power of arms and the power of wealth are felt by everybody. In the naturalistic order of the society they occupy the supreme position. So long and so far as animality reigns in the society,

their supremacy is unchallengeable. It is only an extraordinary power of spiritual idealism that can subordinate these political and economic powers and can make them do homage to those who are culturally, morally and spiritually superior. It is this idealism which finds expression in the Brahmanical supremacy in the Hindu social organization. The ideals which all classes of Hindus seek to realize in and through the performance of their duties in the respective spheres of their life are set up by the Brahmans, and the laws which the political authorities are expected to enforce for the regulation of the activities and the development of the lives of all classes of people are also determined by the Brahmans. They are expected to have no worldly ambitions of their own, and consequently their interests cannot conflict with the interests of any other class. Hence the laws of rights and duties enacted by them are expected not only to be perfectly consistent with the ultimate principles of justice and benevolence, but also to be truly conducive to the harmonious development of the inner and outer life of each individual as well as to the advancement of the society as a whole in the direction of the highest ideal.

*(To be concluded)*

---

## MAHENDRA NATH GUPTA

BY SWAMI RAGHAVANANDA

One of the last of the Romans is gone. Of that blessed confraternity of souls called into being by the divine touch of Sri Ramakrishna and gathered round him by the mystic call of his spirit,

the number has been dwindling. Mahendra Nath Gupta, better known by the pen-name of "M." or as Master Mahasay, lived longer than many of his younger brothers and preached by life



and speech the message of his Master with unabated zeal and energy till the last. This group which gathered round the towering personality of Sri Ramakrishna like iron round a loadstone, was set apart from the rest of common humanity, by peculiar endowments of head and heart which marked them out as born to show "the way, the truth, and the life". The Master would often compare himself and his blessed group to a troupe of Bâuls (god-intoxicated souls) who suddenly appeared in human society, danced and sang the name of God and then as suddenly disappeared into the unknown, leaving man in awe and admiration, staggered by the force and fascination of their heavenly personalities. The present writer having come into intimate touch with many members of this group has felt this in his heart of hearts.

Mahendra Nath was born on the 14th July, 1854, at his family residence at Sibnarain Das Lane. His father Madhusudan Gupta and his mother Swarnamayee Devi were both very pious people. They had four sons and four daughters of whom Mahendra was the third. The outstanding impression left on Mahendra Nath by his parents was the piety of his mother to whom he was deeply attached. Once when he was only four years old, he accompanied his mother to witness the Ratha Yatra festival at Mahesh on the Ganges near Calcutta and when returning, the party landed at Dakshineswar Ghat to witness the temple of Mother Kali, then newly built by Rani Rasmoni in 1855. "The temple was all white then, new and fresh; while going round the temple I lost sight of my mother, and was crying for her on the *dais* of the temple. Some one then came from inside and caressed me and began to call out, 'Whose child is this? Where is his mother gone?' " The fond

imagination of Mahendra Nath would dwell upon the incident and love to think that it was perhaps his Master, whom he met in early life in this fugitive way. The outstanding piety of his mother so impressed him in early life, that Mahendra grew very fond of her, and when his mother died, he felt disconsolate and wept bitterly. Then one night he saw his mother in a dream speaking in a sweet voice, "I have so long protected and looked after you, I shall still continue to look after you, but you will not see me." Master Mahasay, after narrating the incident would say, "It is the Divine Mother of the universe who in one form as my earthly mother protected me in life. She is still protecting and watching over my life." Ah! what a blessed vision.

The early lineaments of his character bespoke the intense spirituality of his later life. He was from a very early age of a religious turn of mind, and the make-up of his mind was different from the ordinary. He was thus blessed with religious experience which does not fall to the lot of the majority of humanity at an early age. We cannot explain this unless we take into thought the fact that he was an *Antaranga* of Sri Ramakrishna, the Divine Incarnation, with whom he came as a helper in his present dispensation. These he narrated to Sri Ramakrishna (when he met him in later life), who was confirmed in his already formed idea about him.

This religious temperament found expression in an early manifestation of piety. From an early age, whenever passing or repassing a temple, e.g., the Siddheswari Kali Temple at Thanthania, he would bow down before the Deity and stand in awe and reverence. At the time of the Durga Puja, he would sit for long hours near the Image, in the Thakur-dalan in the house next to his, rapt in love and admiration. He



was very fond, in early age, of seeking the company of Sadhus, who visited Calcutta, specially during the occasion of Yoga for Ganges bath or Melas or *en route* to the pilgrimage of Jagannath. Later in life he would relate to us that this his habit of seeking the company of Sadhus stood him in great stead and eventually brought him to the feet of the Prince of Sadhus—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Then he would go on and intensify the impression of the utility of Sadhu-sanga on his hearer by citing the example of पक्षियज्ञ (a great ceremonial assemblage of birds). In that Yajna all the birds were invited to come, Salik, Finge, swallows and other common species and therefore it was blessed latterly with the presence of the Paramahansa, the great Swan, who came in stately gait in the wake of the other common birds to attend the Pakshi-Yajna. Thus he who seeks the company of Sadhus, is blessed eventually with the sight of the Paramahansa (freed soul) who lives and moves among the Sadhus. What a forceful and fascinating way of singing the glory of Sadhu-sanga with which all our scriptures are replete!

Mahendra Nath was an intelligent scholar. He passed the Entrance Examination from the Hare School and occupied the second place; in the F. A. Examination he stood fifth and graduated from the Presidency College in 1875 and stood third. It was during his time that the present grounds and building of the Presidency College was erected. He was a student of Mr. C. H. Tawney, the well-known Professor of English, with whom he kept up correspondence even after his retirement. This professor afterwards wrote a brochure on Sri Ramakrishna and his life.

Towards the end of his college career, he married the daughter of Thakur

Charan Sen, Srimati Nikunja Devi, who was related to the well-known religious teacher Keshab Chandra Sen as cousin. Nikunja Devi was also blessed with intimate acquaintance of Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother and obtained their grace and love.

Entering the household life he first served as headmaster of different schools, *e.g.*, the Narail High School, City, Aryan, Model, Metropolitan, Shyambazar Branch and Oriental Seminary. Besides this he served in the City, Ripon, Metropolitan College as Professor of English literature, Mental and Moral Science, History and Political Economy. In 1882 when he first met Sri Ramakrishna, he was serving as teacher in the Shyambazar Branch School, established by Pandit Vidya-sagar.

Before he met Sri Ramakrishna, the religious teacher whom he frequented and looked up to as his ideal was Keshab Chandra Sen. Keshab was then in the plenitude of his power and popularity and by his sermons and religious discourses and saintly character had won the heart of many Bengali youths like Mahendra Nath. He attended many of his Upasanas both at his family house and at the Navavidhan temple. He used to say that the soul-stirring prayers of Keshab, delivered in such sweet language and voice, his face bright with the enthusiasm of a prophet, produced a great impression on him, and Keshab appeared to him like a god. He had heard no one speak with such power, and none had stirred his soul so much before. Latterly Mahendra Nath used to say that Keshab's sermons appealed to him perhaps because he was then contacting his Master through Keshab and his light was then coming to him reflected through the medium of Keshab Chandra. Keshab had then already



made the acquaintance of Sri Ramakrishna and used to visit him in the company of his friends and disciples.

It was at this time, in the spring of 1882, that he first met his Master Sri Ramakrishna sitting in his room in the temple-garden of Dakshineswar discoursing on God before a rapt circle of listeners. The first meeting captivated the heart and soul of the disciple and he returned home, a slave to his love, to revisit him soon, ultimately to dedicate his all at the feet of his Master. Educated in Western lore, saturated with the writings of Western philosophers, Kant, Hegel, Hamilton and Herbert Spencer, he had shared the meaningless iconoclasm of the age and intellectual sufficiency of modern knowledge, had a little of its *hauteur* and considered himself a Jnani, a man of knowledge. But a few hard knocks from the Master were enough to shatter his intellectual pride, shut his mouth, and place him in the position of a learner at the feet of one to whom knowledge was direct perception and revelation. The real Jnana is knowledge of God, the Ultimate Reality; all other knowledge, limited and sense-bound, is only a form of ignorance. This he was never tired of iterating in later life to his listeners. "Intellect has been weighed in the balance and found wanting; intellect, a feeble organon, limited and conditioned by the senses, cannot solve the problem of the Unconditioned and the Unlimited. Revelation is necessary to have a knowledge of the Unconditioned Reality." And for that, the association of Sadhus who are ever communing with the Infinite and Eternal and trying to commune, free from all distractions and isolated from all disturbing factors and thus capable of long and continued communion, is the *sine qua non* of religious knowledge. That alone will give us in

tangible form the *suddha mana* and *buddhi* (pure mind) which will receive and catch messages from the Beyond, the Unconditioned and Infinite Reality. Without that no amount of intellectual knowledge and study of scriptures is of any avail to take us into the region of the Unconditioned.

