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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

*New York,
June 4, 1900.*

You know to my nature a thing hardly seems true or accomplished till it is somehow uttered and left on record.

Swami has just lectured.

I went early and took the seat at the left end of the second row—always my place in London, though I never thought of it at the time.

Then as we sat and waited for him to come in, a great trembling came over me, for I realized that this was, simple as it seemed, one of the test-moments of my life.

Since last I had done this thing, how much had come and gone ! My own life,—where was it ? Lost—thrown away like a cast-off garment that I might kneel at the feet of this man. Would it prove a mistake ; an illusion ; or was it a triumph of choice ; a few minutes would tell.

And then he came ; his very entrance and his silence as he stood and waited to begin were like some great hymn. A whole worship in themselves.

At last he spoke—his face broke into fun, and he asked what was to be his subject. Someone suggested the Vedânta philosophy and he began.

Oneness—the Unity of all “And so the final essence of things is this Unity. What we see as many—as gold, love, sorrow, the world—is really God. . . . We see many, yet there is but One Existence. . . . These names differ only in the degrees of their expression. The matter of today is the spirit of the future. The worm of today—the God of tomorrow. These distinctions

which we so love are all parts of one Infinite fact and that one Infinite fact is the attainment of Freedom. . . .

"All our struggle is for Freedom—we seek neither misery nor happiness but Freedom. . . . Man's burning unquenchable thirst—never satisfied—asking always for more and more. You Americans are seeking always for more and more. At bottom this desire is the sign of man's infinitude. For infinite man can only be satisfied when his desire is infinite and its fulfilment infinite also. . . ."

And so the splendid sentences rolled on and on, and we, lifted into the Eternities, thought of our common selves as of babies stretching out their hands for the moon or the sun—thinking them a baby's toys. The wonderful voice went on—

"Who can help the Infinite?. . . Even the hand that comes to you through the darkness will have to be your own."

And then with that lingering, heart-piercing pathos, that no pen can even suggest, "We—infinite dreamers, dreaming finite dreams."

Ah, they are mistaken who say that a voice is nothing—that ideas are all. For this in its rise and fall was the only possible music to the poetry of the words—making the whole hour a pause, a retreat, in the market place of life—as well as a song of praise in some dim Cathedral aisle.

At last—the whole dying down and away in the thought—"I could not see *you* or speak to you for a moment—I who stand here seeing and talking—if this Infinite Unity were broken for a moment—if one little atom could be crushed and moved out of its place. . . .

"Hari Om! Tat sat!."

And for me—I had found the infinitely deep things that life holds for us. To sit there and listen was all that it had ever been. Yet there was no struggle of intellectual unrest now—no tremor of novelty.

This man who stood there held my life in the hollow of his hand—and as he once in a while looked my way, I read in his glance what I too felt in my own heart, complete faith and abiding comprehension of purpose—better than any feeling. . . . Swami says, "All accumulations are for subsequent distribution, this is what the fool forgets."

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[IN HIS OWN WORDS]

One day Sâradâ Devi, the wife of Sri Ramakrishna while massaging the latter's feet, asked him, "What do you think of me?" Quick came the answer, "The Mother who is worshipped in the temple is the mother who has given birth to this body and is now living in the concert-room, and ~~She~~ again is

massaging my feet at this moment. Verily I always look upon you as the visible manifestation of the Blissful Mother."

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One day Sri Ramakrishna was in the parlour of the garden-house of Jadu

