

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR AWAKENED INDIA

• • • •

NOVEMBER, 1933



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## THE FIRST RAMAKRISHNA MATH

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

### MATH BROTHERS' DAILY ABLUTIONS IN THE GANGES AND WORSHIP OF THE GURU

Narendra and other devotees are going to bathe in the Ganges. M., too, will take his bath. To protect himself from the sun he has taken an umbrella. Saratchandra, too, of Baranagore is going to bathe. He is an orthodox Brahmin youth, strictly following the Sastric injunctions—a frequent visitor to the Math. Some time before, he was seized with the spirit of renunciation and made many pilgrimages.

M. : (to Sarat) “The Sun is burning !”

Narendra : “Rather say, ‘Let me take the umbrella.’ ” (M. laughs.)

The devotees, with towels on their shoulders, are going through the road to the Ghat to the north of Paramanikghat for bath. All are clad in ochre cloth. To-day is the 26th Vaisakha. The sun is burning.

M. : (to Narendra) “One is about to get sunstroke !”

Narendra : “Your bodies are an obstacle to taking to the path of

renunciation. Isn't it? Your, Deven Babu's——”

M. began to smile and think within himself, “Is it only the body?”

Devotees returned after their bath, washed their feet and entered the Master's room. They bowed down one by one and offered flowers to the Master.

Narendra came a little late. When going to offer flowers to the Master, he found that there was no flower in the tray, and called out, “No flower here !” There were one or two Vilva leaves. Dipping them in the sandal paste, he offered them and sounded the bell once; and after bowing down returned to the hall of the Danas (or the demons as they call themselves humorously).

### THE HALL OF THE DANAS, THE MASTER'S ROOM AND THAT OF KALI THE ASCETIC

The Math brothers call themselves Danas and Daityas; and the hall where all of them would assemble, they called the ‘Danas’ Hall’. The southernmost



room was occupied by those who wanted to meditate in solitude. Kali was mostly found in the room with doors bolted; so the Math brothers called it 'Kali the ascetic's room'. Just to the north of this was the Master's room. And the one to its north was the "Offerings room" (i.e. the room where the Master's offerings would be prepared). From this room one could see the evening service and from here the devotees would offer salutation to the Master. To the north of this room was the 'Danas' Hall'. It was tolerably long. When the devotees came from outside, they were received there. There was a little room to the north of the Danas' Hall. It was nicknamed the "Buffet" and was used as a dining room.

To the eastern side of the 'Danas' Hall' was a portico which was utilized for dining during festivals. Just to the north of the portico was the kitchen.

There was a verandah to the east of the Master's room and that of Kali the ascetic. To the south-west corner of this verandah was the library-room of a certain Society of Baranagore. All these rooms were on the first floor. In between the room of Kali the ascetic and the library was the staircase from the ground-floor to the first-floor; and to the north of the dining hall was the staircase that ran to the roof. By this staircase Narendra and other Math brothers would go to the roof usually in the evening. Seated there they would be engaged in conversations on various religious topics. Sometimes they talked of Sri Ramakrishna, sometimes of Sankara, of Ramanuja, or of Christ; sometimes of Hindu philosophy and sometimes of Western philosophy; sometimes again about the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras, etc.

Sitting in the 'Danas' Hall' Narendra would sing holy songs in a voice so melodious that it was rare even among

the gods. He taught Sarat and other brothers to sing. Kali was learning to play on some musical instrument. Many a time Narendra in company with the brothers would sing divine songs and would go into raptures and dance in ecstasy.

#### NARENDRA AND THE PREACHING OF RELIGION. MEDITATION AND WORK

Narendra is seated in the 'Danas' Hall.' There are other devotees too—Chunilal, M. and the Math brothers. The conversation turned round the propagation of religion.

M. : (to Narendra) "Vidyasagara says, 'I do not talk to others of God for fear of being whipped.' "

Narendra : "For fear of being whipped?"

M. : "Vidyasagara says, 'Suppose, after death, we are all taken to God. Suppose the messengers of Death carry Keshab Sen to God. In this world of imperfection he must have committed some sin or other. When it is proved, God will perhaps say, 'Give him 25 stripes.' Suppose I am then taken to Him, and I am a frequent visitor to Keshab's Samaja. I too have committed many sins; so an order of stripes is passed on me too. Then in defence, I might say, 'Keshab Sen instructed me thus, so I did that.' Then God will perhaps send his men to bring back Keshab. When he is come, he will probably be asked, 'Hast thou instructed him like that? Thou knowest not anything yourself of God; and hast gone to instruct others? Hullo! Who's there? Give him 25 stripes more.' [All laugh.]

"So Vidyasagara says, 'I can't help myself; am I to get stripes for others! [All laugh.] I myself don't understand anything of God. Am I to deliver lectures to others?' "

*Narendra* : "How has he understood other things, if he has not understood this?"

*M.* : "What other things?"

*Narendra* : "How has he understood that kindness, doing good to others, is virtuous, if he has not understood this? Starting schools, imparting secular knowledge to boys, getting married, leading householder's life, begetting a band of children—how has he come to know all these to be good?"

"He who knows one thing to be right, knows all other things too."

*M.* : (aside) "The Master used to say, 'Who has understood God, has understood all.' And about leading the life of a householder or founding schools he said, 'All these are due to *Rajas* (i.e. inordinate passion for activity).' *Vidyasagara* is kind; so the Master said, 'His *Rajas* is of the best kind. This kind of *Rajas* does one no harm.' "

After lunch the Math brothers are taking rest. *Mani* and *Chunilal* are engaged in a chat, sitting on the staircase, leading to the inner apartments, to the east of the 'Offerings Room.' *Chunilal* is narrating how he first came to see the Master, how he was seized with the spirit of renunciation and left the world and how he went on travelling from one holy place to another. Such talks were going on when *Narendra* came and took his seat close by. Talks turned on to the *Yogavasishtha*.

*Narendra* : (to *Mani*) "And *Viduratha*'s transformation into a *Chandala*?"

*Mani* : "Well, are you talking of *Lavana*?"

*Narendra* : "I see; you have read it."

*Mani* : "Yes, a bit of it."

*Narendra* : "Have you read it here?"

*Mani* : "No. I have read it at home."

*Narendra* asked *Gopal junior* to bring tobacco for him. The latter was meditating.

*Narendra* : (to *Gopal*) "Hullo! Just prepare tobacco for me. Leave off your meditation. Prepare yourself first by serving the Lord and His devotees: then try meditation. First work, then meditation." [All laugh.]

Adjacent to the Math compound and to its west there is a large plot of land with a large number of trees on it. *M.* is seated alone under a tree when *Prasanna* came. It was about 3 p.m.

*M.* : "Where have you been these few days? They are all anxious for you. Have you met them? When have you come?"

*Prasanna* : "Just now. I have met them all."

*M.* : "You wrote that you were proceeding to *Vrindavana*. We were so very anxious. How far did you go?"

*Prasanna* : "Up to *Konnagore*." [Both laugh.]

*M.* : "Sit down, let me hear about your experience. Where did you go first?"

*Prasanna* : "To the *Kali* temple at *Dakshineswar*. I spent one night there."

*M.* : (Smiling) "What about *Mr. Hazra*?"

*Prasanna* : "He says, 'What do you think of me?'" (Both laugh.)

*M.* : (Smiling) "What did you reply?"

*Prasanna* : "I kept quiet."

*M.* : "Then?"

*Prasanna* : "Then he said, 'Have you brought tobacco for me?' (Both laugh.) Demands service of me!" (Laughter).

*M.* : "Where did you go next?"



*Prasanna*: "At last I reached Konnagore. I passed the night unconcerned at a place, and wanted to proceed farther and asked the gentlemen of the locality if the railway fare could be procured there."

*M.*: "What did they say?"

*Prasanna*: "You can get but a paltry sum. Who will pay you that large amount?" [Both laugh.]

*M.*: "What did you take with you?"

*Prasanna*: "One piece of cloth and a picture of the Master. I didn't, of course, show the picture to anyone."

#### CONVERSATION BETWEEN A FATHER AND A SON. PARENTS OR GOD FIRST?

Father of a Math brother has come to take his boy home. For nine months did this brother nurse Sri Ramakrishna in his illness most devotedly. He has read up to B.A. He secured scholarship at the Entrance Examination. Father, a poor Brahmin, was religious-minded and followed Sastric injunctions strictly. The son is the eldest child. Great was the hope of the parents that their boy, after finishing his education, would earn money and remove their misery. But he has renounced everything to realize God. He told his friends with tears in his eyes, 'I can't make out what to do. Alas! I have failed to serve my parents. They had high hopes on me. Mother could not get ornament to wear. How great was my desire that I would give her ornaments. But nothing has been realized. The very idea of returning home is now a terror to me. Gurumaharaj asked us to give up lust and wealth. I can no more go that way.'

After Sri Ramakrishna had passed away, the father of Sasi thought, "Now perhaps he will return home." But after a short stay at home, he began to visit the Math as soon as it was established, and finally stopped going

home. So his father comes now and then to take him home. He, however, would not go. Hearing that his father had come that day he made off through the back door to avoid meeting him.

The father knew *M.*, with whom he began to talk while walking on the upper verandah.

*Father*: "Who is the head here? This Narendra is at the root of all evils. They returned home and took to their studies like well-behaved boys."

*M.*: "No one is the head here. All are equal. What will Narendra do? Does man come here against his own will? Why can't we give up our homes and join them?"

*Father*: "You are following the right course. You pay equal attention to both aspects of life. Can't one be religious that way? We want that. Let him come here; but he must go there (i.e. to home) too. Just think, how much his mother is weeping!"

*M.* felt sorry and kept quiet.

*Father*: "And so much going about in search of Sadhus! I can take him to far better Sadhus. A Sadhu has come of late to Indranarayana—a wonderful man is he. Let him go to him."

#### RAKHAL'S SPIRIT OF RENUNCIATION; MONK AND WOMAN

Rakhal and *M.* are sauntering on the verandah to the east of Kali's room. They are talking about the Master and his devotees.

*Rakhal*: (impatiently) "Well, let us take to spiritual practices very earnestly."

"For that purpose I did not return home. If any one says, 'Well, you have not realized God; what is the use of leading such a life?' Narendra gives the nice retort, 'Well, what logic is this, that if I do not get Rama, I have to live with Shyama and beget

children?' Ah! his words are sometimes so significant! You rather ask him personally.

M. : "Yes, he is quite right. I see you, too, are filled with the divine discontent."

Rakhal : "Master Mahasaya, To speak of that! At noon my heart was panting for going to the Narbada (for Tapasya).

"Dear Sir, practise Tapasya, or else nothing will accrue. Just imagine, even Sukadeva had fear! The moment he was born, he fled. Vyasadeva (his father) asked him to stop, but he would not."

M. : "Oh, you are talking of the *Yogopanishad*. Sukadeva was fleeing from the domain of Maya. Ah! there's a fine conversation between Vyasa and Sukadeva. Vyasa asks him to stay at home and practise religion. Sukadeva says that devotion to God is the only thing worth having and expressed contempt for marriage and family life."

Rakhal : "Some think that they are safe if they do not only look at a woman. What does it matter, if they only hang down their heads at the sight of a woman? Last night Narendra spoke very rightly, 'So long as there is lust, there is sex consciousness. Or else there is no distinction of man and woman.' "

M. : "Yes, quite right. Children feel no distinction of sexes."

Rakhal : "So I say, we must have spiritual practice. Unless we transcend Maya, how can we get the Supreme Knowledge? Let us go to the hall. Some gentlemen from Baranagore have come. Let us hear what Narendra says to them."

#### NARENDRA AND RESIGNATION

Narendra is talking. M. did not enter the room. He heard some fragments of the talk as he kept on saunter-

ing in the eastern portico adjoining the hall.

Narendra : "There is no fixed time or place for prayer."

A gentleman : "Well sir, can one realize God if only one undergoes spiritual practices?"

Narendra : "Everything depends on His grace. The Gita says :—

'The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings by His Maya, to revolve, (as if) mounted on a machine.

"Take refuge in Him with all thy heart, O Bharata; by His grace shalt thou attain supreme peace (and) the eternal abode.'

"Without His grace religious practices are of no avail. So we must resign ourselves to Him."

The gentleman : "I hope you won't mind it if we come now and then to trouble you thus."

Narendra : "No, we won't; you may come at any time. We go to bathe at your Ghat."

The gentleman : "There can't be any objection to that; but see that others do not follow suit."

Narendra : "Well, if you say, we won't go."

The gentleman : "No, no, not that; but if you see that others are going there, please stop going."

#### EVENING SERVICE AND NARENDRA'S READING ALOUD OF GURU-GITA

After dusk the evening service began. Again the devotees with folded palms began to sing the glories of the Lord by chanting in chorus, "Glory unto Shiva etc." The evening service finished, the devotees assembled in the 'Danas' Hall, M. was seated. Prasanna was reading the *Guru-Gita* to the devotees. Narendra came and began reading it aloud himself. Narendra chanted : "Salutations to the true Guru



who is the embodiment of the Bliss of Brahman and the bestower of supreme happiness, who is detached, Knowledge personified and beyond duality, who is like the sky, and is indicated by such Vedic dicta as 'Thou art That,' and who is One, eternal, pure, immovable, the witness of all the changes in the Buddhi (intellect), beyond all states and devoid of the three Gunas."

He goes on :

"None is greater than the Guru, none is greater than the Guru; such is the command of Siva, such is the command of Siva. I speak of the Guru who is none else but the Supreme Brahman, the (eternal) abode of all powers and qualities. I worship that Guru who is none else etc. I (constantly) remember that Guru who is none else etc. I bow down (again and again) to that Guru who is none else etc."

Narendra went on chanting the *Guru-Gita*; and the minds of the devotees became still as the steady flame of a lamp at a spot sheltered from the wind. Truly did the Master say, "When Narendra sings, He who dwells in the heart gets still and hears him just as a snake does with its hood raised when it hears the melodious tune of a flute." Ah! how great is their reverence for the Guru.

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S LOVE AND RAKHAL

Rakhal is seated in the room of Kali. Close to him is sitting Prasanna. M. too, is in the same room.

Rakhal has cut off all connections with his wife and child. The spirit of renunciation is burning brightly in his heart. He always thinks of going away all alone to the banks of the Narbada or to some other place. Still he is dissuading Prasanna.

*Rakhal* : (to Prasanna). "Where do you thus run away again and again? Here you get the company of holy

men, and of persons like Naren! Leaving these where will you go?"

*Prasanna* : "Parents live in Calcutta. I fear lest their love should attract me. So I want to fly away."

*Rakhal* : "Do the parents love us so intensely as did Guru Maharaj? What have we done for him which entitles us to so much love from him? Why was he so very anxious for the welfare of our body, mind and soul? What have we done for him?"

*M.* : (aside) "Ah! Rakhal is absolutely right. For this reason is God called the Ocean of Selfless Love."

*Prasanna* : "Don't you feel within you an urge to go away?"

*Rakhal* : "Sometimes I feel tempted to go to the banks of the Narbada. Sometimes I think of going there and living in a garden in performing spiritual practices. Occasionally it occurs to me to do Panchatapa\* for three days. But then I don't feel inclined to live in the garden of a householder."

#### DOES GOD REALLY EXIST?

Tarak and Prasanna are talking in the 'Danas' Hall'. Tarak has lost his mother. His father like Rakhal's has married again. Tarak, too, was married, but his wife is dead. Now the Math is his home. Tarak too is dissuading Prasanna.

*Prasanna* : "I find in me neither the Supreme Knowledge nor the love for the Lord. How to pass the days, then?"

*Tarak* : "It is very difficult to attain Knowledge. But how can you say that you have no love for the Lord?"

*Prasanna* : "I don't feel an intense pang at not realizing Him; how am I to say I have love for Him? And

\* A form of spiritual practice.

what have I gained in this long period?"

*Tarak* : "Why? Haven't you seen Sri Ramakrishna? And how do you say that you haven't got the Knowledge even?"

*Prasanna* : "What knowledge has one to get? Knowledge means to know. What will one know? There is no knowing at all whether God exists or not."

*Tarak* : "Yes, that's right. To a Jnanin there is no God."

*M.* : (aside) "Ah! What a fine state of mind Prasanna is in! The Master used to say, 'Those who really want God, have to pass through such a state. Sometimes they doubt if there is really a God. Tarak is perhaps studying Buddhism; so he says, 'To a Jnanin there is no God.' But the Master used to say, 'The worshipper of the Personal God and the aspirant to the Impersonal—both of them (ultimately) come to the same goal.'"

## GOOD LIFE WITHOUT GOD

BY THE EDITOR

### I

If science could explain the mystery of the universe without reference to any extra-cosmic Being or Power, religion would have been totally exploded. From the beginning of the time when science came into clash with many theories of religion regarding creation, life, death, existence beyond life, etc., theologians began to view science with great alarm. But greater than the menace of science is a danger that comes to religion from another quarter. Is good life possible without belief in God? If it is possible, then there goes away another strong reason for worshipping God.

Great is the admiration of man for one who lives a good and noble life. And if one can incorporate in oneself the virtues which are universally admired and coveted, without any belief in God, why should a man pin his faith on One whose existence seems at best but hypothetical? As such, the last stronghold of religion is destroyed.