He found in his Master one to whom knowledge was revelation, who was not walking in the dim twilight of finite knowledge, half-light, and half-darkness, but ever in the clear daylight of revelation and direct perception of truths in supersensuous consciousness (Samadhi). He found it in his Master, as he found in none other. His Master's intense hunger for truth, his frequent plunges into the depths of superconsciousness (Samadhi), his perception of God, as a very near and ever-present Reality, and his sweet-souled and rapturous communion with the Divine Mother and conversation with Her produced a deep impression on Mahendra Nath and putting aside all vanities of education, he became a rapt listener to the flow of revealed knowledge that fell from the lips of his beloved Master in trance, semi-trance and in states of outward consciousness. This attitude he maintained to the last. Seeing his attitude of rapt wonderment, drinking in his words, the Master once called him to himself and broke the secret! "Whatever you hear falling from this mouth, know, it is the Mother speaking." Mahendra Nath was thus confirmed in his view.

His Master recognized at first sight the spiritual calibre of Mahendra Nath, and the wonderful spiritual material which lay imbedded in his make-up waiting for a spark of the Divine Fire. He was a little shocked to hear from his mouth, in answer to his query, that he had already bound himself by marital ties and that a son had been born to



him! The Master felt sorry, 'Alas! alas!' he said. For it was the Master's idea that one must conserve all one's power and not scatter it in cares of family life or worldly pursuits. One should direct the whole collected and concentrated energy of mind, body and soul Godwards; then only there will be a wonderful development of spirituality. Then He explained to Mahendra Nath, "I can see from the signs of your eyes, brows and face, that you are a Yogi. You look like a Yogi who has just left his seat of meditation." Such was the concentrated force of Yoga, of deep God-thinking, impressed on his features, transparent to the eye of the Master; and the Master knew that if all the material that lay in him had taken fire, it would have produced a wonderful conflagration of spirituality.

The Master then began to train him for his work, as helper in his Lila, for which he had brought Mahendra Nath with him. He began to advise him how to live the life of *Grihasta-Sannyasa* and all his instructions to him tended that way. In his first meeting when Sri M. asked the Master how to live in the world, the Master said (See *Kathamrita* Part I, Khanda I, Chapter 5 :

"Do all your work, but keep your mind on God. Wife, children, father and mother, live with all and serve them, as if they are your own, but know in your mind that your relations with them are temporary.

"The maid-servant of a rich man's house, does all the work of the household but her mind flies to where her native home is in the country. She calls her Master's children hers and brings them up as such, she calls them, 'My Ram, My Hari,' but knows in her mind that they are none of her own.

"The tortoise swims about in the waters of the lake, but his mind is fixed to where her eggs are laid on the

banks. So do all the work of the world, but keep the mind in God.

"After attaining to love of God, if you mix in worldly work, you will remain non-attached.

"For that one must retire to solitude occasionally and think on God intensely and exclusively.

"In order to raise butter from milk, one must let the milk set into curd in a solitary place, then one must, sitting alone, with concentration, churn the curd; then the butter will rise on the top and that butter will float on the water and not get mixed up with it.

"Similarly if by prayer and meditation in a solitary place one can raise the butter of love and knowledge of God in the mind, then keep the mind in worldly work, it will float on the waters of the world, it will remain non-attached; in the world, but not of it."

How difficult it is to practise these things in worldly life, in the midst of wife, children, money, and hundred worldly distractions, in the storm-centre of life exposed to gusts from all directions,—any one who has attempted it knows in his heart of hearts. It becomes easier if one isolates oneself in early life, fixes one's thoughts first on God and then mixes in the world. Yet Mahendra Nath, through the grace of the Guru, carried it to success, and attained to perfect Yoga in God in the midst of the storm and stress of life. The grace of the Guru made the impossible possible. Any one who had seen Mahendra Nath in later life would bear testimony to the fact that he lived in the world only in name, that his mind was always in union with God, revelling in His Love and Knowledge. His unbounded joy in the company of Bhaktas and Sadhus, which he always prayed for, the incessant flow of his words while talking of God and things of God, his easiness of



access to the Bhaktas at any hour of the day or evening, ready to sit in their company and hold unwearied discourse on God and his Master's life and personality till a late hour of the night, were a phenomenon to see, and wonder that in this Kali Yuga, when there are so many obstructions, it is possible to live in the world, wrapt in the love and thought of God. In the latter part of his life when he lived in 50, Ahmerst Street, it was a place of pilgrimage to many, and some visited it everyday. Whenever you would go, you would find that either, he was listening to some devotional scriptures being read, and making comments occasionally, or he was talking of his Master and his teachings throwing wonderful sidelights from the life and teachings of Jesus, Chaitanya and Sri Krishna by apposite references to the Bible, Puran, Bhagavat, Upanishad, etc. There was no other talk, no other discussion, say, of Politics,

Sociology or anything. If these were brought in by some venturesome questioner, they were at once turned skilfully to a religious topic, to the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, and the whole atmosphere was changed. No word was heard but the word of God, no word was spoken but the word of God, no word was read but the word of God.

The Master knew that Mahendra Nath was one of his 'officers,' destined to preach his word, and he began to train and commission him for the purpose. So we find one day in July, 1883, the Master, in one of his trances, praying to the Mother about Mahendra Nath, "Mother, why have you given him only one Kalâ of Power! I see! That will be sufficient for your work?" So as early as that, all these arrangements were being made secretly with the Mother, commissioning the disciples with power, so that they would do the work of teaching people in future.

*(To be continued)*

## SOCIALISM IDEALISM IN GOETHE'S LYRICS AND DRAMAS

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

*(Concluded from the last issue)*

### GOETHE AS FATHER OF ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

In the summer of 1827, some five years before his death, Goethe received a letter from Walter Scott. "I feel myself highly honoured," wrote Scott, "that any of my productions should have been so fortunate as to attract the attention of Goethe, to the number of

whose admirers I have belonged since the year 1798, when notwithstanding my slight knowledge of the German language, I was bold enough to translate into English the *Goetz von Berlichingen*. In the youthful undertaking, I had quite forgotten that it is not enough to feel the beauty of a work of genius, but that one must also thoroughly understand the language in which it is



written before one can succeed in making such beauty apparent to others. Nevertheless, I still set some value on that youthful effort, because it at least shows that I knew how to choose a subject which was worthy of admiration."

Scott, translator of Goethe! In this little fact of literary history lies, to a great extent, hidden the great history of a superb movement in the world's thought. Even as the renowned author of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808) and the *Waverley Novels* (1814) Scott was looking up to Goethe in 1827 with all the warm feelings of a youngster. The same spirit of hearty admiration which had prompted him to produce the "Youthful undertaking," namely, the translation of *Goetz*, pervades the letter from beginning to end. That "youthful effort" was valuable to him still, the "subject," "worthy of admiration" and the piece "a work of genius." This abiding enthusiasm for Goethe's drama, composed as it was on a mediaeval German Knight, enables us to psycho-analyse the soul of Scott as an embodiment of romanticism in British literature. And we visualize at once that a great deal of the romantic movement in the world's literature is to be fathered upon Goethe, the genuinely adored "Guru" of Scott.

The revival of mediaevalism is one of the chief items in Scott's contributions to idealism and romanticism.

It is this same "Back to the Middle Ages" that Scott in his younger days discovered in the work of the famous German contemporary. *Goetz*, the hero of Goethe's drama, flourished in the fifteenth century during the reign of Maximilian I, Emperor of Germany. Previous to this period the German nobles,—from big princes and prelates down to the petty Knights and Barons,—enjoyed *Faustrecht*, the privilege of carrying on private wars. But in 1495

this privilege was abolished by an ordinance of Maximilian.

"Upon the jarring interests of the princes and clergy on the one hand and of the Free Knights and petty imperial feudatories on the other," says Scott in the preface to his English translation of *Goetz*, "arise the incidents of the following drama. The hero was in reality a zealous champion for the privileges of the Free Knights, and was repeatedly laid under the ban of the Empire for the feuds in which he was engaged, from which he was only released in consequence of high reputation for gallantry and generosity."

Scott writes further, "In Germany it is the object of enthusiastic admiration; partly owing doubtless to the force of national partiality towards a performance in which the ancient manners of the country are faithfully and forcibly painted."

It is in antiquarian productions like Percy's *Reliques* (1765) and Chatterton's *Forgeries* (1769) that literary criticism as a rule attempts to trace the beginnings of Scott's themes. And of course for a non-British source of romanticism in Scott as in others it is the universal custom to cite Rousseau. But in regard to romanticism in general as well as to Scott's poems and novels in particular,—especially so far as mediaevalism is concerned,—the student of world-literature would have his feet on perfectly solid ground if he were to single out that finished product of literary art entitled *Goetz* as the chief source of creative inspiration. It remains to add that the original German was published in 1778 when Goethe was only twenty-four years old.

#### GOETHE AS THE WORLD'S FIRST NATIONALIST

If *Goetz* (1778) is a drama in which Goethe enables us to have a glimpse into



his view of the internal constitution of the German empire and of the mutual political relations between its different members, the tragedy entitled *Egmont* (1786) is a study in foreign subjection and the problems of external freedom. Goethe here analyses the fortunes of the Dutch people smarting under the double tyranny of Spain, political and religious.