Nath Mallik at Dakshineswar, on the walls of which were many beautiful portraits, one of them being Christ's. Sri Ramakrishna was looking attentively at the picture of the Madonna with the Divine Child and reflecting on the wonderful life of Christ, when he felt as though the picture had become animated, and that rays of light were emanating from the figures of Mary and Christ, and entering into him, altogether changing his mental outlook. When he realized that his Hindu ideas were being pushed into a corner by this onrush of new ones, he tried his best to stop it and eagerly prayed to the Divine Mother, "What is it that Thou art doing to me, Mother?" But in vain. His love and regard for the Hindu gods were swept away by this tidal wave, and in their stead a deep regard for Christ and the Christian church filled his heart, and opened to his eyes the vision of Jesus in the churches and offering unto him the eager outpourings of their hearts. Returning to Dakshineswar temple he was so engrossed in these thoughts that he forgot to visit the Divine Mother in the temple. For three days those ideas held sway in his mind. On the fourth day, as he was walking in the Panchavati, he saw an extraordinary-looking person of serene aspect approaching him with his gaze intently fixed on him. He knew him at once to be a man of foreign extraction. He had beautiful large eyes, and though the nose was a little flat, it in no way marred the comeliness of his face. Sri Ramakrishna was charmed and wondered who he might be. Presently the figure drew near, and from the inmost recesses of Sri Ramakrishna's heart there went up the note, "This is the Christ who poured out his heart's blood for the redemption of mankind and suffered agonies for its sake. It is none else but that Master-Yogin Jesus, the

embodiment of Love!" Then the Son of Man embraced Sri Ramakrishna and became merged in him. The Master lost outward consciousness in Samâdhi, realizing his union with the Brahman with attributes. After some time he came back to the normal plane. Thus was Sri Ramakrishna convinced that Jesus Christ was an Incarnation of the Lord.

Long after, in discussing Christ with his disciples who were able to speak English, he asked, "Well, you have read the *Bible*. Tell me what it says about the features of Christ. What did he look like?" They answered, "We have not seen this particularly mentioned anywhere in the *Bible*. But Jesus was born among the Jews; so he must have been fair, with large eyes and an aquiline nose." Sri Ramakrishna only remarked, "But I saw his nose was a little flat—who knows why!" Not attaching much importance to these words at the time, the disciples, after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, heard that there were descriptions extant of Christ's features, and one of these actually described him as flat-nosed!

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In the state of Divine communion at the end of all his Sâdhanâs there came to him many intuitive perceptions, some of which were in relation to himself, others in connection with spirituality in general. Though these revelations were the outcome of his supersensuous perception, yet we may try to express them in terms of human reasoning.

About himself he came to the following conclusions: First, that he was an Incarnation of God, a specially commissioned personage, whose spiritual achievements were for the benefit of others. Comparing his own life with that of the usual seeker after truth, he

was convinced of the great gulf that lay between. He saw that the ordinary aspirant, after a life-long struggle, was satisfied with the realization of any one aspect of the Lord, whereas he could not rest till he had realized Him in all. He was aware that it took him an incredibly short time to attain realization of any particular phase. That could not but mean that there was some peculiarity in his mental constitution which made it relatively easy for him to attain the supreme spiritual level. He was forced to acknowledge that he was exceptional; that his extraordinary spiritual struggles and realizations were not for himself, but to usher in a new era of spiritual unfoldment and to show mankind how to overcome the obstacles on the way to realization.

Secondly, he knew that he had always been a free soul; that the various Sâdhanâs through which he had passed were not really necessary for him as they were for others. So the term Mukti or liberation was not applicable to him. From another angle liberation was equally impossible for him, for just so long as there were beings who considered themselves bound, the Incarnation would have to come and show them the

way out of their bondage. He used to say, "A Zemindar's officer will have to run to any part of the estate where there is trouble." He used to tell his disciples that next time he would have to re-incarnate himself *there* (pointing to the north-west). Some of these disciples, among whom was the great actor-dramatist, Girish Chandra Ghose, of Bengal, have said that Sri Ramakrishna also gave a hint as to the time this would occur, saying, "Two hundred years later I shall have to go there. Then many will be liberated, and those who will fail then, will have to wait for a long time!"

Thirdly, he came to foresee the time of his passing. One day, in an ecstatic mood, he spoke of it thus to Sâradâ Devi, "When you find me taking the food touched by a non-Brahmin, passing nights in Calcutta, and feeding another and eating the remnants—then know that the day for my leaving this body is near at hand." These words were literally fulfilled. Another day, also in an ecstatic mood at Dakshineswar, he said to Sâradâ Devi, "Towards the end I shall take nothing but liquid milk preparations." This statement too came true.

THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR

BY THE EDITOR

I

The division of life and life's activities into the sacred and the secular is a comparatively recent affair. Man began his life with the secular alone and perhaps stumbled into the discovery of the other element. It took a long time to rise above the struggles for existence. The idea of the sacred can never dawn in the mind of one who

is to work the whole day in order to support himself and his family. A peasant or a wage-earner in a mill or a factory, a petty clerk or an ordinary shop-keeper, works so hard for his livelihood, has so many worries to face, that little energy or even will is left for him to devote to other things. This being the case even in modern times, it is easy to imagine how difficult it

must have been for the primitive man, living in perpetual fear and anxiety, to have even a distant idea of the sacred.

With a little sense of security and consequent leisure, his mind is slightly freed from the thoughts about the primary necessities of life. Now he looks at nature—its sky, mountains, seas, rivers, lakes, mornings and evenings, its trees, flowers, and creepers, its beasts and birds. He hears rustles and murmurs, strange notes and sounds. And he is in rapport with them all. Perhaps he draws rude sketches, moulds and carves out quaint images, and feels a sort of sensation, never experienced before. But the bread problem and the problem of safety are still there. He is forced to give up this new and strange feeling and take to the stern duties of life. But the impressions of these feelings are there in his mind and he longs to indulge in them again at the earliest opportunity, to observe those scenes and sights, those images and drawings so that they might again rouse similar emotions in him. He feels that they are not exactly what can be called necessities of life, that they are dispensable. But then the feelings are so nice; they give such a tone to the mind! It is better to keep and enjoy them all. Thus the dispensable becomes indispensable. Man does his business but reverts now and then to this strange corner of his life. Thus evolves the sacred, which up till now is indissolubly connected with concrete things.

These objects gradually grow rich in associations, and the feelings assume a distinctive character. As man wants more and more to enjoy the feelings, the objects begin to assume a secondary position, until it becomes possible for some at least to dissociate the one from the other. Though the objects continue to give him the same joy, to inspire him with the same awe and admiration

as ever, man has learnt to think of them as but symbols and stimuli of those feelings and emotions, which are of the highest importance to him. All these joy and force elements of nature and man combine to form one living whole, named God. And as joy and force are seen everywhere in nature and even within man himself, God is everywhere, working His will through all things and creatures, manifesting Himself in varying degrees throughout the universe collectively and individually. So the idea of God is complete. He is the central figure of those elements of our lives which we call sacred—everything, everyone that is connected with Him in such a way as to rouse in us the dormant feeling of pure joy and beneficent force is held sacred.

But man cannot live by this feeling alone. He still requires certain very solid things to sustain his own life and those of his family. He is still to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; and the growth of society in complexity has given him tastes of certain pleasures and amenities of life which he would not forgo even if he is to work harder than ever for them. So he is to divide himself in two, to earn and enjoy two different kinds of enjoyments—the one connected with his spirit and the other with his body. He feels that the former gives him a finer and deeper sense of joy, but then the latter cannot be dispensed with, though it greatly hampers and spoils the free play of the former. The joy of the spirit is so great that some would fain minimize the demands of the body and give themselves up to things spiritual. Others would however prefer the second kind of enjoyments even if the spirit be starved. But however much they want the one or the other they cannot totally ignore either; love and tyranny of both will have to be borne with. Civilized man,

the man who has a glimpse of the spirit, is fated to undergo the painful experience of this division within himself. His whole life is a strenuous attempt at a happy adjustment of both. But if they are by nature distinct and contradictory how is reconciliation possible? Be it what it may. Man does not like eternal warfare; if reconciliation is not possible he will at least patch the difference up. But true reconciliation is possible.

II

Three solutions have been offered to free man from this tug-of-war between the sacred and the secular, between things spiritual and things material. He is either to materialize the spirit, or spiritualize the matter; or, which seems to be more wise, man is to learn a bit of self-control and give unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's and to the Lord what is His—he should prevent both from overstepping the legitimate limits of either. Let us examine the views briefly.