One may very often hear that Mr. so-and-so is living a good ethical life as

distinguished from a religious life, Mr. so-and-so's life is better than the life of many religious men, and so on. We must examine these statements very deeply. If one can live a life better than that of a religious man, if one can become an ideal man, without caring at all for God, what is the use of a man's bothering himself about religion or God? Apart from what happiness or reward awaits a religious man when his earthly existence will be over, the world generally admires a religious man, because in him are found many virtues which are absent in others. Now, is it possible that one can cultivate the virtues of religious life without caring at all for religion?

This raises some fundamental questions: Why should a man at all endeavour to better his conduct? Why should he at all try to cultivate even the ethical virtues in life? Why should a man be unselfish? Why should one love one's neighbour? And so on.

In every religion, there have been attempts to make the common people love virtues and dread sins by holding



out the prospect of reward or punishment in the life after death. The dread of hell-fire may be the cause in many for not committing actions considered wrong according to the code of religion. Many may consider the performance of good actions a wise investment for happiness to be enjoyed in the life after death. If man may be eager to make insurance for old age, why should he not be moved by a desire to make insurance for good things to be got in the life after this earthly existence? Man is moved by the consideration of profit or loss. This is but natural, and there is nothing wrong in it. But why should a man take the trouble of disciplining his life, if he does not believe in existence after death, and as such if there is no lure of happiness for him in the life after death?

There might be a class of people who do not believe in existence after death, and there might be also another class of people who are not so very careful for "storing for future"—whose whole attention is riveted on the immediate present and who are not ready to sacrifice anything for the prospect of what will be gained after death. Why should these two classes of people live a good life? Good life always means a disciplined life, good conduct always means an amount of self-control; they presuppose also some labour, effort, struggle and as such pain. Now what can be the motive in a man to undergo the pain for nothing at all? There is no gain without pain, is a trite saying. But will any man covet a pain, if there is no prospect of a gain accompanying it?

## II

One often hears of knowledge for knowledge's sake. But can there be also virtue for virtue's sake? When one pursues knowledge for its own sake,

there is a silent, if not conscious, desire for a better reward—for thereby the intellectual possession will be greater. When one pursues virtue for its own sake, what is the unknown or unseen prospect of reward? Man does not move even his little finger, if he can help it, without a purpose, conscious or unconscious. Will a man pursue virtue without any purpose at all? When one talks of "Honesty is the best policy," though outwardly it hears very nice, one talks of the *policy* that is *best*. When one says, "Virtue brings its own reward," we must ascertain what that *reward* is. When we hear of a man living a good life without having faith in religion or God, we must examine 'faith in what' moves him to be virtuous as also if he at all lives a good life, and that for a sufficiently long period.

Now, what is a good life? It is "not simply paying one's bills, obeying traffic regulations, returning borrowed umbrellas, or anything else that can be indifferently performed in one kind of world as well as in another," as a distinguished writer puts it. Generally the world praises a man as living a good life, if he be a law-abiding citizen, observe common rules of conduct and do some kindly acts of charity, even without undergoing much risk in any of them. If the man shows a bit of courage by way of facing risks in any of the actions mentioned above, he is taken as an exceptional man and admired in high terms. Even when a man donates a large sum of money for a humanitarian work, it is generally found that he does so from a safe ground—*i.e.* he takes care that his act of charity does not involve any sacrifice of personal comfort; instead of hoarding money, as is the common tendency, or without hankering after the pride of more possessions, he gives his surplus

money to some good works. That also, no doubt, requires a certain amount of strength of mind and courage. But this kind of charity rests on the calculation of personal happiness or suffering, convenience or discomfort. And people living a good life which such actions indicate, can go to a certain depth, but no farther; they are capable of sacrifice only to a certain limit and not more than that.

But, a really good life will be of that person who is reckless in his sacrifice, whose personal consideration of loss or gain is nil, who looks the world in the face, who towers above the reach of happiness or misery, who is unbending under any case of discouragement and disappointment, affliction and suffering, who has attained that by getting which no other thing of the world seems worth coveting, who is satisfied with himself and content in himself. A man is poor, though outwardly possessing kingdoms and empires, if he lives in wants. The ideal man is he who is free from all wants. The man who has got the consideration of personal interest has not reached the stage of perfection, though he may be doing a highly admirable amount of work for others. While he is a perfect man whose whole life is a *complete* sacrifice at the altar of humanity. Now such life is not possible without having faith in something of deeper existence—something eternal and immortal, existing in all times and not subject to any change whatsoever.

### III

You may call that God, or whatever you like, but without having faith in such an existence, with which human life is indissolubly linked, one cannot be living a good life beyond a certain limit. At night, you may remove darkness here and there by burn-

ing lights, but the approach of the sun is needed to have the darkness completely removed. Thousands or even millions of lights will not be a substitute for the sun. We may admire the power of a light, invented by human brains, we may enjoy a gorgeous illumination, the result of burning such lights, but these will be nothing in comparison with the light of day. Similarly, a man may show indication of this or that quality, but to have a perfect life, to have all-round development in the absolute sense, one must have a deep faith in God—nay, one must live, move and have one's being in God.

Ordinarily, man is capable of good acts, when life is a smooth sailing, when the days pass easily. But when afflictions and sufferings fill up every corner of life, when the world seems dark and life seems empty and barren, when hope becomes frustrated and love is betrayed, man suffers from an incurable break-down, unless he has got faith in something which is eternal and permanent. Harishchandra was capable of a sacrifice which involved the sale of his wife and the only son, and himself, a king, became a slave, only because he had unflinching faith in the ultimate victory of Truth. Rama could sacrifice his father to his love of truth only because he had an abiding faith in God. That is not possible with anyone who considers human life as the outcome of fortuitous atomic adjustment—a pure mechanism, without any deeper meaning or purpose behind.

The world admires a man who goes out of his way to help humanity. What is the significance of this admiration and why should a man make even the slightest sacrifice, if there is no meaning behind it? Why should a man at all take any trouble of cultivating good conduct, if his existence on earth is of as ephemeral duration as any other



material object subject to destruction? If man is no more than a nervous speck of star dust, why should he at all cultivate any higher qualities? What meaning have virtue or vice, good or evil for him? All are the same to him! A clock has no will of its own, nor is it capable of regulating its actions to some definite end. Want of belief in God or religion, we mean religion in its broadest sense—reduces human life into a clock-work, and then human feelings and emotions, hopes and fears, become altogether meaningless. People decry religion as, according to them, it calls worldly existence a dream, but disbelief in religion makes man an automaton, and all his thoughts and ideas a mirage.

Human laws and man-made code of conduct are for the stability of human society. Man restricts or is perforce compelled to restrict his conduct, because thereby a greater good will be done to the human society. An unselfish action is admired as a virtue because that goes to the furtherance of the welfare of humanity, and any one being a limb of humanity has got an interest in that and so he unconsciously praises an act of disinterested service. But this attitude also is not consistent with the idea that life is simply a mechanical action. If human life is the outcome of the cosmic dance of electrons, what interest can a set of electrons have for another set? If one pursues one's thought in this way to where logic leads, one launches into a contradiction, wherefrom there is no way out.

#### IV

Whatever might be the opinion to the contrary, man is unconsciously religious. Religion is the very breath of human life, though one may not perceive it as clearly as one is conscious that he breathes. We use the word

religion in the sense that it recognizes man as a spiritual personality as opposed to an automaton. However much might be the diversity of religious opinions regarding different matters, the common basis of all religions is that they all take man as a spiritual entity. And this only can explain all human feelings, hopes and aspirations, and inter-relation between man and man. A man loves another man instinctively, because both are the children of the same God. A man *feels* that he is greater than the world, because he is not matter, because he is one with God or because he belongs to God.

The Gita says that the criterion of ideal life is that one is alike in pleasure and pain, regards a clod of earth, a stone or gold alike, is the same to agreeable and disagreeable, in censure and praise, in honour and dishonour, to friend and foe, and free from all undertakings. But that is a condition which can be possible only with a piece of stone or dead matter and not with a man—one may easily say. So the next verse comes to the rescue. This ideal life is possible only with one who loves God with unswerving devotion, *i.e.* one who has been able to lift himself up to a higher state of existence, one who has found out his great kinship with God. Children are satisfied with toys and mock plays of life until they enter the real life; molasses has value so long as honey does not come. In the same way, worldly things lose their value when one gets the glimpse of a higher existence. Man soars high above the reach of worldly things, when he realizes God. Not that a man becomes a piece of stone, when he is alike in praise or censure, to friends or foes, but that on realizing God, a curtain drops down before him which does not allow him to see the world as we see it, or a new vision dawns on him with which he sees

the world in altogether a different light from what others see. He gives up a less valuable thing on receipt of a thing of greater value. It is said that Emperor Akbar once greatly praised the renunciation of a Faquir, when the latter replied : "Your renunciation is greater than mine. I have given up the world for the most supreme treasure of life, whereas you are satisfied with the tinsel show of the world forgetting the bliss that comes from the love of God."

When a man realizes that blissful state, what is ordinarily called sacrifice is no sacrifice to him; it means no trouble or effort to him. He is not then reluctant to sacrifice even his *all* for the sake of humanity, because he sees the face of his Beloved in every human being—nay, in every life. He makes no calculation of earthly loss or gain, because his treasure lies not in the world, but somewhere else. The sacrifice of personal interest becomes natural with him, because he has got no personal interest—in the sense we use the word. Service to others becomes easy with him, because service to humanity means service to God Himself. Ordinary persons try to *do good to the world* with some stoical effort, but he gives as freely as the wind blows or flowers spread their fragrance. If others are capable of going at best to knee-deep waters, he swims playfully in the middle of the ocean and sports with the rolling waves.

## V

Then, how is it that many good qualities are found in persons who have no faith in God, and how is it that they are absent in persons who are known to be religious? We shall say that the former class of people are unknowingly religious, and the latter class are not religious, though they are *known* as such. When a man does anything high-

ly laudable though without having definite beliefs in any religious creed, we shall say that he does so prompted by his unknown religious feelings. The Gita says : The Shraddha of each is according to the constitution of his heart. The man consists of his Shraddha. He verily is what his Shraddha is. The man, mentioned above, is prompted by his religious 'Shraddha,' by his past religious Sanskaras, though he has not been able to recognize it as such. By the touch of the philosopher's stone, iron is being or has been transformed into Gold, but the man has not as yet known what Gold is.

'Ought' is based on 'is.' What man *ought* to do depends on what man *is*. To ignore that, is to try to see the light separated from the sun, which is impossible. If man's life is as meaningless as that of a machine, there can be no question of 'ought.' That man is not a machine, that even an atheist does not, in spite of himself, believe this, is proved by the fact that there is much discussion about what man ought to do and there is universal admiration for virtuous deeds. Man unconsciously recognizes that man is spirit and not matter. If only consciously we would recognize that, it would have been much easier to find out what our conduct should be, and to mould our life according to that standard.

Now, as it is, we want to draw a circle without fixing a centre, and utter chaos is the result. Acts of charity, unselfish love, truthfulness would acquire a deeper meaning, if we would recognize that man is a child of God. And that would have much reduced the necessity of law and force to make people good citizens. Man would have been incapable of doing any wrong, if he knew that, all are the children of God and the world is a created beauty of God. He would have found it hard to break the rhythm, if he knew that



through everything in the universe runs a current of Divine music and that the whole world acts to that great Tune.

All our ideas of ethics and good conduct are based on the unconscious beliefs in man as a spiritual personality. A conscious belief would have given us greater facility to reach the Goal with much less friction and struggle. Recognize this or not, all are going to God, just as the streams scattered all over the earth run to the ocean. By disowning God and our spiritual legacy, we are making a futile attempt to resist the current that is carrying us perforce to the Great Ocean, where all our struggles and fights, tumults and conflicts are to find repose.

The Vedanta recognizes the development of ethical virtues as the first step towards realizing the Truth. If a man

cultivates ethical virtues but does not show any indication of his thirst for Truth, we shall only say that he is simply preparing himself for that. If in this life he does not show any sign of hankering after God, he will do it in the next life. It is thus that some persons, in their very early age, show religious precocity. The child who in this life shows great devotion to God, to the great wonder of all, must have cultivated ethical virtues in the preceding life.

Nothing is lost in the universe. "A doer of good never comes to grief." A man who is living a good life without having faith in God is simply waiting for the time, when the light of God will burst upon him, and then all his unconscious struggles will become full of deep meaning and great significance to him.

## WHERE HINDUISM AND ISLAM MEET\*

BY DR. MD. SHAHIDULLAH, M.A., B.L., D.LIT. (PARIS)

Apparently Hinduism and Islam are poles asunder. It would seem that there cannot be any meeting ground of the two. But go deeper into the thing, and the fundamental unity of the two will strike you at once. Both Hinduism and Islam preach toleration—a toleration arising not out of indifference but out of appreciation of each other. Hinduism says:

"Oh Lord! Thou art the only goal of all men following various ways, straight and crooked, owing to the diversity of their tastes, as the ocean is the goal of all waters" (*Mahimna Stava*).

\* From the notes of a speech delivered at the Quenton Hall, Shillong, under the presidency of Swami Sambuddhananda of R. K. Mission.

The Indian saints like Nanak, Kabir, Dadu, have all preached toleration. Only recently Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva and his apostle Swami Vivekananda preached it so eloquently.

A Bengali poet sang:

"Oh Tara, I have known, I have known, Mother, you know the magic art. In whatever way one thinks of you, O Mother, you become pleased. The Burmese call you Faratara, the English call you Lord: The Moghals, the Pathans, the Syed and the Kazi call you Khoda. The Saktas call you Sakti. You are Siva, so says the Saiva. The Sakta calls you the Power. The Vairagi calls you Radhika. The Ganapata calls you Ganesh. The Yakshas call you the Lord of Wealth. Artisans call you Viswakarma. The Boatman

calls you Badar. Sri Ram Dulal says : it is not magic art ; in truth, thinking of Brahman differently my mind has become vile."

The Holy Quoran preaches the fundamental unity of the great religions of the world. It does not say that Muhammad is the only Prophet and the religion preached by him the only true religion. The Quoran says, "And certainly We raised in every nation an apostle, saying : Serve God and shun the devil" (chapter 16, Verse 36). Again it says, "And certainly We send apostles before you : There are some of them that We have mentioned to you and there are others whom We have not mentioned to you" (chapter 40, verse 78). Further it says, "He hath ordained for you that religion which He commanded unto Noah and that which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and that which We commanded unto Abraham, Moses and Jesus, saying : Establish the religion and be not divided therein" (chapter 42, verse 13). A disciple asked the Prophet, how many prophets there were. The Prophet said, "124000, of whom 315 were prophets with a special message" (*Mishkat ul Masabih from Imam Ahmad*).

Muslim saints and poets preached "toleration." The Persian Poet Sanai says :

"Infidelity and faith, both of them follow Thy path, saying : He is one without a second."

The Urdu poet Zafar sings :

"Whether angels or men, whether Hindus or Musalmans, Thou hast created them as Thou liked. Whatever there is, it is Thee. Whether in the Kaaba or in the temple, Thy worship is performed everywhere. Before Thee everybody bends his head. Whatever there is, it is Thee."

As practical advice also the Quoran preaches ; "There is no compulsion in religion" (chapter 2, verse 256). Again, "And if your Lord had pleased, surely all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them ; will you then force men till they become believers?" (chapter 10, verse 99). It may be a surprise to many that the Quoran has no equivalent word for conversion. A Muslim is by faith and action, and not by birth or formal conversion.

The Quoran even forbids speaking ill of others' objects of worship. "And do not abuse those whom they call upon, besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they should abuse Allah out of ignorance" (chapter 6, verse 109).

It is an orthodox faith in Islam that the great religions in their pristine purity were nothing but Islam. It is only afterwards when the teachings of the former prophets had become corrupt, that differences arose. The Quoran teaches the Musalmans to tolerate these differences and try to excel one another in virtuous deeds. "For every one of you did We appoint a law and a way and if Allah had pleased, He would have made you all a single people ; but that He might try you in what He gave you ; therefore vie with one another to excel in virtuous deeds ; to Allah is your return, of all of you ; so He will let you know that in which you differed" (chapter 5, verse 48).

I will now go to discuss the points of similarity between these two great religions. It is the will of God that the two great communities, Hindu and Musalman, will live in India. It is necessary, therefore, to have good understanding between them so that united like brothers they may fulfil their heavenly appointed mission on earth.



### God

Both the religions teach that God is the only object of worship. The Upanishads teach, "One should worship the Soul always. The wise should not worship anything else."

The Gita says :

"Be thy mind fixed on Me, be thou devoted to Me, be thou sacrificing to Me, bow down to Me. Thou wilt find Me truly, I promise thee; thou art My beloved" (chapter 18, verse 65).

The Quoran says :

"Your God is one God; there is no god but He, the God of mercy, the Merciful" (chapter 2, verse 163).

Again, "Oh men, serve your God who created you and those before you ..... therefore, do not set up rivals to God, when you know" (chapter 2, verses 21, 22).

The Unity of Godhead is equally preached by Hinduism and Islam. Some of the passages in the Hindu and Muslim scriptures are strikingly similar.

"Eye cannot go there (in God) neither word nor mind" (*Kena Upanishad*, 1, 3).

"Vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends vision and He is the subtle, the aware" (Quoran, 6, 104).

"He knows every one who stands or walks or glides along secretly or withdraws into his house or into any lurking place; whatever two persons sitting together devise, Varuna, the King, knows it, He being the third" (*Atharva Veda*, 4, 16, 2).

"Do you not see that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth? Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three persons but He is the fourth of them, nor between five but He is the sixth of them, nor less than that nor more but He is with them wherever they are" (Quoran, 58, 7).

"He who should fly far beyond the sky would not there escape from Varuna, the King" (*Atharva Veda*, 6, 16, 4).

"O ye assemblies of Jinn and men! if you can run away from the boundaries of the heaven, the earth, then do run away. You will not be able to run away except by means of (Our) authority" (Quoran 55, 33).

"Were ink like the Black Mountain in a pot like the sea; were the branches of the best trees of heaven the pen, and were the earth paper and were the Goddess of Learning to write all times taking (all the materials), even then O Lord, she cannot come to the end of Thy praises" (*Mahimna Stava*).

"What is in the heaven and the earth is Allah's; surely Allah is the Independent, the Praised. And were every tree that is in the earth pen, and the sea (ink), with seven more seas to add to it, the words of Allah would not come to an end; surely Allah is mighty, wise" (Quoran, 31, 26, 27).

Islam surely abhors idol worship, but in the Quoran idols mean everything except God that one worships. The Quoran says :

"Have you seen him who has taken his passion to be his god" (chapter 45, 23)?

The higher Hinduism of the Upanishads says :

"Who does not think with the mind, but by whom the mind thinks, as they say; that is Brahman you should know, not this which people worship. He does not see with the eyes but by whom the eyes see; that is Brahman you should know, not this which they worship. He who does not hear with the ears but by whom this ear hears; that is Brahman you should know, not this which they worship" (*Kena Upanishad* 1, 5-7).

The Gita says :

"The fool without knowing My supreme changeless reality regard Me embodied, though I am unembodied" (chapter 7, verse 24).

Even in later Smritis the reason for imagining corporeal existence of Brahman has been given as "for the use of the worshippers." "The imagination of corporeal existence of Brahman Who is pure consciousness without a second, without a part and without a body, is for the use of the worshippers" (*Raghunandan*). The following verse said to have been uttered by Vyasa on the completion of the Mahabharata, gives the philosophy of image-worship :

1. "I have ascribed form for the contemplation of Thee Who are without form."

2. "Oh, Universal Preceptor, I have cast off Thy unspeakable nature by praising Thee."

3. "By instituting pilgrimage, I have destroyed the idea of all-prevailing nature of the Deity. Great God, pardon these three faults of disfiguration done by me."

It is a popular opinion among the Hindus that image-worship is for people low in spiritual development. The *Kularnava Tantra* says :

"The highest is the natural state, the next is contemplation. The lowest is the uttering of hymns. The lowest of the low are oblations and image-worship."

#### *Angels*

Like the Jews and the Christians, the Muslims believe in the existence of angels. According to the Muslim creed, the angels are made of light; they are neither male nor female. They are sinless and are engaged in worshipping God and carrying out His commands. The Hindu conception of the Devas is similar. The Vedanta admits the existence of Devas (1.3.26). According

to the Hindu Sastras the Devas are made of light. Both the Hindus and the Muslims believe that the angels are created and will die in the end and that God alone is Eternal.

#### *Heaven and Hell*

Both Hinduism and Islam agree in the belief that there is life after death, in which the virtuous go to heaven and the vicious to hell. Both according to the Quoran and the Vedanta the number of hell is seven. In the Upanishads we find mention of several hells.

#### *Prophets*

According to the Muslim belief, God speaks to particular persons who communicate God's will to mankind in general. The very conception of Rishi who in meditation perceives the words of Brahman is similar to the Muslim conception of the prophet. The Vedanta speaks of the Mukta Jiva (liberated soul). According to it, the Mukta Jiva becomes endowed with divine attributes excepting the power of creation, maintenance and dissolution. The prophets will be the Mukta Jivas according to the Vedanta. The later Hinduism believes in Avatars, that is, in the incarnation of God as men and even lower animals. This idea is wanting in ancient Hindu scriptures. Both the Hindus and the Muslims alike believe that the words of God are uncreated and eternal and that they are revealed to the seers—the Rishis or the Prophets.

#### *Rituals*

Coming down to beliefs in rituals, we find wonderful similarity between these two great religions. Both believe in bodily purification, pilgrimage, fasting, prohibited foods and prohibited degree in marriage.



A Hindu must bathe and put on clean garments before he performs worship. So also a Musalman must perform ablution (and in cases of greater impurity bathing) and must put on clean dress for saying his prayers. The Prophet said, "Cleanliness is half the faiths."

What is Benares to the Hindus, Mecca is to the Muslims. The Muslims believe that by properly performing the pilgrimage, by abstaining from sin and by taking vow of sinning no more in life, his former sins are forgiven and he receives a new birth. The Hindu belief is not far different. It should be mentioned here that according to orthodox belief the Black Stone of the Kaaba is a sacred relic of Abraham and its kissing is no more than the kissing of a beloved person.

A Hindu is to fast on the eleventh day both after the Full-moon and the New-moon and on other occasions. A Musalman is under obligation to fast for a month in Ramzan. It is regarded as meritorious to fast at other times, especially on the Full-moon day and the two following days of every month, the first ten days of the month of Muharram, on various other occasions and on Mondays. Fasting is regarded by both the Hindus and the Musalmans as a purificatory practice conducive to self-control.

The prohibited foods are almost similar in Hinduism and Islam. The Hindus believe that the prohibition of taking beef is only for the Kali Yuga. In the Vedas and the Mahabharata beef has not been prohibited. On the other hand though the Muslims are allowed to take meat of certain animals, the Sufis recommend abstention from meat-eating for the devotees.

At present the prohibited degrees of marriage among the Hindus are very

much restricted on considerations of both Gotra and Pinda. Marriage among cousins is unknown among the Hindus in Northern India, but in the Deccan even a Brahmin can lawfully marry his maternal uncle's daughter, following the example of the marriage of Arjuna with Subhadra. In fact, the present restriction was unknown during the Vedic age. The following Vedic text is quoted in the Smritis sanctioning the marriage of cousins. "Indra, come by path that are praised to this our sacrifice, accept the offering. Well-cooked meat is offered which is Thy due as one's maternal uncle's daughter or father's sister's daughter (is his due)." The *Satapatha Brahmana* says :

"From the very same common stock are descended the enjoyer (husband) and the enjoyed (wife). We marry in the third or we marry in the fourth degree."

It should be mentioned in this connection that ancient Hinduism did not know the burning of Sutees\*; rather it sanctioned the marriage of the widow, preferably with her brother-in-law. Yaska gives the derivation of Devara as meaning the second husband (Dwitiya Vara). The following verse of the *Parasara Smriti* for the re-marriage of women is often quoted.

"A second husband is ordained for women in case her husband disappears or dies or becomes Sannyasin or becomes impotent or apostatizes."

Even the Smritis recognize the abandonment of the wife under certain circumstances. The wife, however, cannot re-marry, if abandoned by the husband. This Hindu 'Varjana' is somewhat similar to the Muslim Talak. It should be understood that according

\* There is reference to the Sutee in the Atharva Veda XVIII, 3, 1. During the Rig-Vedic times the custom is said to have completely disappeared.—Ed.

to Islam divorce without sufficient reason is sinful and displeasing to God. The Prophet has said, "Of all permitted things divorce is most abominable to God." The Hindu scriptures are also equally vehement in denouncing this practice.

In conclusion, I should like to appeal to my Hindu and Muslim brethren in

the name of the Great God whom we all worship and in the name of our Dear Motherland where we are destined to live for generations, to forget the minor differences of their religions, to feel that after all they are the spiritual children of the Lord of the Universe and to love and respect each other and to live in peace.

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## PEACE AND EDUCATION

DR. MARIA MONTESSORI, M.D. (ROME), D.LITT. (DURHAM).

### I

To ask anyone to speak on peace would appear to everybody a phenomenon quite foreign to our time, since we think to-day that nobody is worth listening to on any subject, unless he is a specialist. For questions of far less importance, we choose only the most competent orators. Who would dream of asking a mathematician to criticise modern art, or a man of letters to expound the theory of radio-activity? And yet, in comparison with the problem of peace, of what value are even the most sublime branches of human knowledge? It is upon peace that the very life of the nations depends, perhaps even the progress or decay of our entire civilization.

How strange it is therefore that there exists no science of peace, no science with an outward development comparable at least with the development of the science of war in the matter of armaments and strategy. Yet war, looked upon as a phenomenon due to collective humanity, presents a greater proportion of mystery, for—in spite of the fact that all the peoples of the earth are eager to escape from that most frightful of scourges—it is men

themselves who set it afoot and they submit to it of their own accord. Great numbers of people devote their lives to the study of the hidden causes of natural cataclysms such as earthquakes, which mankind is powerless to overcome. War, on the contrary, depends on mankind, it is an exclusively human phenomenon: hence, more than any other, it ought to be open to human research and thought. Conditioning the establishment of peace in the world, there are bound to be indirect and complex factors, certainly worth studying and worthy of giving rise to a powerfully organized science. But it can be asserted without hesitation that no research study, even of a rudimentary character, has been undertaken on peace. Stranger still, the very concept of peace is not yet clear, it has never been adequately defined.

How astonishing is that fact! Man has solved many of the riddles of the universe, he rules the earth and has conquered many occult forces. The incentive has come from the vital instinct of preservation and still more from the urge to know and to find out. Is it not curious that there should remain a vast unexplored region in the study of man's



inward energies? This ruler of the outer world has not succeeded in conquering his inward energies as they accumulated and found expression among the vast masses forming the different human groups. If man were asked the reason of this, he could not give a clear answer. In this sense, the concept of peace still remains absent from the innumerable notions that determine our knowledge.

## II

What is generally meant by *peace* is the ceasing from war. But this concept, a purely negative one, is not the real concept of peace. If the apparent aims of a given war are stressed, peace understood as above represents their final and stabilized triumph. The incentive to war used indeed to be the conquest of land and the subduing of nations and, although the habitat of man is no longer the actual soil but rather a social organization built upon economic machinery, that old incentive is still the one generally thought of as the real one and the masses allow themselves to be drawn into war on such grounds.

Now why, before the spectre of an invasion of the land, do the masses arise, ready to march to death? Why do we see women and even children rushing to the defence of their country? It is from fear of that very thing, which—once the war is over—bears the name of peace! Does not the history of mankind teach us that what we call peace is the forced adaptation of the vanquished to a state of submission which has become final, to the loss of all that they have loved, to the giving up of the fruits of their labour and of their conquests? The vanquished nation is compelled to renunciation, as though it alone deserved punishing because it has been vanquished, while

the victor claims supremacy over the defeated population, which may be looked upon as the victim of disaster. Such a situation, although it marks the end of the fighting, cannot be given the name of peace; on the contrary it is precisely that adaptation that constitutes the true moral tragedy of war.

War may be compared to the burning down of a palace filled with works of art and other treasures. If that palace has been reduced to a mass of smoking ashes, reeking with poisonous fumes, the disaster has reached its ultimate consequences; yet those cinders and the suffocating vapours they emit may be likened to peace as the word is generally understood.

Let us take another example: imagine a man dying as the result of an infectious illness. In his body, the war between the germs and those energies that might have made him immune to the disease is over and we very properly hope that he may rest in peace; but what a difference between that kind of peace and what is called health!

The error which consists in giving the name of peace to the permanent triumph of the ends that war had in view misleads us as to the path of salvation that would lead us to true peace. And as there is, in the history of all nations, a sort of periodic recurrence of unjust triumphs of that kind, so long as that error remains with us, the seeking after peace will be hopelessly beyond the reach of human possibilities. Hence the need for seeing clearly the essential differences, the opposite moral implications of war and peace; without that clear vision we shall be deceived and while seeking for peace we shall find conflict.

It is not only of the past that I speak. To this day the life of nations when they are not at war, is an adaptation

to events that have gone before, an adaptation taking place between the victors and the vanquished. The former lash out with whips and the latter hurl imprecations at them, like the demons and the damned in Dante's *Inferno*; all of them equally far removed from the divine breath of love, all of them fallen beings who have broken away from the harmony of the universe. And this repeats itself endlessly, for all nations have been alternately victors and vanquished. Therefore the contact of nations with one another throughout the ages has corrupted them all.

### III

True peace, on the contrary, suggests the triumph of justice and love among men: it reveals the existence of a better world wherein harmony reigns.

In order to establish clearly the difference between war and peace, it is not sufficient to have a starting point; to bring light into this field, as it has been brought into so many others, actual research work is needed. But where shall we find the laboratory in which the human mind is endeavouring to seek the truth, to find out the real facts related to peace?

Nowhere! There is no such thing. There are only sentimental meetings, resolutions, appeals; no leading idea guides a study into the roots of this formidable problem. We seem to live in a state of ethical chaos, since—at the same moment—we honour the man who has discovered the microbe of a disease and invented the serum which will save numbers of human lives, and we honour still more greatly the man who discovers new means of destruction and uses his intellectual energies for the wiping out of entire populations.

The value attached to life and the moral principles involved are so entirely

contradictory in these two cases that one is tempted to believe in the mysterious co-existence of a double collective personality. It is evident that there is an unwritten chapter on human psychology, that there exists an untamed force of infinite danger to mankind.

In the research all the unknown elements of the problem must be taken into account. It must allow for hidden or unthought of elements which may be very remote from their ultimate effects. Just for these reasons the causes of war cannot be found in well-known and self-evident facts concerning social injustice towards the industrial workers in the field of economic production, or in the conditions resulting from the end of a war. These are already social results, they are perceptible to the most rudimentary logic; they constitute the stages immediately preceding the breaking out of war.

### IV

This assertion may be illustrated by the history of a phenomenon parallel to that of war, a phenomenon which is as it were its reflection on the physical plane. I am speaking of the plague, that scourge capable of decimating or even wiping out a whole population and which remained for thousands of years invincible and much to be dreaded—the plague, propagated by ignorance and which was only conquered when scientifically studied even in its most hidden causes.

The plague, as we know, appeared at long intervals just like wars; it disappeared spontaneously and society, which did not know its causes, could not interfere actively to hasten its disappearance. It broke out as an appalling chastisement and caused ravages which have become historical, like wars. Indeed, the plague made a greater number of victims than war and caused



many more economic disasters. In the fourteenth century there was a plague that, in China alone, made ten millions of victims. That same devastating wave swept over Russia, Asia Minor, Egypt, and reached Europe, threatening with destruction almost the whole of mankind. Hecker, quoted by Wells, puts the number of deaths at more than 25 millions, hence the ravages of the plague were worse than those of any war, even the world war. Each appearance of this scourge was accompanied by a general stoppage of productive labour, thus ushering in periods of deep misery, so that famine followed on the plague, accompanied by the phenomenon of the "hallucinated," a notable proportion of the survivors being mentally unbalanced, and this fact increased the difficulties of a return to normal conditions and put an end to the constructive work of civilization for a long time.

It is interesting to examine the explanations which were given of this scourge, an amazingly striking image of war on the physical plane, and to find out what attempts were made to protect men against it. From Homer and Titus Livius to the Latin chronicle of the Middle Ages, we always find the same explanation: the plague is caused by wicked men who disseminate poisons. Dion Cassius, describing the plague of the year A.D. 189 relates that, in the whole of the Empire, cruel men had been enrolled who, for money, threw poisoned needles about everywhere. At another period, in the days of Pope Clement the Sixth, the Jews were accused of spreading this disease and were massacred. When, during the siege of Naples, the plague destroyed 400,000 of the inhabitants of the city,—that being nearly the whole of the population and almost three quarters of the besieging troops,—the Neapoli-

tans believed themselves to be poisoned by the French and the latter by the Neapolitans.

Still more interesting are the documents to be found in the ancient Ambrosian Library of Milan, dealing with the setting up of courts of justice and with the proceedings of a lawsuit brought against two poisoners accused of having started the famous plague of Milan, proceedings which ended in their being condemned to death to make an example of them. This was the only instance of legal proceedings having been undertaken in order that, under such very exceptional circumstances, public chastisement should not be left to popular vengeance. The proceedings of the lawsuit, preserved in the State archives, were variously commented upon by a number of writers. It is a significant fact that a question so patently pathological could have been discussed as though due to an act falling under the sanction of the law and should have given rise to a lawsuit brought against men utterly powerless to cause such a stupendous disaster. This seems absurd nowadays when we think of the plague, but do we not in the case of war seek to foist the responsibility for the world cataclysm upon an individual: the Kaiser, the Czarina, the priest Raspoutine or the regicide of Serajevo?

Another kind of phenomenon, caused by the instinct of self-preservation, was observed during the most celebrated outbreaks of the plague, this was the flocking together of those who remained immune: crowds assembled in public squares, filled the churches and organized processions in the streets, chanting prayers, carrying banners, sacred images and relics. These practices helped to spread the disease rapidly among those who might have escaped. Finally the scourge ceased abruptly

and the survivors became reconciled to life, their hearts swelled with that hope which never dies, they were convinced that mankind had just undergone a necessary trial, perhaps the last one.