In Act I, Scene 2 we find the Spanish regent, Margaret of Parma much vexed over the rebellious disturbances in this and that province of the Netherlands. She is discussing the gravity of the situation with her Secretary Machiavel with special reference to the character of Count Egmont whose loyalty to the Spanish Emperor she finds very questionable. Machiavel says in the course of the conversation in part as follows :—

“How can we hope to acquire and to maintain the confidence of the Netherlander, when he sees that we are more interested in appropriating his possessions, than in promoting his welfare, temporal or spiritual? Does the number of souls saved by the new bishops exceed that of the fat benefices they have swallowed? And are they not for the most part foreigners?”

In addition to this “economic interpretation” of foreign rule Goethe has put into Machiavel’s mouth some considerations such as might be regarded as constituting the core of the latter-day “principle of nationality.” Says Machiavel :

“Will not people prefer being governed by their own countrymen and according to their ancient customs, rather than by foreigners, who from their first entrance into the land, endeavour to enrich themselves at the general expense, who measure everything by a foreign standard, and who exercise their authority without cordiality or sympathy?”

While reading this sentence it were well to note that *Egmont* was published

three years before the French Revolution and two decades before the German people found itself in the condition of the Netherlands of the sixteenth century and had to undertake the war of liberation (1806-1813) against Napoleon. But nobody can ignore that in these sentiments of Goethe we are encountering the beginnings of that modern philosophy of nationalism which has had such powerful European exponents as Fichte, List, Mazzini, John Stuart Mill and others.

In Act IV Scene 2 we have the patriot-martyr Egmont himself speaking in reply to the Duke of Alva. Some of Goethe’s words on Egmont’s lips are given below :—

“It is easy for the shepherd to drive before him a flock of sheep; the ox draws the plough without opposition; but if you would ride the noble steed, you must study his thoughts, you must require nothing unreasonable, nor unreasonably, from him.

“The burgher desires to retain his ancient constitution; to be governed by his own countrymen; and why? Because he knows in that case how he shall be ruled, because he can rely upon their disinterestedness, upon their sympathy with his fate.

“Natural is it, that the burgher should prefer being governed by one born and reared in the same land, whose notions of right and wrong are in harmony with his own and whom he can regard his brother.”

Verily, the creator of *Egmont* is the world’s first “Nationalist.” Besides, Goethe’s *Egmont* is not a mere orator or demagogue. His death sentence he meets with the following words :—

“And now from this dungeon I shall go forth to meet a glorious death; I die for freedom, for whose cause I have lived and fought and for whom I now offer myself up a sorrowing sacrifice.



"Protect your homes! And to save those who are most dear to you, be ready to follow my example, and to fall with joy."

In 1786 Goethe was thirty-seven years old. It is the "storm and stress" embodied in his *Egmont* that was later followed up by Schiller in *Wilhelm Tell* and other plays of national freedom.

#### GOETHE'S PATRIOTISM

Goethe's patriotism finds a vigorous expression later in *Hermann and Dorothea* (1796-97). There, while referring to the French invasion of the Rhineland Hermann speaks as follows:—

"But, alas, how near is the foe!  
By the Rhine's flowing waters  
We are protected indeed; but what  
are rivers and mountains  
To such a terrible nation, which  
hurries along like a tempest!"

Hermann's patriotic sense counsels him to a course of action which is far above the duties prescribed by ordinary civic manners and morals. To his mother this young man explains the situation in the following manner:—

"Ah! and can Germans dare to remain  
at home in their dwellings  
Thinking perchance to escape from the  
widely threat'ning disaster?  
Dearest mother, I tell you that I  
to-day am quite sorry  
That I was lately excused, when they  
selected the fighters out of the  
townsfolk."

Hermann considers it a sin to have been excused because of his being the "only son." He feels that he is a "shirker" and declares:—

"Were it not better however for me  
to fight in the vanguard  
On the frontier, than have to await  
disaster and bondage?  
Yes, my spirit has told me, and in my  
innermost bosom

Feel I courage and longing to live and  
die for my country  
And to others to set an example  
worthy to follow."

In these lofty words Goethe has spoken not only for himself *visà-vis* France but for all generations of youths yearning for self-sacrifice and martyrdom at the altar of the country's freedom. Goethe is here the spokesman of the same "Youth Movement" which about a decade later was to get a shape in the philosophical idealism of Fichte's *Lectures to the German Nation* (1808). The youths who under the inspiration of Schiller and Fichte as well as Koerner and Arndt, the singers of freedom, fought the war of liberation against Napoleon (1806-13) were but embodiments of the "spirit" and "innermost bosom" of Goethe's Hermann. It is Hermann who for the first time in German poetry visualized the following picture:—

"Oh of a truth, if the strength of the  
German youths was collected  
On the frontier, all bound by a vow  
not to yield to the stranger,  
He on our noble soil should never set  
foot, or be able  
Under our eyes to consume the fruits  
of the land or to issue  
Orders unto our men or despoil our  
women and maidens!"

Those who are watching to-day the rising tide of nationalism and patriotism among the German youths under Hitler's leadership will have to follow it up straight back to the Hermann of Goethe in order to understand the beginnings of the constructive youth movement. Naturally, once more do we find Goethe as the fountain-head of German *Kultur*, and we feel how Goethe has earned immortality in Germany.

This sort of anti-French patriotism should not be regarded as anything exceptional in Goethe's idealism, his admiration for Napoleon in later life not-



withstanding. For, one cannot forget the fact that the very inspiration of Goethe as a young man of letters was furnished by the ambition to emancipate German *Kultur* from the prevailing Gallicisms in art and life,—in one word from the thralldom of France. Anti-Frenchism was indeed the source of his predilections for Gothic art, Teutonic folk-manners and the romantic exploits of the German Middle Ages.

#### GOETHE AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

In 1789 when the French Revolution broke out Goethe was already forty years old. And although not as young as when author of *Goetz* (1771-73) or of *Egmont* (1786) he was in a position to write in 1796-97 on those "ideas of 1789" as follows :—

"Who can deny that his heart beat  
wildly and high in his bosom.  
And that with purer pulses his  
breast more freely was throbbing?  
When the new born sun first rose in  
the whole of its glory,  
When we heard of the right of man,  
to have all things in common,  
Heard of noble Equality, and of  
inspiring Freedom.  
Each man then hoped to attain new  
life for himself, and the fetters  
Which had encircled many a land  
appeared to be broken,  
Fetters held by the hands of sloth  
and selfish indolence."

These are the words of a German fugitive—the leader of a company of men and women running away from the French Revolutionary invaders of the Rhineland, and the piece is a lyrical epic in nine cantos known as *Hermann and Dorothea*. The general conflagration which started in Paris thus left a powerful impression on Goethe as on the English poets of the age. To go on with Goethe's sentiments :—

"Did not all nations turn their  
gaze, in those days of emotion,  
Towards the world's capital, which  
so many a long year had been so,  
And then more than ever deserved  
a name so distinguished?  
Were not the men, who first  
proclaim'd so noble a message,  
Names that are worthy to rank with  
the highest the sun ever shone on,  
Did not each give to mankind his  
courage and genius and  
language?"

In this open-hearted enthusiasm of Goethe while nearing fifty we have once more the "storm and stress" of Goetz, almost the hundred per cent idealism of Shelley. But it was not long before Goethe was disillusioned and like Wordsworth and many others had to exclaim : "Gone is that vision, the melancholy dream!" As we read in *Hermann and Dorothea*,

"But the heavens soon clouded  
became. For the sake of the  
mast'ry

Strove a contemptible crew, unfit to  
accomplish good actions."

But although Goethe could not continue to behave like "a kinsman of the wind and fire" he did not fail to become an exponent of democracy. In 1824 speaking to Eckermann of *Die Aufgeregten* (The Excited), a dramatic fragment composed in 1794 Goethe says :—

"I wrote it at the time of the French Revolution and it may be regarded in some measure, as my political confession of faith at that time. I have taken the countess as a type of nobility. . . . 'I will for the future,' says she (after returning from Paris), 'strenuously avoid every action that appears to me unjust, and will, both in society and at court, loudly express my opinion concerning such actions in others. In no case of injustice will I be silent, even though I should be cried down as a democrat.' "



"I should have thought this sentiment perfectly respectable," continued Goethe; "it was mine at that time and it is so still."

At the moment of this conversation he was seventy-five years old.

Goethe could not afford to be or rather remain an extremist. An entire generation after the events of 1789-98 he explained the situation, again, to Eckermann, thus :—

"It is true that I could be no friend to the French Revolution; for its horrors were too near me, and shocked me daily and hourly. Whilst its beneficial results were not then to be discovered. Neither could I be indifferent to the fact that the Germans were endeavouring, artificially, to bring about such scenes here, as were, in France, the consequence of a great necessity."

These are Goethe's "reflections on the French Revolution" almost in the language and spirit of Edmund Burke.