To materialize the spirit is impossible. Stilling the Small Voice within has not been successful. Once it is developed, it persists even under ruthless suppression. In its pliancy lies its strength. It gets silenced soon, but it knows when to appear again; it chooses the most effective moments to whisper its words of conversion. To keep it silenced throughout the life would have been possible, had there been no calamities in life, had there been no soft feelings in the human heart. As it is, they are in all lives, in all hearts. And when they come, the whispers assume the loudness of a peal of thunder. Strong in persuasions and in censures, it works its way against all odds. It gives no peace till its dictates are obeyed to the letter.

Nor is it desirable to kill the spirit even if it were possible. For all the

noble qualities that civilized man is proud of are rooted in it. Take away the spirit and these qualities lose all their meanings. They have their reasons in the spirit of man. Self-sacrifice, which has marked every forward step of civilization, has been possible, because man is more than matter. Had his eyes been fixed on matter and material gain alone, no human society could have been possible. What would have compelled the parents to take so much pain in rearing up children? What would have compelled man to give enormous sums of money in charity for the building of hospitals, schools, orphanages, etc.? If everything ended with the body of man, what could have been the impetus for the great works of art? In fact without a belief in the spirit, no civilization could have been possible. We think we can build up a civilization based on matter alone, because freely breathing in spirit we fail to realize its all-penetrating influence on our present culture and civilization. All the sufferings of mankind, all the forces that threaten civilization come from matter; and all that is noble and peace-giving come from the spirit. So long as man has a natural hankering after peace, the killing of spirit would be the greatest calamity that can befall mankind.

Next comes the wiseacres' interpretation of "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." They forget the other command of giving up all and following the Son of Man. They forget also that He is a "jealous God", who would brook no division of interest and devotion. How is it possible for man to serve two masters, to serve God and Mammon at the same time? They are diametrically opposite—opposite in their ways, opposite in the goal they lead to. One must deprive oneself of

all belongings before one can hope to realize God, the way to God is strewn with the thrown-away clothes and jewels of the devotees—the process is a continual giving up, not only of belongings but of all desires and aspirations even. Whereas the worship of Mammon is a continual hoarding of wealth and the increasing of desires *ad infinitum*. How can such a division be possible? Both are all-consuming in their own ways and hate limitations. Each wants to have a monopoly of man.

The acquisition and enjoyment of worldly things cannot have any legitimate limits. Both beauty and utility have infinite gradations. There is no end to necessity. The moment one necessity is fulfilled another peremptorily demands fulfilment. Today there are many things which we think we cannot do without; but perhaps a year before we ourselves looked upon them as articles of luxury and might have criticized others for taking them to be necessities. Desires increase with their fulfilment. Fine tastes grow finer. Beauty leads to greater beauty. The mind hungers after new things and urges man to discard old things for new ones. All these lead man to ever-increasing activity and give him no respite. After a life-long acquisition and enjoyment of things of comfort and luxury man finds himself in the same sorry state of wants and unsatisfied hankerings. While he is feverishly busy with satisfying his wants and is painfully conscious that an infinitesimal part of them has been fulfilled after very hard labour, a pull from the other direction comes and makes him all the more restive. He is bewildered. His desires have increased, his enjoyments have not been fulfilled, perhaps evil days have marred whatever little he had, the momentum of work urges him onward, and his conscience gives him a sly prick.

What will the poor man do? Exercise self-control? It is easier said than done. To keep oneself evenly balanced between the spirit and the matter, between things sacred and things secular, is in the very nature of the case, impossible. Those who speak of it have never tried. They do not care for things spiritual. They are devoted to the ordinary pursuits of life, but they are wise enough to understand that it does not look well to speak of discarding spirit in the public. So they advise to strike a mean between the two. What they really mean is that man should be a man of business and should not indulge in sentimentality and day-dreams—he should not spoil his career by running after wild geese. Hence this solution is as bad as the one of materializing the spirit. It is impossible and pernicious.