## V

Does not this state of mind remind us of the alliances made between nations in order to avoid war? The aim of pre-war alliances was to establish a European balance against war: it is plain to us now that it was precisely this system which caused the stupendous disaster, because a great number of nations were drawn into the conflict from the mere fact of being bound to others. And if, to-day, all the nations in the world united with the aim of doing away with war, but left untouched within themselves the same tendencies and the same disregard of first causes, the war might spread to the whole world, while men continued to hope, imagining that this war, the last, was necessary for the final establishment of peace.

It was scientific research in the realm of the invisible which alone succeeded in discovering the direct cause of the plague: specific micro-organisms and their propagating agents, which were rats. As these small mammals shun mankind, they had never been suspected. Once the factors causing the plague were known, it became apparent that it was one of the numberless infectious diseases which continually threaten the health of mankind and find in a vitiated environment a permanent ground of infection.

Now, in the Middle Ages the nations lived indifferent and ignorant amidst unsanitary conditions, coming and going among the filth accumulated in the public streets, without water in their houses, choosing in preference dark stuffy rooms to sleep in, fearing

the sunshine. This created a favourable ground for the breeding not only of the dreaded plague but of an infinite number of sicknesses less apparent in their manifestations, because they only attacked individuals or families and did not interfere with the daily life of mankind. Hence, when men fought successfully against the plague, they also of necessity carried out, against all diseases caused by germs, an energetic campaign of public and private cleansing, undertaken at the same time in cities and inside every private house. And that was the first chapter of the glorious history of the defence of mankind against the last and smallest of living creatures which still threatened its existence.

But personal hygiene, the ultimate attainment of that long fight, has yet another aspect: health, as such, took on a new value because a perfectly healthy man, well grown and strong, can run the risk of infection without being contaminated. Personal health is related to self-control and to the worship of life in all its natural beauty—self-control bringing with it happiness, renewed youth and the lengthening of existence. Thus personal health has acquired enormous importance and it has placed before itself as the goal to be reached, the ideal of the perfectly healthy man.

Now, when mankind started on this new quest, the perfectly healthy individual simply was not to be found. Whether he were underfed or overfed, a man was always filled with poisons: we may go so far as to say that he deliberately poisoned himself. Little by little, and with great zest, he brought upon himself suffering and death; he found his greatest pleasures in a superabundance of food, in the poisons of alcohol, in idleness. What science revealed was that what he looked upon



as delightful, indeed as a peculiarly enviable privilege, held within it the germs of death. Voluntary renunciation of interminable, solemn and sumptuous meals, of the refined and tempting pleasures of the cellar, or of thoughtless idleness was looked upon not as a means of escape from ill health, but as a sacrifice, a penance, and the highest possible virtue. It seemed like renouncing immediate enjoyment, and at the same time sacrificing life itself. Yet those pleasures were built up on foundations of unsuspected degradation; they were the pleasures of men who had sunk into idleness and lost all taste for strenuous living. When the legions of micro-organisms attacked a man, he was already morally enfeebled and almost in a dying condition. But, when the love of life at last revived and became dominant, man was terrified by the consequences of his degeneracy and he fled to sunshine and activity, joyously, as to a liberation. The simple life, temperate meals, preference given to a vegetarian diet and even to raw food, joy in physical effort, the total giving up of one's self to natural and life-giving forces, that is to-day the way of living of those who know how to enjoy modern existence, of those who wish to live long and conquer ill-health. A saint of the olden time would have looked upon such an existence as the model of perfect penance!

The idea of personal hygiene has thus completely reversed the values formerly professed: it has suppressed the pleasures accompanying the race for death and replaced them by the pleasures of the race for life.

## VI

But in the realm of ethics we have not taken one forward step; in respect to morality we are as backward as the men of the Middle Ages were in respect

to sanitation. Our conscience does not even suspect that dangerous unknown quantities exist in the realm of ethics; it only conceives of superficial reactions; the loose morality of the present day is explained as a form of modern liberty, a shaking off of the old ethical shackles which had remained untouched since the days when salvation was thought to be found in sacrifice. To work less, allowing machinery to make all the necessary effort, such is the highest aim inspiring the conquests of our modern times. And in the substratum of our chaotic ethical life is found the overwhelming desire to get rich, which reveals the existence of that irresistible vice called avarice, and which is the parallel, on the ethical plane, of idleness on the physical plane. Both imply the illusion that one is heaping up treasure and both give the illusion of enjoyment. But pleasures which have their roots in those two vices of a decadent epoch are in reality poisonous and mortal dangers. The wide world open to a sane and conquering life remains hidden; man, with his secret vices, holds himself aloof from it and he preys upon himself in the dark caverns of subconsciousness. If it were possible, in this matter, to use a pathological parallel, this moral situation might be likened to the subtle creeping sickness whose unsuspected menace hangs over our life: tuberculosis. In its early stages tuberculosis causes a frenzied desire for enjoyment and it remains a long time latent and imperceptible. While the plague is a rapid and sudden scourge, tuberculosis is a slow consuming of the enfeebled body.

Everything considered, we live morally in a state of degeneracy in a dark and stuffy environment, and crowds of us are making false assertions. How many moralists, for example, go about to-day repeating that the error of the

age consists in a determination to base everything upon the human reason; how many are convinced that progress cannot be reached by mere logic taking everything in hand. But seemingly there is no one who doubts that reason is reigning triumphant to-day, that it is the supreme sovereign. And yet it is precisely man's *reason* which is now

obscured and almost vanquished. In reality, the prevailing chaos of our ethics is merely one aspect of our psychical degeneracy, the other aspect being the loss of reason. It is this loss of reason, this spreading and increasing madness, that characterizes our time. The return to reason is the most urgent thing for us.

(To be concluded)

## HINDUISM IN CEYLON

BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

### I

Though Ceylon is well known as an ancient seat of Buddhist thought and culture, Hinduism is no less dominant in the island. Of the Ceylonese population, which is approximately five and a half millions according to the last census, about one-fourth are Hindus belonging to the Saivasiddhanta school of Hinduism. Ceylonese Hindus are Tamilians belonging to the South-Indian Dravidian stock and their ancestors migrated to the island in the pre-historic days. It is also suggested that they were the original settlers of the place when in the bygone ages Ceylon was geographically a part of India.

The Hindus in Ceylon numbering about a lakh are staunch followers of four prominent Saivite saints of India, viz. Manickavasagar, Sundaramurthy, Thirugnanasambandar and Appar-swamy. The books written specially by these four Tamil saints, mostly Thevarams or hymns in adoration of Siva, are their religious scriptures. Some of them, for instance Thiruvagasam of Manickavasagar, have been rendered into English with critical annotations

by the late Rev. Dr. Pope of Oxford. Both in spiritual fervour and poetic beauty they are masterpieces of world literature. Though the Hindus have spread all over the island, the northern part, being nearer to India, is colonized by the Hindus. The Hindu districts are Trincomalie, Batticaloa, Jaffna and Nogombo, mostly inhabited by the Saivites with a sprinkling of Vaishnavites. Lanka is the oldest name which the island always bore in song and story both here and in India. After it was conquered and colonized by the Bengali prince Vijaya and his followers, it began to be called Sinhala Dvipa or The Island of The Lion Race. Sinhala Dvipa became Heladvipa in the mouths of its inhabitants, while foreigners made it Serediv. It was often called Sinhala whence come the later forms of Ceilam, Ceylam, and finally Ceylon. The Greeks called it Tapropane instead of Tambrapani, corrupted form of Tamraparni, the name of a South-Indian river supposed to be given to it.

The Tamils or Hindus in Ceylon are divided into two classes, the Ceylon Tamils and the Indian Tamils. The Ceylon Tamils are usually educated and



occupy good position in society. The late Sir P. Ramanathan, the Sir Surendranath of Ceylon, built a very gigantic Siva temple in Colombo, made of stone according to the South-Indian style. Amongst other prominent Hindus may be mentioned the names of the late Sir P. Arunachalam and Dr. A. Coomaraswamy, the reputed authority on Indian art and architecture, now the curator of the Indian section of the Boston Museum of fine arts. The Indian Tamils are chiefly of the labouring class and are temporary immigrants of South India. They return to India after a period of service and form the bulk of estate labour. But both the Ceylon and Indian Tamils along with all Muslims speak the Hindu language Tamil, which is said to be the oldest living literary tongue. As in India many Hindus in Ceylon have been converted to Christianity. The foreign rulers, especially the Portuguese, forced them to adopt the semitic faith and name also. Even now many Hindus bear Christian appellations. The religious conditions of Ceylon indicate that christianization has penetrated to the core of Ceylon life. But as the spirit of Hindu culture is deathless, it has already started to assert itself.

## II

Though Hinduism in Ceylon is pure Saivism; the Ceylon Hindus are practically the worshippers of Pillair or Ganesh and Kandaswamy or Kartikeya, the two sons of Lord Siva. There are 2157 Hindu temples in the island, mainly dedicated to Kartikeya and Ganesh. Some of them are very old, of pre-Buddhistic age—specially the shrines at Kataragama, Chilaw, Trincomalie and Dondra. Kartikeya temple at Kataragama, considered to be the holiest in the island, is a sylvan shrine lying in the heart of a vast forest in-

festated with wild beasts in the southernmost point of Ceylon beach near the Indian Ocean, the nearest railway station being about 50 miles away. But during the two festival weeks in July and August it overflows with visitors and becomes a busy town with shops and markets and a veritable hive of activities with processions carried out at night. The pilgrimage to Kataragama attracts Hindus, Buddhists and Mahomedans alike in their thousands from all parts of Ceylon and South India. The origin of the temple can be traced back to the hoary age of Hindu mythology. Kandaswamy is looked upon by the Sinhalese Buddhists as their national hero and god. There seems to be an idea that the Hindus have a greater claim to it than the Buddhists. The management of this holiest temple of Ceylon is in the hands of the Buddhists, just as the holiest Buddhist temple in India, I mean the one at Buddha Gaya, is in the hands of the Hindus. As a matter of fact the worship of this god Kartikeya had been known to the Sinhalese people from the earliest times. It was quite certain that the Sinhalese people had worshipped him before they became Buddhists. To the Ceylon Buddhists this Hindu god is the embodiment of life and energy.

The Kataragama temple is situated on the bank of the Manickka Ganga, the Ganges of Ceylon. The Hindu settlers of Ceylon brought along with them the traditional Bhakti for the Ganges. Six prominent rivers have the suffix "Ganga," such as the Kalu Ganga, Kelani Ganga, Mahaweli Ganga, etc. The Hindu god Kartika has been allotted a prominent place in all Buddhist temples. In the hill towns of Budulla and Kandy two Kandaswami temples are owned by the Buddhists. Under the ancient Bo-tree at Anuradhapura,



planted by Mahendra of Asokan royal family in the third century B. C., an image of Kartikeya is worshipped. In many Buddhist houses stone images of Kartikeya are to be seen even now. In every one of the Buddhist temples of the island, numbering about 6200, Kartikeya has secured a seat. Tradition goes to say that Bhagavan Buddha visited Ceylon by air three times, and when he left the island he appointed god Vishnu as the care-taker of the island. So the Hindu god Vishnu is also worshipped by the Buddhists. In Colombo there is a big temple dedicated to god Vishnu by the Buddhists. In the hilly town of Diyatalawa there is a Buddhist temple on both sides of which there are temples of Kartikeya and Vishnu. Of the most beautiful rock-cut temples at Dambulla one is dedicated to Vishnu. In these temples, which are marvels of architecture, there are images and wall paintings of Rama, Lakshmana, Vishishana, Kartikeya, Ganesh; Vishnu and other Hindu deities. In Kandy, the third and last important capital of Ceylon, near the famous Tooth-temple, there are temples for Vishnu and other Hindu gods. Even the ceremonies of the Tooth-temple have been greatly influenced by the Hindu culture. The last five kings of Ceylon who reigned here were Tamils or Hindus and married the princess of the royal dynasty of Madura and Tanjore.

There is a belief that in Adam's Peak, the second highest peak of Ceylon, about 7500 feet high above the sea level, and the holiest place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists, Buddha came by air and left his foot-prints. The Hindus, on the other hand, believe that the foot-prints are those of god Siva and hence make pilgrimages there very frequently. From the peak one can get the most beautiful natural scenery of

Ceylon. It is characteristic of Hindu culture to convert beautiful mountain peaks into places of worship. Hence the origination of rock-temples at Trincomalee, Pakshi Tirtha in the South and Amarnath, Kedarnath, Badrinarayana, etc., in the North.

In Trincomalee, one of the most important naval bases in the East, lies another very ancient Hindu shrine, named Swami Rock. The grandeur of the site probably led to its selection as a place of worship even in the pre-Buddhist age, long before organized Hinduism built a shrine at the spot. St. Nihal Singh in his *Ceylon, New and Old* says, "This temple is half as old as time. Its foundations are lost in the mist of mythology. According to one account it certainly existed 2500 years B.C. The present name is a corruption of Thirukanath Malai derived from 'Konatha,' the deity to whom the place was originally dedicated. In the vernacular now in use however the god is spoken of as Koneswara Swamy or Siva." The temple in which the image was enshrined was a thousand-pillared magnificent edifice but the Portuguese vandals in their greed of gold destroyed it completely. Worship nevertheless continues. The Portuguese not only took away jewels and wealth but smashed the pillars, threw them into the ocean and used some fragments of the thousand pillars for their buildings. One solitary stern pillar of the early Hindu type still remains. From the precipice downwards to the deep sea there is a cleft in which is carved in relief "Konesh," who is worshipped by streams of pilgrims. There is a tradition that Ravana, king of Lanka, was a daily worshipper of the temple, but as daily attendance to the temple from his place was troublesome to him, he wanted to remove the temple whole-



sale to his palace but he was miraculously stopped.

### III

The pre-historic temple at Muniswara Siva at Chilaw has a lure for the Hindus and the Buddhists alike. Traditions go to say that it is a Ceylon shrine at which Ramachandra worshipped. Historians cannot say exactly how many centuries back the temple was constructed. However the legend is that it was built by Ramachandra after the defeat of Ravana before returning to India. St. Nihal Singh opines that it is one of the oldest places of worship in the world. Siva is the presiding deity here and is given the first and foremost chamber in the sacred shrine. But the shrine is particularly sacred to his consort Parvati. It is called the Pithasthan of Bhadra Kali. There are figures of all the deities of Hindu mythology, amongst which the one with six heads and twelve hands representing God Skanda in his martial character was presented to the temple by an ancient king of Malabar coast. A festival is held in commemoration of the meeting of Parvati with Agastya Muni who visiting the island from India led a hermit's life for some years at the shrine.

The ancient Vishnu temple at Dondra was one of the most celebrated in Ceylon. The place has been the retreat of the devotees and pilgrims from the remotest time. There are some Buddhist Dagobas but the most important temple is a shrine which in very early times had been erected by the Hindus in honour of God Vishnu. The present temple is 1500 years old, and all the Kings of Ceylon, both Hindu and Buddhist, were devotees of this shrine. The Sri Kedareshwara Siva temple near Mannar is another very, very old temple. The Portuguese vandals repeatedly destroyed both the

temples at Dondra and Mannar and plundered their riches. The Mannar temple was said to have been built by the celestial architect Viswakarma, but when it was in ruins Agastya Muni during his visit to Ceylon rebuilt it. Both the Hindus and the Buddhists come here for worship. Sigiriya, a precipitous bald rock on which a Ceylon King built his palace, is very beautiful. There we can see the famous frescos (also a few at the Galu Vihara in Polonnaruwa), the most delicate and beautiful examples of Buddhist art in Ceylon. The old paintings of the Indian caves of Ajanta are just like them. Dr. Earnst Waldsmidt, curator of the Indian section of the Prussian State museum, Berlin, who was recently in Ceylon on a study-tour, remarked in a lecture at the Colombo museum that the frescos of the "Ladies of Sigiriya" in their vivid colours were the wonderful creation of Indian genius and the most valuable treasures of art. The art of Ajanta and Sigiriya was at its height between the 5th and 7th centuries A.D.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries South India supplied kings and ambassadors of culture to the Kandyan kingdom. What remains of the palace of Kandy, shorn of all its adornments, has a strange resemblance to the one at Tanjore. It is evident that the last kings at Kandy imitated the courts at Tanjore and Madura a great deal. The last Tamil kings of Ceylon were rather Hindu in culture, but they possessed sufficient tact not to interfere with the Buddhist rights and feelings of their subjects. The audience hall of the latter Kandyan court resembles the one in Tanjore palace. Some of the movements of the Kandyan dances have evidently been copied after the style of the dancers of Tanjore court and the records still preserved at the library of the Tanjore palace show that there has

been exchange of artists between the Tanjore and Kandyan courts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which cultural intercourse was very frequent between Ceylon and India. At Polonnaruwa, the second capital of Ceylon, the first being Anuradhapura, Siva temples are even now to be seen. The Sinhalese kings built Hindu temples for their Hindu wives along with Buddhist temples. The Hindu religious celebrations of Ceylon are largely attended by the Buddhists. They offer Pooja almost in a Hindu style. The Hindu worship consists in breaking cocoanuts (Ceylon being a coconut country, there is a plenty of coconuts everywhere), offering flowers, singing Devarams (Tamil hymns) and wearing Thir meeru, that is, sacred ashes or vermillion on the forehead. The Buddhists generally wear vermillion and dash cocoanuts. Ayurveda is the national system of medicine of the Hindus and Buddhists alike, and there is a big Ayurvedic college in Colombo with modern equipments. One Ayurvedic congress is held every year in Ceylon to investigate into and popularize Ayurvedic system and the Government too patronizes it in every way. In almost all Buddhist temples Sanskrit is studied along with Pali by the monks. Unfortunately the Ceylon Hindus are not much interested in Sanskrit. In fact, the Buddhists are more acquainted with Sanskrit than the Hindus.