"But," says he, "I was as little a friend to arbitrary rule. Indeed I was perfectly convinced that a great revolution is never a fault of the people, but of the government. Revolutions are utterly impossible as long as Government are constantly just and constantly vigilant, so that they may anticipate by improvements at the right time, and not hold out until they are forced to yield by the pressure from beneath."

To use a modern category, Goethe was thus a "liberal," indeed, perhaps, the first liberal so far as the Germans are concerned. He was a champion of "ordered" "freedom," i.e., a "conservative" (*Freund des Bestehenden*, friend of the established order, the *status quo*) by all means and in the best sense of the term and yet a constitutionalist and a democrat. It is not possible to look upon him as a reactionary and obscurantist or a "friend of the powers that be" in the sinister sense. On the

contrary, his biological studies in metamorphosis endowed him with the sense of evolution.

It was an article of faith with Goethe that "time is constantly progressing, and human affairs wear every fifty years a different aspect; so that an arrangement, which in the year 1800 was perfection, may, perhaps in the year 1850 be a defect." One of the first progressivists of the modern world, then, is Goethe. Even towards the close of his life he was not attacked by despondency or pessimism. His soul remained the farthest removed from Byronic despair. It was not for nothing that Carlyle's gospel of hope and energism for Young England found expression in the dictum: "Close thy Byron, open thy Goethe."

#### GOETHE'S PARIAH IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAUST, PARTS I AND II

Sceptical agnosticism is the dominant note in *Faust*, Part I (1778—1806). There Goethe's catechism is embodied in the following conversation :—

"*Margaret*: Dost thou believe in God?

"*Faust*: Doth mortal live

Who dares to say that he believes  
in God?

Go, bid the priest a truthful  
answer give,

Go, ask the wisest who on earth  
e'er trod,—

Their answer will appear to be  
Given alone in mockery."

As this intellectual gymnastics does not satisfy the simple Gretchen, she wants to know more definitely and asks the following question :—

"Then thou dost not believe? This sayest thou?" The answer from Faust to this rather inconvenient query is again another exercise in ratiocination. It is worded as follows :—



"Sweet love, mistake not what I utter  
now !

Who knows His name?  
Who dares proclaim :—  
Him I believe?  
Who so careful  
His heart to steel  
To say : I believe Him not;  
The All-Embracer,  
The All-Sustainer,  
Holds and sustains He not  
Thee, me, Himself?  
Hang not the heavens their arch  
o'erhead?  
Lies not the earth beneath us, firm?  
Gleam not with kindly glances  
Eternal stars on high?  
Looks not mine eye deep into thine?  
And do not all things  
Crowd on thy head and heart,  
And round thee twine, in mystery  
eterne,

Invisible, yet visible?  
Fill, then, thy heart, however vast,  
with this,  
And when the feeling perfecteth thy  
bliss,  
O, call it what thou wilt,  
Call it joy ! heart ! love ! God !  
No name for it I know !  
'Tis feeling all—nought else ;  
Name is but sound and smoke,  
Obscuring heaven's bright glow."

Neither Christianity nor Hinduism nor any other established religion would have accepted these questionings and psychological analyses as consistent with the demands of faith as traditionally understood.

Goethe's message of "joy, heart, love, God" as the eternal principle of the universe is quite indifferent as to exactly what it is, whether joy, or heart or love or God. "'Tis feeling all, and nought else." The supreme consideration,—the only touchstone is to be found in the factual experience that the feeling "perfecteth thy bliss." Goethe was pro-

claiming the sovereignty of feeling and was breaking away from the past in religion as in many other things. Here as elsewhere he was demolishing the old world,—the *ancient regime*—and bringing a new world into being. And that new world of scepticism, nationalism and agnosticism,—but all this under the benign guidance of the heart, feeling, bliss,—is the world in which not only Eur-America but Asia also still lives. In Goethe's challenge to the gods and subversion of the old religious traditions we have to seek the beginnings of the artistic creation of modern spirituality. It is to Goethe's poetry that mankind to-day owes the birth of its new conscience and new devotion.

The *Pariah-trilogy*, composed in 1821, is Indian in theme, as the title indicates. Goethe's Pariah prays as follows :—

"We are not of noble kind,  
For with woe our lot is rife ;  
And what others deadly find  
Is our only source of life.  
Let this be enough for men,  
Let them, if they will, despise us ;  
But thou, Brahma, thou shouldst  
prize us,

All are equal in thy Ken."  
In the "legend"—portion we read :  
"Water-fetching goes the noble  
Brahmin's wife, so pure and lovely."  
If the Pariah sings of equality of man in the eyes of God, the Brahmin's wife has to narrate the story of her fall owing to Brahma's ordinance because of transgression, thus—

"He 'twas sent the beauteous  
pinions,  
Radiant face, and slender members  
of the only God-begotten,  
That I might be proved and  
tempted.

\*

"And so I, the Brahmin woman,  
With my head in Heaven reclining,



Must experience as a Pariah,  
The debasing power of earth."

The Pariah and the Brahmin woman are thus united in a common misery and the Indian message finds expression in Goethe's poetry as that of God's neutrality in regard to the social classes. We read:—

"None is in his eyes the meanest—  
\*

Be he Brahmin, be he Pariah  
If toward heaven he turns his gaze,  
Will perceive, will learn to know it.  
Thousand eyes are glowing yonder,  
Thousand ears are calmly list'ning,  
From which nought below is hid."

The Brahmin woman, "transformed to horror" by Brahma's might as she is, is not indeed content with her lot. Her sorrows she declares in the following words:

"Heb ich mich zu seinem Throne,  
Schant er mich, die Grausenhafte  
\*

Und ich werd ihn freundlich  
mahnen,

Und ich werd ihm wuetend sagen,  
Wie es mir der Sinn gebietet  
Wie es mir im Busen schwellet."

The conflict with Brahma's judgment reads thus in English:

"If I to his throne soar upward,  
If he sees my fearful figure  
\*

And I now will kindly warn him,  
And now I will madly tell him  
Whatsoever my mind conceiveth,  
What within my bosom heaveth."

But her grief is too deep for tears.  
And so

"But my thoughts, my inmost  
feelings—

Those a secret shall remain."

In spite of this tragic discontent with her destiny the pariahized Brahmin woman feels about Brahma and the Pariahs as follows:—

"Muss er ewig mich bejammern,

Euch zugute.komme das."  
(He for ever will lament it,—  
May it to your good be found.)

The ultimate triumph of Brahma's justice to mankind is the *leitmotif* of this woman's message to her son. She wants him to be a bearer of this message and in this capacity to

"Wander on through ev'ry nation  
Roam abroad throughout all ages.  
And proclaim to e'en the meanest."

It is the mystical, inexplicable spirit of faith in God that pervades the *Pariah-triology*. Although a sceptic throwing out a challenge to the gods in certain moods Goethe is capable not only of thus believing in God's mercy for all, high and low, but of still higher ranges of devotion. Nay, Part II of *Faust*, completed in (1831) the year before his death, breathes in certain portions, especially the last scene, almost the mystical emotionalism of *Paradiso* in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It is from Goethe, that the following verse has come:

"Thou who ne'er thy radiant face  
From the greatest sinners hidest,  
Thou who thine atoning grace  
Through eternity providest,  
Let this soul, by virtue stirred,  
Self-forgetful though when living,  
That perceived not that it err'd,  
Feel thy mercy, sin forgiving!"

Who would believe that this little devotional song has been composed by the "pagan" Goethe? It is, moreover, almost a miracle that the agnostic and protestant poet should pen a Catholic Dantesque hymnlet like the following:—

"Be each virtue of the mind  
To thy service be given!  
Virgin, mother, be thou kind!  
Goddess, queen of heaven!"

And the last words of *Faust*, Part II, namely,

"The ever-womanly  
Draws us on high,"



while summarizing for us the whole personality of the poet remind us once more of his spiritual affinity to the mysticism of the creator of Beatrice.

One understands indeed very little of the diversity of life's urges when one does not know that Goethe ended like Dante.

## ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

BY TARAKNATH DAS, Ph.D.

There are bigots among the Hindus who do not see anything worth while in other religions. But the real nature of Hinduism is universal toleration and appreciation of all religions. This being the case, a true Hindu finds truth in Christianity and other religions. This was the attitude of Sri Ramakrishna. It is not our intention to discuss the real teachings of Christianity, although we wish to make some comments on *some phases of the organization of Roman Catholic Church*.

The following news item from Vatican City dated April 7, 1932, will throw some light on the universal character of the organization of Roman Catholic Church—

“The new Vatican directory was presented to Pope Pius this morning by Mgr. Ottaviani, Under-Secretary of State. It shows there are 1,609 Roman Catholic Archbishops and Bishops, as well as sixty-five Cardinals.

Europe has 673; North and South America 445; Asia 277; Africa 140; Oceania 74. United States has 109; Canada 74; Mexico 34; Argentina 10; Bolivia 11; Brazil 74; Chile 13 and Columbia 27.”