III

But for occasional strokes of misfortune, these two types of men have a comparatively smooth sailing in life. They do not feel so much the poignancy of a split-up life. There is an air of ease about them, which leads others, afraid of strenuous work for the attainment of abiding good, to imitate them. And this would have been a good practical solution of life's ills, had these people been able to exercise sufficient self-control when misfortunes overtook them. There are of course some—though their number is very small—who, schooled in misfortunes, have acquired a Stoic indifference to these ills of life. Nothing can be said against such lives except that these people lose some very sweet things of life, some very refined emotions, which impart a wider meaning and significance to life, makes life fuller and richer. Those who are content to live an easy life even though it is cribbed and cabined and

who can somehow master the patience of the Stoics can live such a life; but there is another class of men who would rather court dangers and difficulties, and would make their lives full of struggles, in order to get at the completest significance of life. Saints, prophets, and sons of God come and live for them, show them the way out of these struggles to eternal sunshine, and make them the salt of the earth wherewith is to be salted the undeciding multitude. They feel what it is to have a life divided against itself, and it is they who know what real bliss is, what true enjoyment means.

This class of men have understood the value of the spirit, they have contracted a love for all that is sacred. They feel that the joy of living in the spirit far transcends the pleasures of sense-enjoyments. But though the mind is willing, the flesh is sometimes weak. It cannot rise to the height of the mind and very often proves a veritable drag upon it. To them the distinction between the sacred and the secular is extremely painful. They consider those moments of their lives which they have to pass in secular activities as mere loss; and because they cover a considerable portion of their lives, they feel ill at ease but find no escape. Sincere prayers rise from the depth of their hearts to the throne of God, who shows the way out through His saints and prophets. The history of religions is the history of this revelation of God to man as to how best the secular can be made sacred, as to how the matter can be spiritualized.

When the divine discontent seizes a soul for the first time, her pangs of separation from the Lord is so great that she gives up all for the hope of the joy of being united with Him. But this does not last long except in a few rare cases. The intensity decreases and

with it come back the old associations and the forgotten desires. Man is lifted up for the time being and is given the opportunity of tasting the divine sweetness. It is only a precursor of what is going to happen. No real transfiguration has taken place. The entire individuality with all its belongings and surroundings must be transfused with divine light. Not a single point in life's dimensions should remain unilluminated.

The glory of God's grace suffers so long as a single atom of matter lies outside of it. The might of God is proclaimed the day when Satan himself is lifted up and made divine. If the spread-out life of man is to shrink to meet God, life becomes meaningless. If no purpose be fulfilled by the projection of time and space, if the beauty of line and colour and movement has no message behind them, then their creator must be a poor creature and the creation a mad man's frenzy. No, it is not like that. There is a purpose, a very great purpose—not as we understand it—behind all these; and that is being fulfilled from moment to moment throughout eternity. A great illusion is slowly vanishing—matter is assuming its true nature, the spirit that appeared as matter is throwing off its guise, the lost paradise is being regained. When this is complete, the restless mind of man enjoys peace and blessedness, all uneasiness is set at rest. The painful dichotomy of the sacred and the secular is gone for ever.

But this blissful state is not gained in a day. One is to walk through fire a long, dreary distance to reach this goal. The Upanishads say, it is like walking on the edge of a sharp razor-blade. It is a task at the very thought of which the bravest hearts recoil. And the glory of man lies in the accomplishment of this almost impossible task.

The highest and the most abiding peace is his who fights the fiercest battle. The easy-going, the happy-go-lucky cannot gain much. The ostrich might hide its head and think itself safe but this false sense of security brings about its death. Nature and man are so finely attuned by divine grace that man cannot stop halfway or fall back. He is pushed and pushed till he is sent out of the dark region of illusion. The faint-hearted, the unwilling get the greatest amount of pushes, suffer much and are compelled to cover the whole distance with tearful eyes. The willing, the brave welcome the circumstances as friends, enjoy the sufferings, and get out quickly. This is the difference; but none is permitted to stop in the way. The battles must be braved now or twenty years after. What now appear to be so terrible are not mellowed down with lapse of time. The way to eternal life lies through the jaws of death. He whose eyes are dim sees death alone and is terrified, but he who sees the mysterious shimmering beyond does not care for the frowns and threats. The brave make friends of foes and are glorified; cowards turn their eyes away and are humiliated, but there is no escaping from the ordeal.

IV

How to pass through the ordeal? How best to meet the inevitable? What are the ways that saints, seers, and prophets have shown us to reach that eternal abode of peace? Matter must be spiritualized, the painful duality must cease. But how?