#### IV

The Sinhalese folk songs and folk dances have close affinity with those of the Hindus. One cannot separate the three parts of their performances—the song, the dance and the instrumental music rolled into one harmony like the Nritya, Gita and Vaditra of Hindu music. The musical renderings are

based upon infinite varieties of combinations of five primaries, called Panchatala, namely Ta, Dhi, To, Na, Ta. Of the tunes of song and dance there are eighteen principal ones. The traditional tunes faithfully represent the movement and gait of some animals, that is, the cobra, the elephant, the horse, the hawk, etc. The Wessellama dance is not to be performed as an entertainment, as it has connection with the worship of Siva and Kali. "The folk dances and folk songs of Ceylon," says Dr. Andreas Nell, "are of extreme antiquity. Some may have come with other arts with Vijayan colonists and the retinue of the Bo-tree after 240 years but they seem to have grown into indigenous forms." King Parakrama Bahu who reigned at Polonnaruwa in the 12th century A.D., named one of the great gates into his capital city after the heavenly musicians, the Gandharvas. The Sinhalese music is entirely based on the seven melodies of Hindu music.

Nagas or semi-divine serpents of the Ceylon Buddhist lore are most probably of Hindu origin. They are considered as protectors of Buddhist relics and sanctuaries. Figures of Nagas carved out of stone or tin are to be seen near many of the Dagobas of Ceylon. In Buddhist art Nagas appear in two forms, animal and man with many heads. Every Buddhist statue, either seated or reclining, has a hooded Naga over the head. The vessels of clay with figures of Nagas are to be seen in the Colombo museum. James Fergusson in his book *Tree and Serpent worship* says that Nagas are not originally serpents but an aboriginal race of serpent worshippers. Dr. C. F. Oldham, author of *The Sun and the Serpent*, thinks that Nagas are not demons but so called because they descend from the Sun and had the hooded serpent for a totem.



Hermann Oldenberg, the famous German indologist, considers the Nagas to be demoniacal beings like werewolves who like tiger-men and swan-maidens appeared in human forms. Prof. Vogel of Leiden in his book *Indian serpent lore* says that Nagas may occasionally assume human forms but they do not belong to the human world. Theirs is the Naga Loka, wherever that mysterious realm of snakes may be located. In Hindu homes, particularly in rainy seasons, when serpentine troubles increase Manasa Devi or the Goddess of snakes is worshipped to get rid of them. However, the Naga cult is almost a Hindu Yogic cult without a shade of doubt. The snake symbol of mysterious Kundalini is of pre-Buddhistic origin.

Many of the Sinhalese ancient customs, rituals and observances are of Hindu origin. When a child is about to be born a mystic ceremony is performed with offerings of incense and flowers upon a plaster of ground rice and mustard, on which the names of the nine Grahas are drawn. A circular ornament which is said to have the power of securing immunity from evil spirits and of conciliating the Grahas is also hung round the neck of the child. Horoscopes on palm leaves are made by the astrologers just like the Hindus. Marriage ceremony also follows the Hindu method to a great extent.

## V

The genius of Hindu culture is two-fold : assimilation and expansion. These two centripetal and centrifugal forces are at work from the very beginning of its history. They may respectively be called the principles of Aryanization

and Indianization. The former is of world-moving and the latter is of nation-making significance. Through Buddha and Sankara these twin forces of Hinduism worked marvellously. That the whole of Asia was Aryanized and converted into a greater India by Buddha is an undeniable fact of history. Ceylon, Siam, Burma, Cambodia, China and the Far East have been literally civilized by Buddhism. Says Dr. Waddell, the great philosopher of history, "Civilization means Aryanization." The world-shaking and civilizing Sakti of Hinduism, i.e. Aryanization, was incarnate in Buddha. He converted the whole of Asia, nay, the whole of the East into the cultural Empire of India. On the other hand, Sankara was the embodiment of the Hindu Sakti of Indianization. If Aryanization is another name for civilization, Indianization is a synonym for spiritualization. What Buddha expanded Sankara intensified; what Buddha widened Sankara deepened and what Buddha Aryanized Sankara Indianized or spiritualized. It is a historical fact that the pre-Buddhistic religion of Ceylon was primitive Hinduism, which was swept away later by the tide of Buddhism. But Hinduism in Ceylon has now lost its inherent property of expansion and absorption. So there is no Hindu revival in Ceylon. As in India Hinduism in this island could not absorb its 'rebel child' and hence has escaped Indianization, but interaction between Hinduism and Buddhism is slowly going on. And when one more spiritual upheaval will pass over Ceylon from India, there is no doubt that Hinduism will absorb Buddhism and Indianization will be complete.

# A GREAT SUFI SAINT

BY AGA SYED IBRAHIM DARA

## I

There are few Sufi sages whose life can equal in simplicity, romance and grandeur to that of Bayazid. He was a great sage of his time, and truly called "Jewel of Sages." Bayazid was the son of an uneducated man and had the misfortune of losing his father in an early childhood. His loving and affectionate mother brought him up and making great sacrifices sent him to school to study the Quoran. Bayazid proved a brilliant student in the class and became a favourite of the master whose explanations of the Quoran he heard with great interest. Once a simple passage greatly stirred his mind. The Quoran said, "Serve God and your parents." "How can a man serve two masters?" asked Bayazid. The teacher gave an explanation, but he remained unsatisfied. The teacher proceeded further, but Bayazid could not follow him; he remained absorbed in his own trend of thoughts. He then suddenly got up and taking leave of the teacher went to his mother to ask the meaning. The mother's explanation too did not satisfy him. He told his ideas to his mother and added, "I want to serve God and serve Him utterly and fully. You ask me to serve you. I find I cannot do the two things; either you ask me to be always with you and serve you, or give me up to God and let me be His servant for ever." It almost broke the heart of the mother to part from her only son. But nobly she said, "Bayazid, I give you over to God and withdraw all my claims on you. Go gladly and be God's servant

for ever." Putting himself in God's hand, Bayazid left the house that very moment and walked out of the town almost forgetting that he had a home and a mother.

From that moment he was God's—his only object in life became to serve God and to find Him. He went from place to place for the knowledge of God. He visited 118 sages and did hard and difficult penance for thirty years. Though, by this time, he himself became a sage and was revered by people, Bayazid was not satisfied. He felt an intense agony at separation from God. He kept awake at nights and wept and prayed for the "hidden door" to open and for God to reveal Himself more fully. In this condition he at last came to Jafar Sa Ai Sadiq, the great-grandson of the Prophet. He was a great spiritual leader of his time and founder of all the great schools of philosophy in Arabia. People came to him from distant lands, and became his disciples. He was always haunted by the then Khalif and his spies, who fearing lest he might claim the Khilaphat made many plots to kill him. Had Jafar Sadiq been allowed to deliver his message fully, Islam would have been greatly enriched and benefited. His explanations of the Quoran are the greatest authority with most Muslims. Bayazid found a right master and felt not only satisfied but felt so much love and devotion for him that he never wished to leave his presence and remained absorbed all the time. As Jafar Sadiq was a great scholar and writer he naturally had many books. One day he told Bayazid, "Go and



fetch for me that book from the almirah." But to his surprise he found that Bayazid did not even know where the almirah of books was. He said, "Bayazid, you have been here so long and yet you do not even know my almirah of books. It is a wonder!" Bayazid answered, "My master, what is the good of seeing the almirah of books? I see your face and hear your discourses. It is sufficient for me." Jafar Sadiq was greatly struck with the reply. He began to ponder over the condition of the disciple, who had been so absorbed in him all these days. Then he called Bayazid and said, "Bayazid, your Sadhana with me is complete. You leave me and now return to your mother. May the knowledge you have acquired lead you to the final Goal." Thus giving him blessings, he sent him back to his mother.

## II

Every incident of Bayazid's life is wonderful. When he reached his mother's house, he stood at the door and heard what his mother was speaking. To his surprise he heard her loudly and earnestly praying to God with a voice choked with sobs and tears, "O Lord, always shower Thy blessings over my son. Let the teachers and sages be pleased with him and let his life and service please Thee for ever." When Bayazid heard this prayer, tears fell from his eyes. He went in and said, "Mother, your son is here." His mother embraced him and said, "My child, after a long span of thirty years you have remembered your mother! At your separation I have cried and cried, and become blind." Bayazid answered, "Mother, I have acquired the difficult knowledge. When leaving you, I was given two alternatives by the Quoran. That

which was more important of the two I then placed in the background, and followed the other. At last I have discovered the secret. I ought to have served my mother first. For I find that what I obtained through long penance I could very easily and quickly get by serving you. From now, I shall serve my mother."

This was a great spiritual discovery of Bayazid. He was one of the very first men in Islam to discover the consciousness of the Divine Mother. He now changed his entire course of Sadhana and began serving his mother or rather serving the Divine Mother through her. With astonishing devotion he did it. One day when his mother woke up at night and asked him for some water to drink he found that the vessel was empty and there was no drinking water in the house. He thereupon took a heavy brass water vessel and went to the adjacent river. Meanwhile his mother fell asleep again. When Bayazid returned, he stood in the courtyard with the water pot on his head all the night and did not put it down lest the sound would wake his mother. This and many similar incidents prove that in serving his mother Bayazid was consciously doing a Sadhana for the realization of the Divine Mother. It is also a spiritual fact that what is gained after great difficulty and hard penance by means of personal effort, can be very easily got by the Mother's Grace. This is too well known in India to need any explanation. This principle was adopted by some other Muslim sages also. The Prophet himself gave a clear hint to that effect in the famous saying, "Praise lies at the feet of the Mother." It is clear that Bayazid's Sadhana was taking a new turn, and its beginning was made when he came in contact with Jafar Sadiq. The very fact of

his not caring for any other thing except being devoted to the Guru shows that his was a Sadhana of love and devotion. It was for this reason, perhaps, that his master sent him to his mother. This is indeed a very interesting part of Bayazid's life.

### III

Bayazid after this period went for a pilgrimage to Mecca. This too he did with great faith and devotion. He pondered that he was going to the "House of God" and trod every step of the way with great reverence. He performed penance all along and took twelve years to reach there. While he was returning people asked why he did not visit Medina, the place where there is the grave of the Prophet. Bayazid replied, "One cannot serve two masters at a time. I will do special penance for it and come again." After this he spent twelve years more in purifying the heart" through penances. Then for full one year he "carefully watched his heart," and found in it to his great dismay, "the ego of penance." So for the next five years he tried to eradicate it with great care and, then, became free and humble like a child.

At his prayers Bayazid always asked for a complete union with God, and perfect freedom from all traces of ego. "O Lord," says he, "how long will remain this gulf of separation? Take away my ego from me, then only will my personality merge into Thee. O Lord, as long I am with Thee and in Thee, I am in a safe and exalted position. But when I am in my body, in the ego, I become the lowest of the low."

Bayazid's character is revealed in the following incidents. He was quite original in everything.

One day Bayazid met a young man on his way home from the mosque and gave him some advice. The youth got angry and hit him with his musical instrument, which broke into pieces. Bayazid too got a deep wound in his head. But on reaching home he sent the price of the instrument and a big pot of sweets to the man and insisted on his taking them. Since then the youth became his great friend.

One day a man came to Bayazid and said, "I have fasted every day for thirty years and spent greater part of every night in prayers, yet I have not even got a glimpse of God, while you bathe in His sunshine." Bayazid said, "Do as I tell you and you will surely find Him. First of all throw away all your riches and then sit on the roadside with a pot of sweets. Then ask all the boys to beat you with shoes, and who insults and hurts you most, to him give the largest share of sweets. Do this in every quarter of the town, staying most in the place where you are treated worst." The man did not agree to follow this advice and went away.

There are many such stories about Bayazid.

### IV

The sayings of Bayazid are very famous. His discourses are profound and inspiring. The following is a discourse about his Sadhana. We must here remember that during his time Mahomedan belief was strictly against the Sufi ideas that man can get union with God.

Bayazid says, "I spent sixteen years on the threshold of the door and could not enter. Then one day I said to God, 'O God, Thou art mine. When Thou art mine I have got everything.' That very moment, through His grace, all my internal struggle was over. Then



I got new life and direct experiences. One who follows his command gets all he wants as a return. But I have not sought for any other thing except Him in return. First I thought that I loved God. But when my inner sight opened I found that it was God Who first loved me and drew me to Himself; that made me love Him.

"With great devotion I turned my eyes towards God. He took me away from worldly things to a very high place. He made me luminous with his light. He revealed to me the deepest secrets and showed me His greatness and power. From Him I turned my eyes towards myself and I found that He was so high and I was so low. He was all purity, I was all impurity. I turned my eyes still further and I found that my light was His own light. Contemplation showed me that all worship and devotion is done by *God* and not by me. The former ego-sense that I do prayer or worship went away in an instant, and in bewilderment and wonder I spoke out, 'My Lord, what is this phenomenon that Thou showest me!' He answered, 'I am everything. There exists nothing without me. You only do work, but the power for work and the fruit of your work I am. Unless I help you, you cannot even worship me.' After this God asked me to see only His form everywhere and do only His work. He removed the ego in me and made me alive with His all-blissful Existence. Thus He took me from falsehood into Truth, from darkness into Light. I made my house in *Him* and enjoyed Eternal Bliss. I silenced my tongue, I closed my ears, all the traffic of the senses I stopped. Then the Divine Grace descended upon me. My heart shone forth with the New Light. I got the Divine Knowledge. He said to me, 'Bayazid see

where there is nothing there is everything.'

"I answered, 'My Lord, see that I do not become egoistic. I have got a new life and I am anxious to keep it. It is better that I lose myself rather than live without Thee.'

"God said, 'Bayazid, keep on to your contemplation, in the end you will be successful.'

"I said, 'God, I have full faith that if Thou takest me in Thy service, then only I can do contemplation. By myself I am unable to do anything.'

"Then God said, 'Bayazid, ask of Me now what you want.'

"I said, 'O Lord, I love Thee, and I love nothing else. Thou art the greatest of the great. Thou art the most gracious. I shall get peace in Thee and through Thee only. Therefore, do not separate me from Thyself even for a second and do not bring before me anything but Thyself.'

"He answered, 'Let it be so.'

"After that He remained silent for a long time and then said again, 'The Truth you saw and heard, you have spoken now.' I replied, 'What I have experienced I have experienced because of Thee. What I saw I saw through Thy Grace. What I heard I heard through Thee. First Thou madest me hear and now it is Thou that praisest it.'

"Again He severely tested me, but I came out successful from the test brighter than before. The flame of my devotion illumined my heart, and I saw there was no other means but prayer to reach God. I saw that silence was the only lamp to dispel the darkness. By these means I became totally free from human limitations, external and internal. Then the inner sight opened and all the darkness disappeared. My tongue was transformed and it could utter nothing but of His Unity,

Grace and Love. My eyes saw only His indescribable Beauty. I live in Him and I am never to die."

# V

Bayazid was greatly revered by his disciples and the people of his time for his eloquent, inspiring and sincere discourses and the hard penance he had done all his life. They not only loved and honoured him but had faith and trust in him. One day, to the surprise of all his disciples, Bayazid stood up in ecstasy and said that he was God himself.

"Lo I myself am God Almighty  
There is no God besides me;  
Worship me."

His disciples were wonder-struck, and afterwards asked him to explain it. Bayazid said, "Next time I say it, kill me on the spot." He however said it again, and yet again, and each time with increasing conviction and force. One day a disciple aimed a dagger at him on one such occasion. But to the surprise of all, the dagger turned back in the hands of the disciple, who

struck his own heart and died! Then Bayazid explained that he had merged in God. His outer being was only a mirror in which they saw their own faces. It reflected all that was thrown at it—good and bad alike. Hence the dagger too turned to the hitter.

His sayings on the subject of his union with God are many. He would say,

"Within my vesture there is nought  
but God,  
Whether you seek Him on earth or  
in heavens."

or

"How wonderful am I!  
Salutations unto Me!  
How great is My Glory!"

Bayazid realized many other great and complex spiritual Truths and left in Sufism many great and permanent things.

Bayazid successfully established in Sufism ideas for which so many sages had given their lives or suffered innumerable troubles and persecutions. He was a great master and up to this day is revered by the Sufis.

## WHAT HAS MADE JAPAN GREAT

BY CHARU CHANDRA GHOSH

(Concluded from the last issue)

The following I think are the factors which have made modern Japan, and they are named according to their order of importance in my estimation.

1. Universal compulsory primary education and provision of facilities of higher education on a commendably ample scale.

2. Co-operation.

3. Technical schools and colleges.

4. Institutions for research and experiment.

5. Adoption of up-to-date machinery in all industries.

6. Availability of cheap electric power.

7. Banking facilities all over the country.

8. Facilities of communication all over the country.



I would place co-operation first. But it is difficult to apportion value correctly. I shall now give a brief account of each of these factors.