While there are 65 Cardinals and 1,609 Roman Catholic archbishops and bishops scattered all over the world, the number of Roman Catholic priests, monks, nuns and lay brothers must be several hun-

dreds of thousands. Roman Catholic Church maintains hundreds of thousands parochial schools, hundreds of universities and thousands of hospitals all over the world.

Furthermore it may be of interest to note that the section of “propagation faith” whose headquarters are located in Vatican City, *this year* raised \$2,600,000 or about 80 lakhs of rupees from voluntary contributions. This year's contribution is about thirty per cent less than what was collected last year. In short Roman Catholic Church, under the direction of the General Council of Propagation of Faith alone, annually spends about one crore of rupees. The cost of educational, philanthropic and social service activities and maintenance of various religious orders of Roman Catholic Church all over the world, will amount to several billion dollars annually. The empire of Roman Catholic Church is vast and it is possibly the greatest organization in the world. Its stability is due to the character of the organization, which is at once a mixture of theocracy, aristocracy and representative system. The Pope, the head of the Church, is regarded as the infallible and undisputed ruler of the Church. But he is chosen by the College of Cardinals which is composed of 65 Cardinals representing the Roman Catholic world. These Cardinals are the



Princes of the Church—real aristocrats of intellect, (chosen from various nationalities and races) who have given their best energy for the service of the Church and thus risen to such important positions. Although there are hundreds of thousands priests in Roman Catholic Church there are only sixteen hundred bishops and archbishops and only sixty-five Cardinals. The bishops and archbishops are the rulers of their districts or domains and yet absolutely subordinate to the authority of Church.

The democratic character of Roman Catholic Church is evident from its organization. There are rich and poor, learned and ignorant people within the fold of the Church; but before the Church "all men are born free and equal." *There is no "untouchability."* A son of a king, or a son of a peasant can enter the priesthood or some religious order after fulfilling the requirements. It is not uncommon that a

peasant's son, through sheer merit rises to the position of the Pope. The case of the late Pope Pius X is a recent example.

Another interesting feature of Roman Catholic Church is that it takes the greatest interest in matters of education of the children belonging to the Church. Here lies the real strength of this great Organization spreading all over the world and which wields tremendous influence in world affairs, even greater than many World Powers.

Roman Catholic Church has within its fold the greatest theologians and real devotees, as well as most eminent scholars—scientists, engineers, medical men and statesmen. Those who are working to bring about rejuvenation of Hindu society will be profited by studying the system of organization of Roman Catholic Church, some phase of which may be utilized to promote Hindu solidarity.

---

## MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY

### REPORT FOR 1931

We have great pleasure in placing before the public the record of work done by this institution during 1931. It has been doing its humble work of service among the hill people for the last 28 years through its Outdoor and Indoor Departments. The institution is becoming more and more popular with the people with the lapse of years. The Dispensary is within the precincts of Advaita Ashrama and is conducted with great efficiency under the charge of a monastic member of the Ashrama, whose knowledge of Medical Science qualifies him for this work. Patients come to the Dispensary from a distance of even one or two

days' journey. The Doctor also goes round the villages to render service to such patients as are not able to come to the Indoor Hospital. Service is rendered to all irrespective of caste, creed or sex.

The total number of patients relieved during the year at the Outdoor Dispensary was 6,165, of which 4,697 were new cases and 1,468 repeated cases. Of these new cases, 2,115 were men, 1,182 women and 1,400 children. In the Indoor Hospital the total number treated was 149, of which 121 were discharged cured, 28 left treatment, and 5 died. Of these 80 were men, 31 women and 38 children.



## STATEMENT OF DISEASES

(INDOOR INCLUDED)

Dysentery ... ..	112	Diseases of the Nose ... ..	78
Enteric Fever ... ..	4	Diseases of the Circulatory System ...	15
Gonococcal Infection ... ..	54	All Diseases of the Respiratory System	
Syphilis ... ..	65	except Pneumonia and Tuberculosis	423
Malarial Fever ... ..	265	Diseases of the Stomach ... ..	105
Influenza ... ..	20	Diseases of the Intestines ... ..	124
Pneumonia ... ..	17	Diseases of the Liver ... ..	86
Diseases of the Ductless Gland ...	60	All other Diseases of the Digestive	
Pyrexia of Uncertain Origin ...	237	System ... ..	378
Rheumatic Fever ... ..	16	Acute Inflammation of the Lymphatic	
Tuberculosis ... ..	14	Glands ... ..	72
Worms ... ..	60	Diseases of the Urinary System ...	47
All other Infective Diseases ...	27	Diseases of the Generative System ...	51
Anæmia ... ..	15	Inflammation (ulcerative) ... ..	227
Rickets ... ..	11	Other Diseases of the Skin ... ..	200
Diseases due to Disorders of Nutrition		All other Local Diseases ... ..	132
and Metabolism ... ..	207	Injuries (Local and General) ... ..	52
All other General Diseases ...	54	Operations ... ..	13
Diseases of the Nervous System ...	169		
Diseases of the Eye ... ..	1,342		
Diseases of the Ear ... ..	94		
		<b>TOTAL</b> ... ..	<b>4,846</b>

## SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS FOR 1931

## RECEIPTS

	Rs.	A.	P.
Last Year's Balance ...	4,019	10	10
Subscriptions and Donations ...	877	10	0
Endowments ... ..	1,500	0	0
Interest ... ..	200	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b> ... ..	<b>6,597</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

## EXPENDITURE

	Rs.	A.	P.
Medicines and Diet ... ..	460	12	3
Instruments and Equipments ...	77	3	3
Establishment ... ..	39	3	0
Doctor's Maintenance and			
Travelling ... ..	380	0	0
Miscellaneous including repairs	19	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b> ... ..	<b>976</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>BALANCE</b> ... ..	<b>5,620</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>

We cordially thank all our donors who by their continued support have made it possible for us to be of some service to humanity in this distant hills. Our thanks are specially due to Mr. Rathnasabhapathy Chettiar, Madras, for an endowment of Rs. 1,500 for one bed in memory of his father Ratnavelu Chettiar; to His Highness the Maharaja of Morvi for his yearly donation of Rs. 350; to Mr. J. M. Billimoria, Bombay, for a donation of Rs. 100 and to Mr. P. K. Nair for his subscription of Rs. 120. Our thanks are also due to Messrs. Anglo-French Drug Co., Ltd. (Eastern), Ranaghat Chemical Works, Bengal Immunity Co., J. D. Riedel-E-de Haen

A.G., and I.G. Farbenindustrie Aktiengesellschaft for supplying us their preparations free.

We have at present two rooms to accommodate 4 patients in the Indoor Hospital, a number too small to meet the increasing demand. We are, therefore, contemplating the construction of a new ward of 8 beds with all accessories, which means an expenditure of at least Rs. 15,000, an amount which the Dispensary cannot afford at present. We, therefore, appeal to the generous public to extend their kind help to such a useful institution.

We also appeal to the kind-hearted gentlemen for a Permanent Fund for the maintenance of the Dispensary and its



Indoor Hospital of 12 beds. An endowment of Rs. 1,500, will meet the cost of maintaining one bed.

Donors desirous of perpetuating the memory of their departed friends or relatives may do so through this humanitarian work by bearing the costs of any of the above-mentioned wants of the Dispensary.

Any contributions, however small, either

for the building or for the upkeep of the Dispensary, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

(Sd.) SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA  
President, Advaita Asrama,

P.O. Mayavati,  
Dt. Almora, U.P.

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### CHAPTER XIX

#### REPOSE IN SELF

जनक उवाच ।

तत्त्वविज्ञानसन्दंशमादाय हृदयोदरात् ।

नानाविधपरामर्शशल्योद्धारः कृतो मया ॥ १ ॥

जनकः Janaka उवाच said :

मया By me तत्त्वविज्ञानसन्दंशं the pincers of the knowledge of Truth आदाय taking हृदयोदरात् from the inmost recess of my heart नानाविधपरामर्शशल्योद्धारः the extraction of the thorn of the different judgments कृतः is done.

Janaka said :

1. I have extracted from the inmost recess of my heart the thorn<sup>1</sup> of different disquisitions with the pincers of the knowledge of Truth.

[Janaka, the disciple, having heard about bliss in Self and realised the same, is now recounting in the following eight verses his own repose in Self for the satisfaction of his Guru.

<sup>1</sup> Thorn etc.—Doubts and disquisitions are always a great obstacle to the vision of Truth causing extreme anguish to the aspiring soul. Just as a thorn is extracted with a pair of pincers, so the thorn of doubts and disquisitions can be removed by the light of Knowledge transmitted by a true seer.]

क धर्मः क च वा कामः क चार्थः क विवेकिता ।

क द्वैतं क च वाऽद्वैतं स्वमहिम्नि स्थितस्य मे ॥ २ ॥

स्वमहिम्नि In my own glory स्थितस्य abiding मे my धर्मः righteousness क where कामः enjoyment च and क where वा or चार्थः prosperity च and क where विवेकिता discrimination क where द्वैतं duality क where अद्वैतं non-duality च and क where वा or ?