"All this should be covered with God", thus sang the ancient Rishis of the Upanishads. Not that this universe, which we are asked to cover with God, is something distinct from God, which requires gilding over to hide its ugliness. But that it is really the mani-

festation of the Divine, which we have not the true eye to see as such. What is really meant by this 'covering' is the removal of the wrong vision, which is responsible for the hideousness in place of true beauty. The gracious touch of the Lord is there in everything around us. All nature throbs with Divine life, obeys Divine will, fulfils Divine purpose. At the back of every thought and movement there is the Divine urge, each is sustained all through by Divine energy, and accomplishing the Divine end it passes out of sight and merges in Him, perhaps to spring into new activity in new form to fulfil a new purpose. From the apparently aimless activity of the mysterious child to the most carefully planned international scheme runs the one nexus of the Divine will. This is the true vision of the universe, which we have lost. We are to get it back by conscious efforts. We are to see God everywhere, to feel His hand in every work, to unite ourselves with Him in our thinking, feeling, and willing. This continuous conscious effort will give back our Divine heritage.

The immediate effect of this sublimation of life and life's activities will be a great sense of relief. The uncomfortable feeling of being pulled in two directions, the division of energy and will, the sense of wrong and indecision will cease for ever. No profession, no occupation will appear mean or merely mundane. The scavenger, the butcher, the executioner will have the halo of nobleness as much as the king, the monk or the justice. Shoe-blackening will have as much prestige as lecturing on the grace of God or even meditation on Him. There will be no distinction between the holy days and the working days. Church-going will not be considered a holier duty than school-going or office-going. For, all the houses are sanctified by His eternal presence, all

actions orientate towards Him, in all the strata of society and occupation He is fully revealed. So where is the place for meanness and jealousy, for superiority and inferiority? Nothing of diversity is taken away, no attempt at simplifying society is made. All the bewildering complexity is kept in tact, only the bewilderment is gone. The end of all thoughts and actions and the succession of means to it are crystal-clear. Everyone is fully alive as to what he is doing and for what. There is no reason for hurry-scurry or shilly-shally and yet there is the beauty of the ups and downs of life without the anxiety for them. No dimensions of life are dwarfed and yet in spite of immensity there is no unwieldiness about it. There is peace, order, and gracefulness everywhere.

This, however, will not be done in a day. Such grand results cannot be achieved so easily. The old habit of looking at things as matter, of hankering after gross material enjoyments will keep on coming every now and then. The mind will forget many times that we are ourselves spirits and not matter, that all other persons and things have spiritual existence, and that our legitimate relation with them can only be spiritual. It is by patience and continual brave attempts that one can succeed in getting established in this new attitude of life. By constant practice under all circumstances, the remembrance of our true, spiritual nature should be made permanent. In the midst of each household duty, in clubs and office rooms, in senates and parliaments, in social gatherings and war councils, in the midst of heated debates and cool serious thinking this remembrance should be kept wide awake. The ever vigilant devotee should be always prepared to fight out inertia and forgetfulness. But sometimes the attachment

for material enjoyments is so strong that man is not allowed to rise to the height of this stage of practice. Hence the Rishis supplement this practice of the constant remembrance of our spiritual nature with the cultivation of dispassion for material things. The former is the positive aspect of that whose negative side is the latter. Both are necessary, but greater emphasis must be laid on the positive aspect. Buddhism made this mistake of ignoring this aspect and emphasized the negative one, and the result was that it was wiped off its land of birth.

Hence comes the second maxim: "Enjoy by renouncing". It seems paradoxical. But spiritual enjoyment cannot be otherwise. Material enjoyment means possession, grabbing. Wherever there is a thing of beauty or utility we want to possess it. And this possession of ours means the dispossession of others. Without depriving others we cannot enjoy. This is in the very nature of material things. The desire of one limited being for some limited thing can only be fulfilled by their being brought together. The condition for material enjoyment is that the distance between the enjoyer and the enjoyed must be reduced to nil. Hence whenever we want to love or enjoy a thing we feel an instinctive impulse of hugging it to our bosom. Here the grabbing instinct shows itself in a noble garb and deceives man. When a man wants to enjoy anything he identifies himself with the body, which is material, and thinks of the object of enjoyment in terms of matter. Such enjoyment is possible by contact and between matter and matter.