The primary education compulsorily imparted to boys and girls for six years is of a very high order and includes botany, zoology, physics and chemistry in addition to language, mathematics, history and geography. There is a higher primary course for two years for those who do not join the middle school course which is for five years and equivalent to our Matriculation. Technical and industrial schools are open to those who have completed the primary and in some cases the higher primary course. Technical colleges are open to those who have passed out of the middle school. Those who wish to go to the university have to pass through high schools for two years after the middle school. Space will not permit me to go into details. But I wish to emphasize one point and that is that instruction is everywhere through the medium of Japanese. I also quote from the latest Year-Book the number of different kinds of educational institutions with the number of teachers.

	No. of schools.	No. of teachers.
Elementary or primary schools ...	25,546	2,25,692
Normal schools for training teachers ...	121	3,535
Middle schools ...	530	12,990
High schools for boys ...	58	1,217
High schools for girls ...	899	13,726
UNIVERSITIES—		
including two technical or engineering universities ...	37	4,643
Special colleges not attached to universities	91	3,810
Technical colleges (Agriculture, Forestry, Sericulture, Commerce, Engineering, Mining, Nautical, Pharmaceutical,		

	No. of schools.	No. of teachers.
Dental, Foreign language, Fine arts and Music) ...	50	2,057
Technical schools (Middle school and Higher Primary grade) ...	235	1,779
Supplementary or Continuation Technical schools for boys and girls 12 to 14 years old	15,361	16,259
Training institutes for Technical school teachers ...	50	83
Schools for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb ...	117	851
Other schools not recognized by Government	1,719	13,873

Besides the above there are special schools for the children of the peers, for training Shinto priests, and in special departments, *viz.* the army, navy, railways, telegraphs, etc.

Compulsory primary education has been of the greatest help in the development of trade and industries. In factories, farms and research stations the labourers do their part with intelligence and themselves keep notes and work out mathematical results where necessary. In the recent economic depression about 5 lakhs of reeler girls voluntarily agreed to a reduction of their pay by 30 per cent.

While education has given the principal impetus, it is co-operation which has actually made success possible. Japan is a land of co-operation, the extent of which can hardly be gauged by the official number of co-operative societies or the number of their members. There are on the average about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  societies for every one of the villages, towns and cities in the country. In a single district, Saitama, with a population of about 14 lakhs in 368 towns and villages, there are 533 co-operative organizations and in addition 119 banks including branches. The co-operative spirit is best ex-

plained by a few examples. The people have got into the habit of doing everything by forming associations. In villages there are young men's associations, old men's associations, women's associations, teachers' associations, associations for nursing the sick and the aged, and so on. Associations are formed for pilgrimage. In some places there are early rising societies, the members having to go round by turns to wake up the members early. There are all possible kinds of co-operative organizations in sericulture, agriculture, and industries of all kinds. It is co-operation in industries, at present described as rationalization, which is one chief factor in the success of the Japanese industrialists. Every man saving one yen a day, a village has accumulated about ten thousand yen in a few years, to be spent probably on a co-operative store building. Sunday collections by school children in a village with about 500 households have built up a fund of about 60,000 yen in five years. A village is said to be raising a fund by self-taxation, and hopes to live tax-free after 57 years. For this purpose one sen is levied every week, 10 sen at the birth of a child, 15 sen at marriage, something on passing examinations, on appointment, at death, and so on.

I have given above some facts about the technical and commercial schools and colleges and cannot go into more details. Attention may be drawn also to the provision made for research and experiment for all industries such as agriculture, sericulture, textiles, fishery, forestry, pottery, dyeing, etc. I have given details about research and experiment in sericulture in the Silk Industry of Japan and briefly refer to them here to illustrate my point. Japan is divided into 47 districts. The principal sericultural experiment station for the

whole country has the following staff, *viz.* 21 experts, 15 assistant experts and 56 assistants. In the different districts there are 76 experiment stations with 102 experts, 260 assistant experts, 29 assistants and 72 clerks. Besides these experiment stations there are what are called propaganda or controlling stations numbering 363 with 66 experts, 767 assistant experts and 234 clerks. For agriculture there are similar parallel institutions as for sericulture, covering the country. Experiment and research stations for weaving etc., are provided in the districts which have these industries, while the technical universities are the big national research and experiment centres for these purposes.

## VI

Japan has progressed industrially by the adoption of modern machinery. One of the principal functions of the different research and experiment stations is to bring and try any new machinery and methods wherever found and, if suitable, to adopt or adapt them and then introduce them among the people. Power-looms used in weavers' houses are mostly made of wood with as little metal parts as possible. Necessarily they are cheap. The success in industry is in no small measure due to the determination to be up-to-date in machinery and methods as well as in the study of the markets. The consuls in various countries keep their eyes open in this respect, and observers are sent out frequently by the commerce department and also by private industrial unions.

The chief factor in the quick and cheap production of goods is the use of electricity, which is produced by harnessing water currents, is available anywhere, is used in all industries, large and small, lights even the farmers' houses in



villages, is used by ironsmiths for drilling holes in metals and by tinsmiths for soldering tins, and has enabled trams to be opened and run even through villages.

Banking and easy circulation of money in the industrial life of a nation is like blood in the human body. I have seen farmers taking cheques after sale of cocoons and cashing them either in their own or a neighbouring village. I have mentioned above that in a single district with a population of about 14 lakhs there are 119 banks including branches.

Communication between the different parts of the country has been made easy by means of railways, which have been mostly taken through tunnels in the hills and by means of tramways, steamships and roads. Practically in villages are approachable in motor cars. Bicycles are so extensively used probably in no other country. I could get to use telephones in farmers' houses in villages, installation of telephone being subsidized by Government. The result of easy communication has been the development of industrial towns all over the country.

It may naturally be asked, how Japan has been able to provide for education, research and experiment as well as propaganda on such an ample scale. The answer is, it is due principally to the low rates of pay in all departments. The highest paid officer in Japan, the Prime Minister, gets one thousand yen a month, at present less 20 per cent on account of the economic depression. The maximum pay for the heads of districts, who are called governors, is 500 yen, at present less 20 per cent. The maximum pay of an expert in the scientific service, in which we are naturally interested, is 375 yen a month, but he usually retires at about 300 a month. In this connection I

should explain that although the exchange value of yen is Rs. 1/9/- when at par, the yen in Japan is what the rupee is in India. Although the pay is small, educational and other buildings, their fittings and appliances are on a commendably large scale. Even a village primary school has a separate, furnished visitors' room or rooms, and issues printed, and in some cases illustrated, report every year. As a rule all experts in the research institutions are sent out to foreign countries by orders of Government. In the sericultural department their full pay and in other departments half their pay is given to the family, and all expenses in foreign countries are borne by Government and at first-class rates for the sake of the prestige of the country. On return they continue getting their grade pay. Another feature is that assistant experts have a personal budget of 1,500 yen, and experts 3,000 yen per year, which they are at liberty to spend on books, appliances, etc.

## VII

I remember to have seen it stated that Japan has progressed because she has westernized herself in every way including religion. It is far from correct. I have already explained the position with regard to religion. It is true that the official Japan has adopted Western dress. Up-to-date machinery and methods have been adopted and in most cases adapted in education, industry and trade. But under this Western garb she is thoroughly oriental and characteristically Japanese, to the extent of being considered superstitious. The naming ceremony of baby princes and princesses is performed according to ancient rites with the twang of bow strings by priests clad in ancient ceremonial garments. The planting of paddy for use in the coronation cere-

mony of the Mikado is undertaken after offerings to gods, is carried out by persons purified by ceremonial baths and is supervised by the Director of the local Agricultural Experiment Station dressed in silk hat and frock coat. Ministers in newly elected cabinets go to worship in shrines. Ceremonies are performed for scaring off diseases, and charms against them are put up in houses. Tugging of ropes to draw down rain from the heavens is a common practice in the country-sides. This is further supplemented by loud appeals to the rain-gods from the summit of a high hill by rain delegates, who have to carry water from distant auspicious places without stoppage probably for 50 hours and without spilling a drop on the way. And also the opened head of an ox is thrown into the pools below waterfalls in order to anger the rain-god who in disgust will cause showers of rain to fall. While travelling in the

Japanese boat on the Pacific Ocean I have seen Japanese gentlemen preferring Japanese diet to the excellent European diet provided. Most girl students in high schools take up domestic science, and all with whom I talked were preparing themselves for marriage and to be mistresses of families. The girl workers in the factories who are really the main prop in Japan's successful competition with other industrial nations, come to work after completing their compulsory primary education at the age of 14, 15 or 16, and they all go back home at the age of about 18, 19 or 20, marry and settle down in life. Japan has thus avoided the chief curse of industrialism which in the most industrialized West has converted workers into parts of machinery. This is also probably one of the secrets of absence of the problem of unemployment in Japan.

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## A POOR MAN IN THE SERVICE OF THE POOR

BY ADA R. BROWN

In the State of Ohio, America, free textbooks are supplied to every boy in the public schools. This is the work of one single man—Mr. Joseph Heberle, who lived as teamster in the city of Cincinnati. Though very poor and unlettered, his simple life story is well known to the people of Cincinnati, and his memory is revered by all. A few years ago a beautiful edifice was erected in the city in honour of this poor teamster, whose whole life was dedicated to the cause of others and whose heart always bled for the poor and destitute. Many of his acts remind one of St. Francis of Assisi, and like

that great saint Heberle also was unassuming and unostentatious.

Joseph Heberle was born in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1862, and when eleven years old was left an orphan. In his youth he came to America, settled in Cincinnati and became a teamster. He worked long hours each day for a scant wage, but this supplied his simple wants. And if occasionally there was a little left over for a ticket to the opera he was happy, as he had the true German love for good music.

Joseph Heberle was no ordinary teamster; he took a humane interest in his horses, studied their ways and



cared for them when they were ill. His kindness was extended to any person in need, and no sacrifice was too much for him if thereby he could be of service to others.

One bitter day he saw from his wagon a wayfarer whose feet needed shoes. He said to himself, "Heberle, how rich you are! You have shoes at least. And if you have no shoes, you have in your wagon burlap with which to bind your feet against the cold." And he took the shoes from his feet and gave them to the stranger, while his own feet he wrapped in the sacks.

And on this account he felt no glory of saints or martyrs. "Don't mention it, my dear friend," he said, "on Saturday is another pay-day, and I will buy me new shoes."

The sight of little ragged children shivering in the cold grieved him sorely. When he saw young children going to work long hours in a factory he grew heartsick at such injustice, and knew that he must speak out, so that others might see these wrongs as he saw them.

He was a man with little schooling, but realized that education of the labouring classes would be a powerful factor in lifting them out of their bondage and poverty. So he set for himself the mighty task of arousing an indifferent public to their civic and social responsibility. At night, after a hard day's work, he would care for his horses, then go down into the crowded places of the city and talk wherever he could, urging the people to better the conditions of children and working classes. He never got to bed till after midnight as this was his real work, and his efforts were tireless.

Poor people could send their children to free schools, but how difficult was it for them to buy books for use in the schools!

"You say your education is free to

all," Heberle said, "but is it free when poor children must go to charity for their school books? Education must be no charity; it is the right of all, and school books must be free to every child."

It was seven years before this dream was fulfilled.

The story of his life can never be fully told, for hundreds of his good deeds are unknown to the world. But we do know that his first thought was always for those whose needs were greater than his own. Food, clothing, shelter and rest he gave to others, of the little he had.

He was fortunate in that he lived long enough to see much come to pass of what he had visioned. Little children no longer worked in factories, but were given free books and free schooling which should be every child's heritage. Through his efforts better labour laws were passed, and the people of Cincinnati are happier and more self-respecting citizens because of Joseph Heberle. His charity knew no distinction of class, creed, or race—all were his brothers. It was rightly said of him, "He taught us the dignity of labour and the peace of self-sacrifice."

This is the life of a simple teamster who truly "hitched his wagon to a star" and dared to help his fellowmen in spite of overwhelming odds.

His friends, resolving to honour his memory, erected a large and beautiful fountain in the school named after him. Guarding this fountain are four bronze tablets with inscriptions telling briefly his labours and accomplishments. On the first table are the following lines of Wordsworth:

"For thou wert still the poor man's  
stay,  
 The poor man's heart, the poor  
man's hand.

And all the oppressed who wanted  
strength  
Had thine at their command."

The story of this humble teamster  
is told in the stone and bronze of this  
beautiful building, but his memory  
will be for ever held sacred in the  
hearts of the people.

Each one who lives,  
Tho' high or lowly born,  
Owes something to mankind.

And best is he  
Whose vision is far-reaching,  
Undimmed by selfishness or greed;  
Who knows his life is futile  
When lived for self alone,  
Who dares to face a hostile world  
To right the wrongs  
Of his downtrodden brothers.  
God, wake us from the lethargy  
That dulls our finer feelings,  
And stir our wayward hearts  
To serve Thee, through our fellowm

## APAROKSHANUBHUTI

BY SWAMI VIMUKTANANDA

सर्पत्वेन यथा रज्जू रजतत्वेन शुक्तिका ।

विनिर्णीता विमूढेन देहत्वेन तथात्मता ॥ ७० ॥

यथा Just as रज्जू: a rope सर्पत्वेन as a snake शुक्तिका a nacre रजतत्वेन as a piece of silver ( कल्पिता is Imagined ) तथा so आत्मता the Atman देहत्वेन as the body विमूढेन by an ignorant one विनिर्णीता is determined.

70. Just as a rope is imagined to be a snake and a nacre to be a piece of silver, so is the Atman determined to be the body by an ignorant one<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> By an ignorant one—By a rank materialist who declares the body or matter to be the ultimate reality and denies the existence of the Atman apart from the body.

[ How this erroneous knowledge arises out of a confusion between the real and the apparent is illustrated in these stanzas (70—74) ].

घटत्वेन यथा पृथ्वी पटत्वेनैव तन्तवः ।

विनिर्णीता विमूढेन देहत्वेन तथात्मता ॥ ७१ ॥

यथा Just as पृथ्वी earth घटत्वेन as a jar तन्तवः threads पटत्वेन as a cloth एव (expletive) तथा so, etc.

71. Just as earth is thought of as a jar (made of it) and threads as a cloth, so is the Atman, etc.

कनकं कुण्डलत्वेन तरङ्गत्वेन वै जलं ।

विनिर्णीता विमूढेन देहत्वेन तथात्मता ॥ ७२ ॥

( यथा Just as ) कनकं gold कुण्डलत्वेन as an ear-ring जलं water वै ( expletive ) तरङ्गत्वेन as waves तथा so, etc.

72. Just as gold is thought of as an ear-ring and water as waves, so is the Atman, etc.



पुरुषत्वेन वै स्थाणुर्जलत्वेन मरीचिका ।  
विनिर्णीता विमूढेन देहत्वेन तथात्मता ॥ ७३ ॥

( यथा Just as ) स्थाणुः a post पुरुषत्वेन as a human figure वै (expletive) मरीचिका a mirage जलत्वेन as water तथा so, etc.

73. Just as a post is mistaken for a human figure and a mirage for water, so is the Atman, etc.

गृहत्वेनैव काष्ठानि खड्गत्वेनैव लोहता ।  
विनिर्णीता विमूढेन देहत्वेन तथात्मता ॥ ७४ ॥

( यथा Just as ) काष्ठानि wood ( and other materials ) गृहत्वेन as the house एव (expletive) लोहता iron खड्गत्वेन as the sword एव (expletive) तथा so, etc.

74. Just as wood is confounded with the house and iron with the sword, so is the Atman, etc.

[ The stanzas 70th and 73rd are illustrative of a set of false knowledge due to error of judgment, whereas the other three stanzas state only some incomplete knowledge where too much preference is shown only to the forms in disregard of the substance which is ultimately the only reality. ]

यथा वृक्षविपर्यासो जलाद्भवति कस्यचित् ।  
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वं पश्यत्यज्ञानयोगतः ॥ ७५ ॥

यथा Just as कस्यचित् to some one जलात् (seeing) through water वृक्षविपर्यासः to see a tree as inverted भवति arises तद्वत् so अज्ञानयोगतः in consequence of ignorance आत्मनि in the Atman देहत्वं the physical form पश्यति sees.

75. Just as one looking at a tree through water sees it inverted, so does one viewing the Atman through ignorance see it as the body.

[ How ignorance causes one to think of the everpure Atman as appearing in the material forms is described in these stanzas (75—86) through various illustrations culled from everyday experience. ]

पोतेन गच्छतः पुंसः सर्वं भातीव चञ्चलं ।  
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वं पश्यत्यज्ञानयोगतः ॥ ७६ ॥

(यथा Just as ) पोतेन in a boat गच्छतः going पुंसः to a person सर्वं everything चञ्चलं moving इव as if भाति appears तद्वत् so, etc.

76. Just as to a person going in a boat everything appears as though they are in motion, so does one, etc.

पीतत्वं हि यथा शुभ्रे दोषाद्भवति कस्यचित् ।  
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वं पश्यत्यज्ञानयोगतः ॥ ७७ ॥

यथा Just as कस्यचित् to some one दोषात् in consequence of some disease शुभ्रे in a white thing पीतत्वं yellowness भवति appears तद्वत् so, etc.