2. For me who abide in my own glory, where is *Dharma*, where is *Kâma*, where is *Artha*, where is discrimination, where is duality, and where is even non-duality?

क भूतं क भविष्यद्वा वर्त्तमानमपि क वा ।

क देशः क च वा नित्यं स्वमहिम्नि स्थितस्य मे ॥ ३ ॥

स्वमहिम्नि स्थितस्य मे For me abiding in my own glory भूतं past क where भविष्यत् future क where वा or वर्त्तमानं present अपि even क where वा or देशः space क where नित्यं eternity च and क where वा or ?

3. For me abiding in my own glory, where is past, where is future, where is even present, where is space, or where is even eternity?

क चात्मा क च वानात्मा क शुभं काशुभं तथा ।

क चिन्ता क च वाचिन्ता स्वमहिम्नि स्थितस्य मे ॥ ४ ॥

स्वमहिम्नि स्थितस्य मे For me abiding in my own glory आत्मा Self च (expletive) क where अनात्मा not-Self च (expletive) क where वा or शुभं good क where तथा as also अशुभं evil क where चिन्ता anxiety क where अचिन्ता non-anxiety च and क where वा or ?

4. Where is Self or not-Self, where is good or evil, where is anxiety or non-anxiety for me who abide in my own glory?

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

Many people, with superficial thinking, nowadays say, we have enough of religion, we want no more of that. *Surfeited!* is an answer to these critics. . . . Prof. M. H. Syed has got more than a merely intellectual interest in the Hindu scripture and religion. He is an old contributor to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. Last year he wrote on THE DIVINE PROMISE—that also referring to the teachings of Sri Krishna. . . . Mr. V. Snbrahmnya Iyer is widely known for his great scholarship in Indian as well as Western Philosophy. He is a keen student of Sankar and as such entitled to the claim of answering to his critics. . . . Much of the misconception and misunderstanding about Hindu religion arises from the fact that Hinduism is hard to define. Prof.

Akshoy Kumar Banerjee in his present article has made an attempt to give a comprehensive idea of what Hinduism is . . . . The writer of *Mahendra Nath Gupta* had the privilege of moving very intimately with him. . . . Dr. Taraknath Das, in this issue, shows some phases of the organization of *Roman Catholic Church*. This article will form a fitting complement to THE POWER AND SECRET OF THE JESUITS, published in June last. . . . We regret that the announced article of Dr. Montessori had to be crowded out.

### MACHINE-VALUE OF THE WORLD

It is a great tragedy that we, the modern men, have contracted an artificial habit of looking upon the world in terms of human values only. The world has almost lost its pristine beauty and naturalness on account of our



peculiar attitude towards it. The why and wherefore of this world can be solved, only when we are in a position to look at it in a witness-like attitude. We are now too artificial and self-interested to relax ourselves into that attitude. "We think only in horsepower now;" writes Mr. Oswald Spengler in a thought-provoking article in the *American Mercury Magazine*, "we cannot look at a waterfall without mentally turning it into electric power; we cannot survey a countryside full of pasturing cattle without thinking of its exploitation as a source of meat-supply; we cannot look at the beautiful old handwork of an unspoilt primitive people without wishing to replace it by a modern technical process. Our technical thinking *must* have its actualization, sensible or senseless." The writer shows how, even in the economic field, the machine by its multiplication and refinement is defeating its own purpose. "In the great cities," says he, "the motor car has by its numbers destroyed its own value, and one gets on quicker on foot. In Argentine, Java, and elsewhere the simple horse-plough of the small cultivator has shown itself economically superior to the big motor implement, and is driving the latter out. Already, in many tropical regions, the black or brown man with his primitive ways of working is a dangerous competitor to the modern plantation-technic of the white. And the white worker in old Europe and North America is becoming uneasily inquisitive about his work."

The dread of machine has already provoked the thinking as well as the working masses of the world. In almost all the quarters of the globe, men of all classes are stupefied to think of the far-reaching evils of the machine. In a human world, let men be the masters of the machine, not *vice versa*!

Who does not like to see that the world belongs to men, and not to machines?

### "ENGLAND IS IN A BAD WAY"

According to the *Universe*, a Catholic newspaper, published from London, the Cardinal Archbishop in a striking speech delivered at the last annual meeting of a branch of the Catholic Women's League in Manchester said, with reference to increasing immoral practices prevailing in English life, that England was in a bad way; because they threatened to break up the family life and as such jeopardize the nation's very existence. His Eminence particularly deplored how the married life in England was becoming more and more unhappy because moral principle was thrown aside and people wanted a short cut to end the unhappiness through multiplied opportunities of divorce. Indeed, when people become slave to passions and sense-enjoyment and do not think of self-control and self-restraint, happiness in life is idle to expect. Many may find it difficult to practise self-restraint but the worse position is when it is openly denied as a virtue worth striving for. So His Eminence said, "We should be tempted to be very pessimistic on account of the persistent propaganda which is so insistent upon immoral practices reinforced and strengthened as it is by the cravings after happiness and the desire to shirk obligations. We should feel helpless and hopeless in face of these things that are all round about us."

But a nation can never last long by sacrificing moral principles in life. For the time being everything may seem to be all right, but the nation digs its own grave if it fails to recognize the value of moral principles or higher life. In this connection His Eminence cited the



example of the Roman Empire, how it flourished as long as it observed moral principles and "there was a certain austerity of life," but the "fallen Roman Empire was the result of its becoming a sink of iniquity"—it was a logical, ultimate and inevitable result. Strict observance of moral principle is the very basis of the stability of family life. Without that family life will go astray. And "If family life goes to pieces there is absolutely no hope for civilization."

Unfortunately this simple truth does not receive sufficient attention from those who want to guide a nation nowadays. People rack their brains to find out ways for tiding over financial difficulties, for escaping from the aggression of exploiting nations or increasing the national prosperity by the exploitation of weaker nations, but very few have got the eyes to see the great danger that faces a nation when it loses its moral background.

### HURTING THEIR OWN INTEREST

Nowadays we find in many countries, political leaders, or those who show zeal, real or fancied, for the political interest of their countries, decry religion. The Marxian theory that religion is an opiate of the people has spread all over the world—and everywhere a section of people view religion with suspicion and alarm: God to them has become a burdensome superfluity, if not a positive evil. But, for all that, man is incurably religious. Religion is in the very instinct of man. To try to stifle the religious feeling of man by legislation will be found not only futile, but will prove in the long run silly and harmful. Take away the orthodox God from the masses, they will fall a prey to the fortune-tellers, magicians, etc., and place spirits, ghosts in the pedestal,

formerly occupied by God. True indeed, religion has proved a dangerous tool in the hands of some persons to thwart the progress of the world. But in comparison with what evil religion has done, is not the good that has emanated from it overwhelming? These are the points which a thoughtful writer discusses in the *Unity* in relation to the Labour movement of the world.

According to him, "not only is God an objective reality and must be reckoned with by Labor but that the idea of God is pragmatically valuable to Labor. It is valuable to Labor because men will have religion whether or no and it is important for the Labor movement that they have a religion which makes them intolerant of oppression. Second, Labor needs a God because it is wasting too much good energy in fighting sham religious battles. And third, Labor needs a God because of the tremendous driving power of the idea. And fourth, it needs God because it needs men of strong fearless character, the kind of men that historically have been made by the prophetic religion of both Judaism and Christianity. And finally, Labor needs God to give it staying power in the long and hard battle ahead."

Religion is an individual affair. In spite of all criticism against it people will turn to religion, pray to God, impelled by a genuine spiritual thirst, or, those who are in the lower level, to find out outlets for all the emotions born of defeat and disappointment. But as far as its relation to the public life is concerned, it is likely to supply persons, whose character will be a guarantee to the safety, in their hands, of the best interests of the country. And this is very important. For, as the above writer says, 'to usher in the new day when all shall share and none shall want there is needed a much larger supply of incorruptible men. Of what use is it to



collect funds for the strikers if some labor man is going to pocket those funds?" According to him, a belief in the ethical God is a strong enforcement to honesty and fair dealing and "Labor needs this reinforcement."

Looking to Moscow or the anti-religious tendencies in the West, even in India some persons inveighs against religion. It would have been tolerable if their invectives proceeded from the deep knowledge of the real religion of India and not proved a mere echo of things going on in the West or elsewhere. Indeed slavery of the mind is the worst slavery that man may have.

### CHILD WELFARE INSTITUTION

We would like to draw the special attention of our readers and the public to the scheme of the Ramakrishna Mission Sishu Mangal Pratisthan, published in this issue. The appalling rate of infant and maternal mortality prevailing in this country is well known to all. Yet little has been done to combat this evil. The great bane of India is that we easily submit to circumstances and take things as inevitable. We forget that with a little

care, attention and foresight many ills of our life can be got rid of. This is clearly borne out by facts relating to many countries in the West in comparison with those in India.