But spiritual enjoyment is totally different from this. Spirit is not limited by time or space—it is all-pervading. Already possessing everything, it can

have no urge for grabbing. Something more. From the true spiritual standpoint spirit is everything. It is impossible for the "I" to *enjoy* "I". Enjoyment, as it is understood, cannot be attributed to the true spirit. But when instruction is imparted, the Absolute Spirit is not taken into account. It is the individual souls on their march from matter to spirit who are thus instructed. They have yet the clinging to matter and material enjoyments, but the glimpse of the spirit within and without comes now and then. They are asked to "enjoy by renouncing," i.e. by renouncing the materiality of things. By ceasing to think of matter as matter we rejoice in the spirit. The more we give up thinking of limitations and limited things, the more we advance towards infinitude. With the dropping off of gross attachments and longings, finer and finer layers of enjoyment open up. And the more a man approaches towards finer regions, the greater and

more abiding becomes the intensity of his enjoyment.

But what is the meaning of this spiritual enjoyment? It is the enjoyment—sometimes of the witness, sometimes of the players—of the mysterious sport of the unfoldment of the spirit through infinite variety and gradation of what appears as matter. Those who want to take part in and enjoy this blessed sport are to forgo the dull, gross enjoyment of matter. The reaction of this spiritual outlook on life on the workaday world will be immensely blissful—the fighting, competitive spirit will yield place to love, sympathy, mutual help and co-operation, and a feeling of joy and self-satisfaction. And all these, when we have only taken the road and have not reached the goal, which is Absolute Bliss itself. This is the method and this is the goal that the Rishis of the Upanishads have left us by their holy bequest.

SOME STOCK OBJECTIONS AGAINST SANKARACHARYA'S ADVAITISM CONSIDERED

BY DRUPAD S. DESAI, M.A., LL.B.

Conscious full well of my limited acquaintance with the philosophy of Sankara, for all I may be said to have done is to have read rather about him than him, I have chosen yet to put forth in this article the trend of my thoughts respecting his philosophical position, so far as I have been able to understand it: and that, too, not by an elaborate and exhaustive review of his writings, but simply by trying to meet, in my own way, objections that are commonly found to be urged against his system.

For the sake of convenience, to start

with, I shall tabularize the stock objections as under :—

(1) That Sankara is not a philosopher at all, but merely a theologian, as

(i) he takes his stand on Sruti alone,

(ii) which is not a valid Pramâna at all ; and this ultimately is meant to convey that

(iii) his philosophy does not satisfy the demands of Reason.

(2) Experience is not explained at all in his system ; nay, even more, that his system leaves no scope for experience at all.

(3) That the doctrine of Mâyâ acts as a setback to the scientific activity of man.

(4) That Absolutism of Sankara's type negates all moral categories.

We shall now, in what follows, consider the objections one by one.

It is a fact, patent even to a very casual reader, that Sankara has spun out a system of philosophy, peculiarly his own, out of a really weltering mass of confused and unsystematized ideas lurking in the *Prasthânatraya*. It may be that his system does not appeal to us; it may be that the same ideas admit of different interpretations. But that can hardly be made a ground to say that his interpretation is not a systematic interpretation, that he is not a systematic philosopher. His philosophy of Unqualified Monism is a system of philosophy, in its own way, quite in the same sense in which Plato's Idealism, or Kant's Transcendental Idealism, or Hegel's Absolutism are so many systems of philosophy, in their own ways.