77. Just as to a person suffering from some disease (i.e. jaundice) everything white appears to be yellow, so does one, etc.

चक्षुर्भ्यां भ्रमशीलाभ्यां सर्वं भाति भ्रमात्मकं ।  
तद्वदात्मनि देहत्वं पश्यत्यज्ञानयोगतः ॥ ७८ ॥

( यथा Just as ) भ्रमशीलाभ्यां चक्षुर्भ्यां to (one with) defective eyes सर्वं everything  
भ्रमात्मकं defective भाति appears तद्वत् so, etc.

78. Just as to a person with defective eyes<sup>1</sup> everything appears to be defective, so does one, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Defective eyes—Eyes that are subject to such defects as astigmatism and the like.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

*The First Ramakrishna Math* will be continued. . . . . There are persons who admire good life but do not care for God or religion. But is it possible to have a really *Good Life without God*? This month's editorial discusses the subject. . . . . The problem of Hindu-Moslem unity is becoming so complicated from day to day that some are in despair as to whether any solution will be at all arrived at. Dr. Shahidullah has tried with great care to find out *Where Hinduism and Islam meet*. We commend this writing to the attention of the Hindus and the Mahomedans both. Dr. Shahidullah is Professor of Sanskrit and Bengali in the University of Dacca. . . . . Madame Montessori has tried to find out more fundamental causes of war than what so many 'peace makers' of the world like to see. War cannot be abolished simply by contracts and pacts, unless human nature is fundamentally changed. How to achieve that? Dr. Montessori suggested a solution. It may be remembered that some time back Dr. Montessori wrote a series of articles in the *Prabuddha Bharata* describing her theories of education. . . . . Swami

Jagadiswarananda belongs to the Ceylon branch of the Ramakrishna Mission and as such has opportunities to study *Hinduism in Ceylon* at close quarters. . . . . Aga Syed Ibrahim Dara will write about another Sufi Saint next month . . . . . We shall feel justified in publishing *What has made Japan Great*, if people in India find any new light as to how to direct their activities, by going through it. . . . . Mrs. A. R. Brown belongs to the city where the "poor inan" spent his days in serving the poor.

### MATTER FOR SERIOUS THOUGHT

The Census Report of India for 1931 brings to light certain facts and figures, which, though interesting as a piece of study, are not encouraging from the nationalistic point of view. The population, now, exceeds even the latest estimate of China, so long considered to be heading all countries in numerical strength; India at present covers almost one-fifth of the whole human race, being 353,000,000 in number. But when her achievements in different fields of activity are considered, we are reminded of the story of the lioness in *Æsoph's Fables* who replied to her enquirer



that she produced only one cub at a time but that one was a thoroughbred lion. We do not deprecate the increase in population, we know what it spells when the population of a country, community or race is on the decrease. But we want virile men of thought and activity, and not crawling worms coming on earth only to die, living a wretched life of a few years. We want men who know how to earn and to enjoy, and then, if they want, to spurn at enjoyments and be free. What nation has prospered with rickety children who do not see many summers, with slack-jointed young men and women with one foot in the grave? If we want to find out the number of healthy, bright children and able-bodied young men and women engaged in productive activities, we shall meet with nothing but disappointment. Yet they are the real nation, its present prop and future hope.

Dr. Hutton, Chief Commissioner for the Census of 1931, is alarmed at this increase of population (10.6 p.c. since 1921) and advises the extensive employment of birth control methods to check what he considers to be a mishap. We, however, do not share his views. Increase of population in itself is not something to be discouraged. What we should do, on the contrary, is to find out ways and means to feed, clothe and educate the people. Cochin shows that agriculture alone under favourable conditions can support 2000 (if not 4000) persons per square mile, and the present density of India is only 195 persons per sq. mile. It is said again that Bengal can support at the present standard of living nearly double its present population. We take into account agriculture (and its allied pursuits, pasture etc.) as it occupies 71 p.c. of the actual workers and leave off industry, which occupies

only 10 p.c. (as against 11 p.c. of 1921), and trade which shows a decided decline. But what has been done either by the people or by the government to improve the wealth of the country? It cannot be said now that men are averse to work. Like a drowning man, people, driven to the verge of starvation, are ready to catch at a straw; but unfortunately they do not know what to do; they need help and direction from the government as well as from the rich. As regards the unnatural methods of birth control we cannot see eye to eye with the Census Commissioner and some of our daily papers; and that for obvious reasons. The public might remember what Mahatmaji said about it a few years back.

The slow rate of growth of the Hindu population in some of the provinces has led many including Dr. Hutton to the conclusion that it is mainly due to our widows not being re-married. The widows of some of the upper classes alone are not re-married while others are free to marry. We do not know exactly what percentage of widows are thus debarred from marrying again. Whether widows ought to re-marry or not is a different question. Our view regarding this is: let them marry who like, let them not who do not like. To ensure the growth of the population, however, what is of most importance is to reduce the death rate. The old will die, we cannot help it; but why should the babes? What have we done to stay the appalling child mortality? We cannot take care of those who are born, and we are crying ourselves hoarse over the unborn! Let us reduce by all means this notoriously high rate of infant mortality. Let us feed well and educate the existing teeming population; then we shall have time to think of more. First consolidation, then expansion.

### PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

A correspondent, who has got some interest in village welfare works, writes: "Village work is not so easy as one may imagine from outside. Villagers are not so simple as they seem to be. I am trying to do some works in the interest of a village, but I find that at every step I am misunderstood and misinterpreted. By endeavouring to do some work for the village, I am creating rather enemies than sympathizers who will give me help. It is not for us to undertake village welfare work."

The very reason that villagers do not easily sympathize with those who go to work for them, indicates that one should be all the more earnest to improve the atmosphere of villages. The village atmosphere is everywhere greatly vitiated by litigation, party feelings, etc. They require to be cleared up, before any substantial work can be done. The best thing for those who undertake village work will be to carry on their work patiently, and a time will come when they will impress upon the villagers the disinterestedness of their motives. And then they will be a power and their word will be law. Nowadays many good people leave the villages, because they find it difficult to adjust themselves to the social conditions there, and that makes the village work more difficult. But once the initial difficulties are overcome, the task will be easier afterwards.

Those who will go to work in the villages, must do that in a spirit of dedication. In that case they will not get disappointed and disheartened so easily, and will be able to continue their work. There is no man, who has tried to work for others, but has not been subjected to persecution by way of ungenerous criticism or otherwise.

The late Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar had so much bitter experience in this respect that when he would hear that anybody talked ill of him, he would say, "Have I done any good to him?"

Only those persons who are prepared to get evil in return for good, can do substantial work for humanity. As it is, people doing some little good work for others think that they will be at once appreciated and applauded. It is no wonder that they become greatly dejected if they meet with any difficulty or adverse criticism.

### ANOTHER PICTURE

A friend from America writes: "During our trip to and from Chicago, we passed through eight States, and I was struck everywhere with the general prosperity of the people. The country is developed both agriculturally and industrially according to its natural resources. Electricity and modern means of transportation are responsible for this phenomenal progress of American culture. Almost every peasant has a motor-car and telephone. Generally speaking, motor-tractors are employed for ploughing. Horses are also used in many cases. Even the house of a very poor peasant is a picture of beauty, with a pretty garden and other things which show their aesthetic sense. We have covered more than 2500 miles, and nowhere have I seen any waste paper or dirt on the roads. The spirit of neatness is ingrained in the very constitution of the American people. Everywhere one meets men and women who are the very picture of health. Utmost efforts are bestowed on the mental and physical development of the children. The youths are considered the greatest asset of the nation. Education is universal. The general range of knowledge of a young boy or girl in all things, particularly



in applied science, is simply phenomenal. It really gladdens one's heart to see that there is at least one place in God's creation where people develop to the fullest extent their mental faculties and enjoy life. The more I am seeing this country, the more I feel for the condition of the masses in India. If the high standard of efficiency reached by the American people is the condition of life, then I am afraid we shall be dead ere long. I do not understand how we shall come out successful in the struggle for existence, with our poor power of resistance."

It is natural that when one goes to the West from India and compares the prosperous condition prevailing in many Western countries with poverty in India one is struck dumb. But the experience of better state of affairs in other countries should stimulate us to improve our condition, and not throw us into despair. In the latter case lessons of other countries will be altogether lost upon us. There is no reason why condition in India will not be one day improved. Of course at present everything seems to be against us. But even the darkest hour of night gives way to the light of day. Every nation which has improved its condition has done so through ceaseless strife against difficulties, and in this way seemingly insurmountable obstacles have been removed. Despair is no remedy against difficulties; on the other hand, those who will boldly face circumstances, will one day dominate them. India wants words of hope, courage and strength.

#### STUDENTS IN AMERICA AND INDIA

In America, many students earn a portion of their educational expenses by doing some manual work. Whereas

such cases are rare in India. This is attributed to the fact that in India people do not recognize the dignity of manual labour, while in America they do. A contributor to the *Indian Review* gives the reasons why many American students find it possible to take to manual labour while prosecuting their studies in college. In America a manual worker earns much more than a brain worker. A lecturer in a college might be earning Rs. 3,000 to 3,600 a year, while a whole-time janitor or sweeper gets Rs. 4,500 to 6,000. Such being the case, a student working only for two hours as a waiter or dish washer can earn a decent sum, while in India, a student wishing to earn only his living through manual labour will have to work for 8 or 10 hours, and he will have no surplus energy left to attend to his lessons.

In America people taking to manual labour as a means of their livelihood have not to lower their standard of living. In fact, they have more to spend than the intellectual class. "That is the main and only reason," the writer says, "why labour in America has dignity. Labour is not dignified because they think labour is a healthy and noble pastime, but because labour is capable of maintaining a standard of living at as high a level, if not at a higher level, as that of the so-called respectable professions. Average conception of dignity lies not in any particular sphere of work, but in the standard of living that goes with the work."

This is true. So long as Indian students cannot expect to earn a sufficient sum by working in spare hours as a common labourer, they will not try to emulate American students to be 'self-supporting' during their school or college career. But what about

those who fear to do even the works pertaining to themselves, for the sake of prestige? Many students and young men will not take to any physical work lest thereby they show themselves to be poor. This is a sad spectacle. And this develops also a mentality, for which they have to pay very dearly in after years.

### ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF ALL PROPHETS

Dealing with the principles of Islam, the *Islamic Review* says:

"Islam has been the religion of the world since its creation. Islam has been the religion of Adam, of Abraham, of Moses, of Jesus, of Zoroaster, of Krishna and of Buddha. In fact Islam has been the religion of all reformers and torch-bearers of mankind. For, what is Islam? Islam, which literally means entering into a state of peace, is nothing but a belief in two cardinal principles, viz. belief in the Unity of God and in the Brotherhood of Man. These are the two fundamental and basic principles which are the essence of Islam and the source of

all its beliefs and practices. Reformers of all times have invariably preached these two principles, and this is Islam in all its purity and simplicity. Therefore, we as Muslims believe them all to be prophets of Islam, and as such we are required to make no distinction between them."

Surely the essence of all religions will be found to be the same, if one studies them dispassionately, and with a mind free from bigotry and fanaticism. But the necessity for different religions arose from the fact that particular points had to be emphasized to suit the requirements of particular races at particular times. As such different religions—though they are different only in non-essential points—will always remain in the world. Viewed from that standpoint no denominational religion can be said to be the religion of all prophets. In any case, if one learns "to make no distinction" between different prophets of different religions, the world will be free from much of its religious feuds. India, at the present time, specially needs the spread of such liberal views.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**MYSTICISM IN MAHARASTRA.** By Prof. R. D. Ranade, M.A., *Aryabhusan Press Office, Shanwar Peth, Poona.* 494 pp. Price Rs. 15, Library Edition; Rs. 10, Ordinary Edition.

The book under review is the seventh volume of the History of Indian Philosophy, which is being published under the patronage of the University of Bombay. The book gives a lucid and almost a full account of the Mysticism of the great teachers of Maharashtra: Jnanadeva, Namadeva, Ekanatha, Tukarama and Ramadasa. Jnanadeva represents Philosophic or Intellectual Mysticism, Namadeva, Democratic Mysticism, Ekanatha, Synthetic Mysticism, Tukarama,

Personalistic Mysticism, Ramadasa, Activistic Mysticism.

The book opens with a fine preface from the author in which he describes the nature of Mystical Experience—its ineffable, intuitive and universal character. Mystical experience affects our whole being and is a source of fine knowledge, chastened feelings and subtler movement. Hence the seers in reference to the impress of the mystical experience upon the one or the other aspect of our psychic being exhibit different types. Some excel in knowledge, some in devotion, others in service. The author incidentally introduces a comparison between some of the Christian Mystics, e.g. St. John of the Cross



and Jnaneswara and describes the darkness of God as conceived by the Christian Mystics and Jnaneswara. But he does not definitely say anything about the vision of their darkness. Nor does he indicate its place in spiritual consciousness. Why is such a state at all? What exactly is the nature of the darkness?—are the questions that naturally suggest themselves. But the author is apparently silent on them.

He then subsequently describes the *dark night of the soul* and advances the authority of St. John of the Cross. St. John in his Ascent of Mount Carmel speaks of the three forms of the Dark Night of the soul: (1) The first is the privation of the desire of all pleasures in all things of the world, by detachment therefrom; (2) The Dark Night of the faith, "for faith is obscure, like Night to the understanding" (3) The Night of the road, God, who is incomprehensible and infinite.

Apparently there is no distinction between the last meaning advanced by St. John and the meaning put upon it by Tillyard.

St. John, however, in his Dark Night of the soul, speaks in another strain, where the darkness is caused by the withdrawal of God. (*Vide* pages 33, 35.)

The greater part of the book is devoted to the Mysticism of Jnanadeva, which is characterized as philosophical (Intellectual) Mysticism. The author introduces the substance of the teaching of the celebrated works of Jnanadeva, viz. the Jnaneswara and the Amritanubha. The Amritanubha gives the philosophy of Jnanadeva at greater extent which is not very different from the well-known Advaita philosophy.

Jnanadeva's theory of the emergence of the world is called *Sphurtivada* which maintains that the world as a sport of the one supreme intelligent Atman. A complete account of his philosophy together with the ways and nature of mystical realization in unitive consciousness has been given. Though Jnanadeva has the philosophical bent of mind, and indulges in discrimination, still he does not forsake the truth of devotion and feels the influence of grace upon life. The protection of God never leaves the seeker in life or in death.

Namadeva presents the devotional type of Mysticism. He presents great contrast to Jnanadeva. He has not the flashes of a philosophic genius, though he has the luminous experiences of a devotional soul. He finds God's name as the most effective way

of God-realisation. A heart full of humility, utterly resigned to God with the spiritual current set up in the inner being is the true picture of Namadeva. Namadeva asserts "that the name of God is the form of God," and the "faculty of God-realization is according to him is a God given gift" (p. 109). The name produces a state of exultation where the voiceless voice is heard in the silence of the Deep. This exultation can be intensive enough to have no distinction between the lover and the loved. The devotion of Namadeva has finally the same result of a unitive consciousness.

Devotion to God eases our being from the pride of knowledge and makes the heart open to everybody, for it can show life's infinite and eternal plasticity and feels its divine aroma through everything. Hence the stiffness of the soul which makes it irresponsive to the life in its widest commonalty cannot stand before it. Devotion moves the softer nature of man which can see and enjoy the play of the divine life in society and men, and can welcome the high as well as the low, for the same life and spirit moves amongst them.

Hence naturally the obscurities and divisions of life are easily removed from the fold of devotion. Devotion at times becomes so much indrawing and absorbing that it often leads to the forgetfulness of the usual values and duties of life and their adjustments. But life demands its concentration to the points of heaven and home; and mystical life, unless it be equally mindful of the duties of the subtler stations of life stands every possibility of leading on to a confusion. At last the rude shocks of the actualities of life soon make us aware that the life in the process of unfoldment cannot neglect its active adaptation and must look upon it as movements of life divine. The soaring high should enable us to adjust, regularize and control better the active forces of life. This has been the chief character of the Mysticism of Ekanatha. The author calls his Mysticism Synthetic Mysticism. Ekanatha has put more emphasis upon love and devotion than upon intellectual knowledge. Bhakti is the soul's natural attraction to God, and for this spontaneous love, knowledge is a poor substitute. Love transforms the whole being and gives the immediate vision of God.

As a point in illustration, he advances the examples of Gopikas. Ekanatha, like the Bengal Vaishnavas thinks that the Gopikas



represent the Srutis and the Vedic hymns. They are the spiritual potencies incarnate.

The author then passes on to the Personalistic Mysticism of Tukarama. He has drawn a comparison between Tukarama and Jnanadeva in these words. "Jnanadeva is a light that dazzles too much by its brilliance, Tukarama's light is an accommodative, steady, incremental light which does not glitter too much, but soothes our vision by giving it what it needs." It is this humanistic element that makes Tukarama the centre of attraction. "The Personal is superior to the Impersonal." Tukarama's Mysticism exhibits better expression of devotion and service, and he is not anxious to lose our sorrows and miseries, our sufferings and troubles in the all-absorbing silence. Life is a blessing and not a curse when it is strung up to the love of God. The Saints are almost Gods. "God and Saint are merely the obverse and the reverse sides of the same spiritual coin." The devotees are as much a necessity to God, as God is to them. In a way the devotees are superior to God; inasmuch as they are centred always in God-consciousness; but God has to be mindful of the regulation of the world-forces. The devotee can even rule God by the power of devotion, Tukarama shows pantheistic tendencies; "the Impersonal shines forth as Person by the force of Devotion."