We are glad to know that Swami Dayananda, who has recently returned from the West, has turned his attention to the problem of child welfare in Calcutta. We congratulate him on his choosing for himself an altogether unique line of activity. If the scheme succeeds, as we hope it will, similar institutions can easily be started in other cities or parts of India. It may be mentioned here that Swami Dayananda during his stay as a preacher of Vedanta in America was very much interested in the child-welfare movement in that country and keenly studied the problem with an idea to launch a similar movement in India. We know that conditions in India and America are quite different and we can also to some extent imagine the difficulty, labour and sacrifice that are involved in this work. But we hope in carrying out this bold and enterprising scheme the Mission will meet with spontaneous sympathy, help and co-operation from all.

---

## REVIEW

**THE RELIGIOUS BASIS OF WORLD PEACE.** Edited by the Reverend H. W. Fox, D.S.O., M.A. *Published by Williams & Norgate Ltd., 38, Great Ormond Street, London, W.C. 167 pp. Price 6s. net.*

The book contains twelve addresses delivered in 1928 at the Prague Conference of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. The object of the Conference was "to show the direction in which progress might be made towards world friendship by the

application of the spirit of Christ to some of the problems which perplex mankind to-day." The speeches deal with the problem of world peace from different standpoints. The speakers are renowned persons of Europe and America. The names include both professional and non-professional Christians. The conclusion arrived at by the clergy as well as the laity is that world peace can be established only on a religious basis. Political pacts and economic agreements cannot in themselves give that



security of international life which the world demands. "So long as there does not exist among the peoples a spirit of peace and of lawfulness, international order will inevitably remain precarious. This is why the problem of peace is in reality more spiritual than political."

The cause of the conflict is the growing worldliness of mankind. Matter is more real to us than spirit. We care more for external things than internal virtues, such as love and sacrifice, truth and justice. We are ready to sell the soul and save the body. Unless this attitude is changed, there cannot be any peace. Material disarmament is not possible without moral disarmament. Peace ultimately rests on the heart of man.

To bring about a complete change of heart a vast work of education is necessary. All narrow views of national and individual lives should be wiped out of the minds of men. A broad vision of the unity of human family should dawn upon man. Social conditions should also change accordingly. "Peace means the adjustment of relations between individuals and social groups." There cannot be any peace without social justice and equality.

All these can be effected on the background of religious consciousness. The religious consciousness of people is to be awakened first. "The Christian conception of God as Father and of men as His children and therefore brothers and sisters, is the most ideal foundation for the adjustment of human affairs. The truly religious life which makes it possible for us not only to think out, but to feel and to live the mutual relations between men, is the surest foundation for the ideal of universal peace."

Such are the views expressed by the speakers at the conference. They are no doubt in accord with the Christian spirit. The theistic conception of God as Father and of men as His children will certainly convince those with whom religion is more a matter of faith than reason. But the world demands a rational basis of universal love and peace. The Vedantic view of the Oneness of the Soul is the logical conclusion of the theistic faith and is the ultimate ground of universal love and harmony.

The book offers practical solutions of some of the problems of world peace.

**MODERN INDIAN ARCHITECTURE:**  
The work of Sris Chandra Chatterjee,  
Architect, Calcutta.

The spirit of Indian Renaissance is perceptible in the development of modern art, literature, etc., in the country. But many do not care to know that architecture also forms an important function of national life. It is for this reason that ancient Indian architecture has not as yet received as much attention as it should. And many of the modern buildings in various cities in India are simply of hybrid types. Mr. Sris Chandra Chatterjee is trying, and has succeeded to a fair extent, to bring home to all that we should not be denationalized even as far as architecture is concerned. But he is not a blind worshipper of the past: he knows how to adapt the spirit of ancient Indian architecture to modern needs and utility. The pamphlet under review describes the work and mission of Mr. Chatterjee and various appreciations received by him from many quarters in India and abroad. Mr. Chatterjee has passed through the initial stage of struggles and difficulties, and now one can expect that his path will be smoother. It is a happy news to learn that he is trying also to train up a band of young men, and we wish that the influence of this "school of architecture" will gradually spread all over the country just like that of the Bengal school of painting.

**THE TWELVE PRINCIPAL UPANISADS,**  
Vol. III. *The Theosophical Publishing House,*  
*Adyar, Madras. xiv+339 pp. Price: Bd.*  
*Rs. 5 ; Clo. Rs. 6.*

When it was announced by the Theosophical Publishing House that they were bringing out the above edition, we believe there were many who were eagerly longing to see it. Now the third and last volume of the series is in the hands of the public. It contains Chandogya and Kausitaki-Brahmana Upanishads with Text in Devanagari and Translation with Notes in English from the commentaries of Sankarācharya and the Gloss of Anandagiri and the Commentary of Sankarānand. The Chandogya Upanishad has been translated by Raja Rajendralal Mitra and the Kausitaki-Brahmana-Upanishad by Prof. E. B. Cowell, M.A. Notes are such as, instead of frightening the beginners by their abstruseness, are likely to arouse their interest in the reading of the Upanishads. We have no doubt that this valuable edition will be a great help to many English-knowing readers.



## BENGALI

NAYA BANGLAR GODA PATTAN, PART I. By Benoy Kumar Sarkar. *Chuckerverty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta. 457 pp. Price Rs. 2-8.*

Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar is one of the best fruits of the Eastern and Western culture. We can almost say that there are not many Indians with any pretension to culture and education, who have not heard his name. But there are few who know the details of what Prof. Sarkar has done for the cause of India and to raise her in the estimation of the world. The publishers in their lengthy introduction to the above book have attempted to give an account of Prof. Sarkar's manifold activities. Before leaving India in 1914, Prof. Sarkar threw himself heart and soul into the service of the country as an educationist, author and journalist. The same spirit was working in him during his sojourn abroad for long fourteen years. He had been in China, Japan, Manchuria, Korea, America, England and almost all the important countries of Europe and mixed with all classes of people—rich and poor, students and professors, city-bred and countrymen. As such he had an opportunity to see much of the world, specially as he has got "eyes to see," which few people have. He is as much at home in writing in English, Italian, German and French, as in his mother tongue. His writings published in several languages will be a long list. Wherever he has gone he has impressed upon all, that India's place in the world of culture is not insignificant. His lectures in different languages have been listened with eagerness everywhere. He had been invited by Universities, Clubs, Societies, Associations to talk. He has been the recipient of some honours which have not fallen to the lot of any Asiatic beforehand.

The present book, covering a variety of subjects such as economics, politics, sociology, education, culture, etc., mirror his vast experience of life. It cannot be expected that all he has said in it will meet with approval from everyone. In fact, some of his conclusions will seem startling to those who are accustomed to think only in stereotyped ways.

This is but natural with respect to an author who, according to his own confession, has been a 'rebel' from his very early age. All

the same, the writings are characterized by originality of thought and outlook. They will stimulate thought in others, awaken the slumbering as to the necessity of revising their opinions and open up a new vista of hope and vision to the nation in general. The book is dedicated to those who will enter the threshold of life eighteen years hence. But Prof. Sarkar's piquant words will galvanize into activity even those who are considering themselves as passing through the last scene of their life's drama and are waiting for the call from Beyond. The 'rebel' in him is perceptible also in the style of his writing, which indicates that the author has the courage and capacity to mould a language in his own way. We wish that the book be in the hand of every young man in the country. Perhaps the publishers had that end in view; for considering the volume of the book, its price is not high.

## GUJRATI

SRI RAMAKRISHNA LILAPRASANGA (VOL. I & VOL. II). By Swami Saradananda. Translated from the original Bengali by Harisanker N. Pandya. *Published by Swami Bhabeshananda, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, Kathiawar. 152 pp. and 452 pp. Price Vol. I. Annas 8; Vol II. Re. 1.*

These two volumes have removed a long-felt want of the Gujrati-knowing public. The wonderful life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsadeva have already been written in many vernaculars of India. But the present translator has taken immense pains in bringing out two volumes in Gujrati from the Bengali authoritative biography of Sri Ramakrishna, written in five volumes, by Swami Saradananda, a direct disciple of the former. The first volume deals with the early life of Sri Ramakrishna and the second one, with all the details of his life as a religious aspirant. The Gujrati-reading public will be amply benefited by these publications which are undoubtedly valuable contributions to the Gujrati literature. These volumes are carefully printed and nicely got up. We congratulate the translator on his unique success and wish that he may finish the remaining volumes of the original work within a very short time and with equal amount of skill and success.



# NEWS AND REPORTS

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SISHU MANGAL PRATISTHAN, CALCUTTA

### OBJECT AND SCOPE

The appallingly high rate of infant mortality prevailing in India are now well recognized. If we compare notes with other countries we find that while Norway has 51, England 65, U.S.A., 73, Germany 89, France 100, Moscow 127 and Japan 142, the important cities of India have the alarming average death-rate of at least 300 per 1,000 live-births! In Calcutta itself out of 1,000 live-births 159 to 532 babies (according to Wards) are dying in the first year of life and in the whole of India nearly two millions are dying every year!!! The maternal death-rate is also equally appalling. In Bengal alone 73,000 women die each year as a sacrifice to motherhood for lack of efficient care, as most of these deaths are now considered preventable.