The author finally gives an account of the Activistic Mysticism of Ramadasa, who, with the heart set upon God directs all his energies towards the establishment of a kingdom of power and righteousness. While Ramadasa exhibits the dynamic currents in spiritual life; it must not be supposed that his Activistic Mysticism is the expression of hydra-headed desires. Desires have no place in mystical life though it can exhibit in actuality the stirring of the cosmic will and dynamism of power. Ramadasa represents this type.

Though the mystical life manifests various types, it should never be forgotten that the mystical life is centred in God—Personal or Absolute,—it does not matter. The mystical currents of the soul exhibit the finest tendencies enfolded within it. Though at times they take different forms in realization it must not be supposed that they are absolutely different. Mysticism is life and not philosophy, and life unfolds itself in infinite ways and it will indeed convey a poor and partial music view of life, if the same kind

of expression is insisted upon in all forms of realization. The perusal of the history of the Maharastra Mystics makes the truth amply clear to us that Mysticism is attractive because it unfolds life in its entirety and presents the varied experiences of the soul.

Mystic life is a garland of flowers of such experiences, and everyone of them is beautiful and nice in its own place.

The book gives a beautiful bibliography of mystical writings, Indian, Islamic, Christian, etc. The author also introduces certain interesting historical points, e.g. the influence of Christianity upon Devotional Mysticism, the development of the history of Mysticism from the Upanishads up to the age of Jnanadeva. He does not believe in the theory that Mystics draw their inspiration of the souls from any given system and creed; on the other hand he lends his weight to the most natural conclusion that Mystics represent a class of people who have the book of life open before them, and hence they can naturally speak in the same way though they are separated by space and time.

Prof. Ranade has called in Hegel's assistance to prove that every form of experience has its place in the integrity of life, and he is anxious to hold that the conflict of centuries in philosophy is resolved in the integral experience of life. Mystical life may be an atom to all the movements of life and to silence; but the question is: Can their values be equalled? Can the music of life be harmonized with the silence?

MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR

A TRYST WITH THE GODS. By M. M. Salanave. *The Globe Girdlers' Guild, 2004-46th Avenue, Oakland, California.*

This is a brochure of only 29 pages and is the forerunner of a series of short Oriental stories entitled "An Eastern Rosary" to be brought out by the present author who happens to be an American world-tourist. He crossed over to India from the Far East in the winter of 1930 and had the opportunity of visiting the famous Kumbhamela held at Prayag at that time. A vigorous description of the spectacular sights and scenes of the Kumbha forms the main topic of the book. (Specially the author's description of the majestic procession of pilgrims and their sacred bathing at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna on the 'Mahaday' is



full of life.) The author also tried to peep into the hoary past and discover the legendary origin of this "largest historical pilgrimage on earth." He has given the Pauranic version of the origin of the Kumbhamela which is too familiar to need repetition here. The last few pages contain the history of a very queer and mystic advertisement published by the *Pioneer* of Allahabad and purported to have been dictated by a Sadhu. It would have been better if the author had made no mention of this weird thing at all. But the real interest of the booklet lies in its "Prolusion" which deals with the author's "sensations and impressions of India." Mr. Salanave asserts that he is not one of those superficial explorers and travellers who as a rule "do a country in fortnight" in hot haste. Indeed he stayed here long enough to "have a glimpse of the heart of the true Mother India." His purpose in visiting India, was neither to "hold her people up to the world as horrible moral examples," nor to pour forth "Sugary eulogies glorifying India." No—he wisely avoided both these extremes on which he is to be sincerely congratulated. During his Indian tour the author tried "to win the friendship and confidence of the Hindus" by "sincerely respecting their traditions and philosophy" and by "looking upon all beings with the eye of a friend." Thus, instead of "digging up sewers" he was able to appreciate the ancient Indian culture and civilization. Even the much-maligned idol-worship of the Hindus has been seen by him in its true perspective and inwardness. And he has nothing but admiration for the "patient and resigned mothers of India" of whom the West generally lives in "blissful ignorance." We should say that this is just the way of making international co-operation and friendship possible. This tiny booklet will serve no doubt as an eye-opener to those who glibly chime in with the vitriolic outpourings of Miss Mayo & Co. We would welcome similar publications of the author if written in the same strain and with the same object.

BIDHURANJAN DAS

BENGALI

YUGA-GURU. By Matilal Ray. *Pravartak Publishing House, 61, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta.* x+232 pp. Price Re. 1/8.

Here is an attempt to show how the various religious movements of India since

the pre-historic days of Sri Krishna have been moulding and remoulding its national life. Or to put it more correctly, the author's thesis seems to be that all the later movements, consciously or unconsciously, have tried to work out the principles laid down by Sri Krishna in the Gita; and have almost all failed there, or succeeded only partially, owing not *always* to the inherent defects of those movements but to the unfavourable circumstances under which the saintly leaders had to labour. But these failures or partial successes have led the nation up to a place from which it remains but a few steps to reach the summit. From this nation-building point of view he has studied all the important movements, viz. those of Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Maddha, Nimbarka, Ramananda, Tukaram, Ramadas, Kabira, Dadu, Vallabha, Chaitanya, the ten Sikh Gurus and Ramakrishna; and has found in the life of the last the perfect realization of the national ideal as set forth by Sri Krishna in his teachings, and also sure indications as to how the nation should be built up.

The author's analysis and appraisal of the different movements are not, however, always right. He has shown a marked bias, towards Vaishnavism, and against Advaitism. His boiled-down conclusion is that Advaita movements are always anti-national and the Vaishnava movements have always led the nation aright—a conclusion which we can hardly accept. Nothing is more telling than facts. The fact that the Advaitist Sankarites re-organized the whole Hindu world soon after the death of Sankara and even after the lapse of 1000 years still have the wonderful hold over it, is quite sufficient to disprove the charge of anti-nationality against them. How it is possible for a host of pessimists, to whom the whole universe is Maya, to organize a nation is a puzzle to many a biased mind. The fact is that they are not pessimists, nor do they want to convert all mankind into anchorites and all towns and villages into forests. It is a most deplorable misreading of Sankara philosophy, giving too much emphasis on the transcendent (Paramarthik) aspect of his philosophy with non-recognition or improper recognition of its empirical (Vyavaharic) aspect. This unjust aspersion on the Advaitists is a blot to the otherwise thought-provoking book. The printing and get-up of the book are nice.



## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SWAMI YATISWARANANDA SAILS FOR GERMANY

Swami Yatiswarananda sailed from Bombay by *S.S. Conte Rosso* on the 23rd of October last for Wiesbaden in Germany. Some time ago, a group of sincere souls appealed to the Ramakrishna Mission for sending a Vedanta teacher for guidance and instructions in their spiritual life. The authorities of the Mission selected Swami Yatiswarananda and have sent him as a Vedanta teacher and their representative.

The Swami joined the Ramakrishna Order in 1911 and became a monastic member at the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. He worked there with untiring zeal for a number of years and came in close contact with the towering personality of Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Order. In 1920, he came to Benares and got the privilege of serving and intimately mixing with Swami Turiyananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. In 1921, he was asked to be editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata* which he conducted with great ability for about four years. After that, he took charge of the Ramakrishna Math, Bombay and put it on a secure basis. In 1926, he again went to Madras—this time as President of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras. He edited the *Vedanta Kesari* for several years with considerable success, and greatly increased the number of publications of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras. In 1929, he became a member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Swami is endowed with a good many qualities of head and heart. He is a scholar, versed in Western and Eastern philosophy. He is a fine speaker and an able writer. His deep spirituality, winning manners, feeling heart and catholic views have won for him numerous friends and admirers in India and abroad. His monastic career is full of activities for the good of mankind. We feel sure, a spiritual person like him will act as a torch-bearer to many in his new field of activity. Our sincere good wishes and prayer for his noble mission abroad!

### ANNIE BESANT

The death of Dr. Annie Besant removes one of the most powerful and magnetic personalities from the public life of India, and as such this sad loss will be universally mourned in the country. For about forty years she fought valiantly for the cause of the land of her adoption and worked untiringly for the welfare of the country. She had a wonderful capacity for work, and the enthusiasm for any cause she took up was unbounded. Every inch of her, she was a fighter; difficulties and oppositions which would chill the ardour of ordinary mortals, would draw out her powers all the more. During her long public career she had to pass through various critical circumstances, but she admitted no defeat in life. She was always a friend of the oppressed and the downtrodden, and above all of India. She is a sincere well-wisher of this motherland of ours and she is doing the best in her power to raise our country—was the opinion of Swami Vivekananda regarding her. Though an English woman she gave her whole life to work for the good of India and India's regeneration. Sometimes she had to pay heavily for her love of India, but she was not to be daunted.

There might be persons who did not see eye to eye with her in many things, but it is an undoubted fact that she did much to turn the mind of the Indians to the greatness of India. How much was her admiration for Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions, where both met as delegates, because, to quote her own words, "India was not to be shamed before the hurrying arrogant West by this her envoy and her son. He brought her message, he spoke in her name, and the herald remembered the dignity of the royal land whence he came"! Her activities were not confined to one single ground, they covered many fields—religious, political, social, educational, etc. By the death of Mrs. Besant the present generation will find a great gap in the national life, and her name will go down to the posterity as a great champion of the cause of India.

Annie Besant was born on October 1, 1847. She got a most thorough-going edu-



cation, though her father died at her early age. She was married to Rev. Frank Besant in 1867. But the marriage was ill-fated and ended in dissolution. For Mrs. Besant with her spirit of independent thinking could not reconcile herself to many of the views of her husband. After separation from her husband she found herself in dire poverty in addition to the great mental struggle through which she was passing. But it was not in her make-up to give up her conviction for any reason whatsoever. Soon she became acquainted with Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and in association with him joined institutions advocating Atheism and Republicanism. Through contact with Madame Blavatsky Mrs. Besant turned from atheist to theist, and joined the Theosophical Society in 1880. Afterwards she came to India for the spread of theosophical ideas, and became President of the Theosophical Society in India in 1907, in which capacity she worked till the end.

Mrs. Besant founded the Central Hindu College at Benares in 1898. She advocated Home Rule for India and became President of the Home Rule League in 1916. In recognition of her services for the cause of India, the nation elected her President of the Indian National Congress in the following year. Though since the starting of the non-co-operation movement by Mahatma Gandhi, her political influence in the country was not as great as before, her activities for the political cause of India will ever be gratefully remembered by the nation.

Mrs. Besant was a prolific writer and a powerful orator—in fact she is universally acknowledged as one of the best speakers in the world. These powers stood her in good stead in all the activities she had undertaken and were one of the secrets of her successful leadership.

For some time past Mrs. Besant was ailing, and retired from active life. She passed away on the 20th September last at her residence at Adyar, Madras. May her soul rest in peace.

#### PLIGHT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA AT BRINDABAN, MUTTRA DT.

The Secretary of the above Institution wrote on the 6th October, 1933:—

During the Puja days the Jumna rose so very high that we feared that the whole

Ashrama would be swept off. We removed the patients hurriedly to different parts of the town. All but three or four members had to leave the Ashrama. These took shelter in the terrace of a house and passed the days in extreme worry and anxiety. Water flooded the whole Ashrama and entered into the General Ward and the Female Ward. The buildings have been greatly damaged, and as the ground is still wet we fear that any one of them may collapse at any moment. Some walls of the kitchen and the Female Ward have already been cracked. Even if the buildings do not collapse, repairs only will cost at least one thousand rupees, not to speak of the amount that will be necessary to remove the silt etc., to make the Ashrama habitable. But the Ashrama, though fulfilling a great demand in this important place of pilgrimage by way of giving medical help both to indoor and outdoor patients, finds it difficult to meet the recurring expenses. Now this havoc of the flood has put the Ashrama to an additional financial difficulty. Unless the generous public come forward with pecuniary help, the Ashrama work will greatly suffer. We hope our appeal on behalf of the suffering and helpless patients will not go in vain.

#### RAMAKRISHNA VEDA VIDYALAYA, GADADHAR ASHRAMA, CALCUTTA

The report (for 1929-32) before us speaks that the academic atmosphere has been intensified and the scope of work has been widened. The institution has attracted more votaries of learning, enjoyed greater public support and sympathy and established itself on a sounder footing than ever before. Its management has been vested in a committee constituted according to the Government Grants-in-aid rules. We are glad to note that Dr. Surendranath Das Gupta M.A., Ph.D., as the President of the Managing Committee, is taking keen interest in the activities of the Vidyalaya. The institution commands an efficient teaching staff, which has attracted distinguished graduates, teachers and professors to its classes. The examination results are also good: three of its students have obtained government scholarships. The total number on the rolls is at present 37.

The institution spares no pains or means to attract people to the study of their glorious culture. Sometimes it outsteps its means as its loan of Rs. 200/- in 1932 shows.

It (a) gives cash stipends to some of its students, (b) provides free board and lodging in deserving cases, (c) keeps a well-equipped library containing many rare and valuable works and (d) encourages publication of important Vedantic works with translation in Bengali and with elaborate notes and comments. If funds were available, it could have started, we are told, a series of publication under the able general-editorship of Dr. S. N. Das Gupta.

But it has to depend for its upkeep very largely upon the generosity of the public. The substantial help received from both the Government and the Corporation of Calcutta by way of annual grants has greatly improved its financial condition. That its activities are greatly hampered for financial reasons is shown by the statement of its accounts. During these four years it received Rs. 9,747-5-11 (minus the opening balance of 1929 of Rs. 549-12-0 and a loan of Rs. 200/- in 1932) and its expenditure amounted to Rs. 10,188-6-0. This needs no comment. Any contribution, however small, will be received by:—The Secretary, Veda Vidyalaya, 86-A, Harish Chatterjee Street, Bhawanipur, Calcutta.

#### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVA SHRAMA, TAMLUK

The Nineteenth annual report for the year 1932 ~~shows~~ the activities of the Sevashrama as given below:—

The Sevashrama is one of the popular institutions of the sub-division, doing mostly

philanthropic and some educational works. This institution was started in the year 1914 and was recognized as a branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Sevashrama maintains a Charitable Hospital and Dispensary. The Indoor Hospital, which has six beds only, treated 61 cases in 1932. The total number of cases treated at the Outdoor Dispensary was 4,061 in 1932. During the year under review the Sevashrama nursed 24 patients at their own homes, distributed cloths and rice to 28 persons, small cash to 19 persons and stipends to 21 school boys. Cholera relief work was undertaken in affected villages of the Tamluk sub-division in 1932, when 32 houses were disinfected and 54 patients were treated.

This institution conducts a Circulating Library and Free Reading Room which have grown very popular and from which books are issued weekly to the public. This Library contains 1,194 religious books and 3,880 books were issued. It has a membership of 394 school boys and public men. The institution does also the work of preaching the ideal and the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in various villages of the sub-division and publishes some of the teachings of the Great Master and Swami Vivekananda.

The Ashrama among other things conducts regular worship as well as religious classes and Bhajans and celebrates the anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and other Prophets.



## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN ORISSA AND MIDNAPORE

The public are aware that we have been conducting flood relief work in Orissa and Midnapore districts from nine centres, namely, Kapileswar, Niwali, Fatepur, Chitreswari, Baliana, Balikude, Balighai, Pratapdighi and Balyagovindapur. We are giving doles of rice to about 11,000 distressed inhabitants in all the centres taken together. The numbers of affected villages and recipients are steadily increasing. For want of food, people are eating all sorts of undesirable things and as a result, they are becoming victims of Malaria, Dysentery, Diarrhoea and so forth. So we have made arrangements for the distribution of medicines as well. Women are facing most painful odds for want of clothes. Cattle are about to die, as there is so much scarcity of fodder. We are trying our best to provide women with clothes, and fodder for cattle in some centres of Midnapore. There we tried to give seeds of rice for fresh cultivation, but owing to increase in water, we had to stop the measure. So far as Orissa is concerned, we have failed to distribute anything but rice and medicines. Unless fresh funds are forthcoming, we cannot proceed further than what we are doing now. We understand from reliable sources that about forty to forty five thousand rupees are necessary to meet the expenses there.

We distributed from nine centres till the second week of October last 2,054 mds. 37 srs. of rice and 1,164 pieces of new cloth to 10,264 distressed persons of 325 villages. Besides, 677 mds. of fodder were supplied free for cattle. Seeds of rice were given for cultivation in fields measuring forty bighas and a half. But unfortunately they were of no use on account of fresh increase in water.

We acknowledge the receipt of Rs. 16,454-5-6 till the 15th of October last. A large amount of money is necessary to meet the demands of three affected districts. The funds at our disposal are not adequate even for the distribution of rice.

We therefore appeal to the benevolent people again for generous support without which it is impossible to cope with the present situation.

Any voluntary contribution in the shape of money or new clothes will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses:—

- (1) President, R. K. Mission  
Belur Math, Howrah.
- (2) Manager, Advaita Ashrama  
4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.
- (3) Manager, Udbodhan Office  
1, Mookerjee Lane, Baghbazar,  
Calcutta.