There are many efforts, both Governmental and private, for improving the conditions of maternity and child life. These efforts have not met with success expected, on account of the diffused nature of the activities and the fact that the care of the mother and child begins very often only from confinement and not from the beginning of the child's existence in the mother's womb. The safe-guarding of maternal and child health requires careful and continued attention *throughout the pre-natal period as well as the first year of the child's life*. Under Indian conditions any service that aims at this attention for pre-natal and child care should be free and should be accompanied by educative work among the masses in order to make them understand the need of such care. This institution has therefore in view:

(1) An efficient pre-natal service through Clinics and home-visits by way of physical examination of the expectant mother from time to time, which is absolutely necessary for the health, happiness and safety of the mother and the coming child.

(2) Regular instruction through conversations, lectures and pamphlets, on the hygiene of pregnancy and child care.

(3) Suitable arrangements for skilled aid during confinement.

(4) Weekly examination, weighing, etc., of new-born babies during the first year of life and afterwards at longer intervals up to school-going age.

### TRAINING OF NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Another object of our institution is to train up nurses and midwives specially fitted for this kind of work with a view to spread it all around—particularly in the villages. The little that has been done in the direction of Child Welfare in our country, is mostly limited to big cities only. It is practically nil in the villages, where 95% of the population lives. It is for this reason that we intend to take young educated women of respectable connection and train them up in due time as skilled nurses and midwives. After completion of their training they will be asked to go to villages and start independent work. This will solve their economic problem on the one hand and increase the health and happiness of the villages on the other.

### FIRST FIELD OF WORK

We are first starting the Child Welfare work in Bhowanipur, Calcutta. Infant mortality rate here is 225 per 1,000. There are places in Calcutta where the death-rate is much higher. Why is it then that we have selected Bhowanipur instead of one of these areas? Because the work we are going to start is entirely new to the people—there being hardly any extensive pre-natal or post-natal work in Calcutta and also because it is chiefly educative. Any new work of the kind should be started in a locality which is inhabited mostly by cultured middle-class people; for its acceptance and success will depend largely on the education, social outlook and economic condition of the people. We think that Bhowanipur and its neighbourhood will meet these requirements better than any other section of Calcutta and the work will find a favour-



able soil there. Once the work is accepted by the cultured section of one locality, it is sure to spread in the other localities also. We are, therefore, earnestly looking forward for hearty co-operation of the local parents in this new work. If we get it, we are sure to cut down the death-rate of the mothers and children of the locality to 50% in the course of a few years.

#### CENTRAL OFFICE

The work will be conducted from a Central Office located at 104, Bakul Bagan Road, Bhowanipur, Calcutta. This accommodates the main Clinic with a small laboratory for pathological examinations, the administrative section and quarters for nurses and midwives. Although the Clinic will remain open at certain hours, there will always be someone at the Central Office to respond to emergency calls.

#### PRELIMINARY WORK

The preliminary work in this connection is to determine the number and location of the expectant mothers and infants in the selected area who require this attention. This work will be carried on by the nurses and midwives. The whole area will be divided into sections, one for each midwife. The nurse and the midwife will visit each home with the aid of census registers from the Municipal Office and will register all the expectant mothers and infants in prescribed forms, making necessary entries. The nurse will then talk to the mothers on the advantages of pre-natal and infant care and advise them to attend the Clinic regularly for examination and guidance. Further attention to them will be given at the Clinic.

#### PRE-NATAL AND INFANT CLINICS

The main Clinic for expectant mothers and children is located in the Central Office. Branch Clinics will be opened later on according to necessity. The main Clinic will remain open in the afternoon on week days between particular hours, when the doctor, nurse and midwife will be in attendance.

"The pre-natal Clinic work on first visit will consist of, besides the taking of medical history, a complete physical examination of the expectant mothers including an examination of teeth, heart, lungs, kidneys, digestive

organs, taking of blood-pressure and weight and blood-test where necessary. This examination is most important for the mother's and child's well-being, for it enables the doctor to find out whether her organs are in good condition and to start treatment at once if anything is wrong. Pregnancy is a normal condition of the body and does not normally interfere with health. However, it must be carefully and constantly watched, for it may become abnormal very quickly and will then endanger the life of the mother and child.

"It is at this first visit that the doctor or the nurse will go over with the expectant mother the hygiene of pregnancy. She will tell her that she must come to the Clinic once a month during the first six months, every two weeks in the next two months and every week in the last month. She will also explain to her what she will do at each subsequent visit—look into her general condition, take her blood-pressure, analyse her urine and carefully weigh her." This routine work will often be wound up with a short talk of say fifteen minutes on some aspects of pre-natal or infant care.

On infant Clinic days the babies should be brought to the Clinic regularly every week. Here they will have a complete physical examination and be weighed. If they do not increase in weight as they should, the doctor will find out the cause and regulate their diet accordingly. They will also be vaccinated against small-pox and given anti-diphtheric injections at the proper time.

#### HOME VISITS

Regular home-visiting will be done by the nurses and midwives on non-Clinic hours for the purpose of registering new cases, seeing old cases and persuading unwilling mothers to visit the Clinics.

#### CARE DURING LABOUR

This will usually be given at the home by the midwife called in. She will render all assistance during confinement, bathe the child and dress the cord, visit the mother and child for ten consecutive days and then hand over charge of the child to the nurse, who will make the first few examinations in the home and then arrange to have the child brought to the Clinic once a week. Where complications are expected the patient will be sent to the Hospital for



delivery. If during confinement the case does not seem to be a normal one, the midwife should immediately send for the doctor.

#### LABOUR WARD

Provision will be made in future for a Labour Ward constituting a few beds, if its need is keenly felt at a subsequent stage of the work.

#### STAFF AND DUTIES

Two of the most prominent Gynæcologists and Obstetricians of Calcutta—Dr. Baman-das Mukherjee, Visiting Surgeon, Chittaranjan Seva Sadan and Dr. Manindra Nath Sarkar, Resident Surgeon, Eden Hospital—are acting as Honorary Medical Supervisors of our work. Under their supervision there is an efficient medical and nursing staff, consisting of an experienced Lady Doctor, specializing in Child Welfare work, two Health Visiting Nurses and four trained Midwives, that will actually do the work. The strength of this staff will be increased according to needs. Calculating on a birth-rate of twenty per thousand of population, this staff will be able to serve a population of 36,000 at the rate of 15 cases to a midwife per month.

The duties of the nurse and the midwife have been explained before. Those of the doctor are to examine and advise all the mothers and children that will come to the Clinic, to respond to the call for help from midwives, to review the work at weekly conferences and see if records are being kept properly, to give talks on Maternity and Child Welfare and help the nurses do the same etc. In short, the responsibility of the whole work lies on the doctor and its efficient management entirely rests on her.

#### MANAGEMENT

The management of the institution is placed in the hands of a Managing Committee composed of the Hon. Mr. Justice Manmatha Nath Mukerji, M.A., B.L. (President), Sir Hari Shankar Paul, Kt., Dr. Baman Das Mukherjee, L.M.S. and Sjt. Ramaprasad Mukherjee, M.A., B.L. (Vice-Presidents), Swami Nirvedananda (Chief Supervisor), Swami Dayananda (Secretary), Sjt. Jogesh Chandra Chakravarty, M.A.

(Assistant Secretary), Swami Atmabodhananda (Treasurer), Srijukta Tatini Das, M.A., Sjt. Durga Prasad Khaitan, M.A., B.L. and Dr. Manindra Nath Sarkar, B.A., M.B., F.R.C.S. (Edin.) (Members).

Besides this Managing Committee there is an Auxiliary Committee composed of ladies of respectable families of the locality, who will help the work in every possible way from outside the Committee.

#### COST

The cost roughly estimated will be Rs. 10,000 per year. This is however a very modest beginning. The work will be extended as soon as sufficient funds are forthcoming. Needless to say that *the service given by our institution will be free of charge.*

#### APPEAL

In the foregoing pages we have briefly outlined the object and scope of the Sishu Mangal Pratisthan our Mission has just started. In pursuance of our policy in the field of constructive work we are again venturing on a new line of activity, for which, we believe, there is a great need in the country. The future of a nation depends on the well-being of its children. It is for this reason that this subject has engaged the careful attention of all progressive countries. If our public feel the same way, as we believe they do, we are sure there will be an adequate response and co-operation from them, without which no work of this kind can grow. We too will do this work in a spirit of co-operation with other allied institutions as far as possible.

We cordially invite the generous public to help the Ramakrishna Mission in this new and noble venture, which will not only save thousands of young mothers and children of our country from meeting with a premature and agonizing death, or perhaps a worse fate than that, life-long invalidism, but will also lay the foundation of a healthier, stronger and happier India.

Intending benefactors will please communicate with the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sishu Mangal Pratisthan, 104, Bakul Bagan Road, Bhowanipur, Calcutta; or the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Howrah.