The only reason, therefore, why Sankara's philosophy does not appeal to his objectors as a system seems to be that they find it based almost entirely on Sruti. But the question, more pertinent, is: Why should this basis of Sruti be condemned so outright? Is there not a reason, a sufficient reason, that justifies Sankara's stand on, and constant appeal to, Sruti? It may be that times have changed, circumstances have changed, and they no longer require us to take our stand on, and appeal to, those *Srutis* anywhere. But have we not made out our own *Srutis* nowadays, and do we not appeal to them with satisfaction and a sense of elation, both in our ordinary walks of life and in the extraordinary pursuits of contemplative activity? How pleased we often feel when we find that a certain conclusion arrived at by us quite independently

has got its support in the names of widely known, world-famous persons? The fact is that man, be he a philosopher or any other sort of "er", cannot cut himself aloof from the moorings on which his ship is fixed fast. The past is a precious possession with him, the present has its roots seated deep in that past, and has its growth helped by getting them watered and nurtured by the environments that actually surround it now. Sankara's stand on, and his constant appeal to, Sruti, I believe, is really to be taken as an acknowledgment, on his part, of the debt he owed to his illustrious predecessors who gave him a clue, it may be said, to the philosophy of which he afterwards became a champion. And it is difficult to understand why this should be condemned so outright in these days especially when almost all writers, as a rule, make it a point of procedure to start with by adding a list of authorities consulted and followed in their deliberations.

Besides, the influence which the *Srutis* exercised in moulding the life and thought of the peoples of India in those days justified Sankara doubly more in reverting constantly to them to show that what he taught was really their own purport. How else could he have satisfied his contemporaries?

Thus Sankara's stand on Sruti has its own justification. But when Sruti is set up as something quite opposed to reason, there is a deeper and a more serious charge laid at its door, which needs to be considered as seriously. We will ask the framers of this charge just a straight question: What is this Reason, with a capital "R", they worship so much? How will they define it, or, if definition be not possible, how will they describe it? Is it one of the faculties with which human mind works when it thinks? Or, is it the power of argumentation, the dialectics, so often

the possession, proud and precious, of logicians as well as keen and acute metaphysicians?

Taking Reason in the sense of a faculty with which human mind works when it thinks, we can by no means bring ourselves to believe that the *Srutis* are opposed to it. For what tangible ground on earth have we to say that the *Srutikâras*, when they began to think about the problems found in the *Srutis* lacked this faculty altogether? Grant once that the *Srutikâras* had to bestow the best of their thoughts in arriving at conclusions such as सर्वं खलु इदं ब्रह्म, तत्त्वमसि, and so on, and you also grant that the *Srutis* cannot be set aside as being opposed to Reason. At best it can be said that the *Srutikâras* could not present their thoughts to the world in an orderly systematized manner, that there was a defect somewhere in the manner of the treatment they bestowed upon the various thoughts and ideas that flashed across their minds from time to time. But shall we be justified in saying that therefore the *Srutis* are opposed to Reason altogether?

Again, taking reason in the sense of "power of argumentation", we may readily grant that the *Srutikâras* were at a disadvantage there. But what about Sankara? Has he not got over the disadvantage completely? And we are concerned with Sankara more. The charge, therefore, would hardly hold water when applied to him. He has tried to show, to the best of his ability, that the truths of the *Srutis* are not merely the whims and fancies of the *Srutikâras*, but the only truths that reasoning applied carefully to the thoughts expressed therein, may bring to light. He has made it his mission, it seems, to show that the *Srutis* are infallible, not because they are a sort of revelation, but because they contain truth which cannot be contradicted, truth

which reasoning may accept without involving itself in self-contradiction. This mission of his, however, has suffered the lot of being misconstrued, and the result is that he is looked down upon as a commentator only. However that be, his services in bringing about a happy blending of *Yukti* with *Sruti*, and thus showing that it was not all a matter of the blind following the blind, can never be underrated. Again, his refutation of the different systems of philosophy then in vogue is a standing testimony to his claims as a supreme dialectician. In the face of all these, even a veritable tyro like myself may make himself bold to say that there is no meaning in raising objections like the one hereinbefore discussed.

On what grounds can it still be maintained that Sankara's system does not satisfy the demands of reason? There seems to be only one ground on which the objector may yet persist in his objection—the personal ground, the ground viz. that it does not satisfy the demands of *his* reason. Very well then. The question in this case would be: Why should any system of philosophy try to satisfy the demands of each and everybody's reason at all? It is an impossible feat. No system of philosophy, at any time and in any place, has up till now succeeded in doing this. It would be better, in order to be clearer, to put one straight question to the objector: How do you say that a particular system does not satisfy the demands of your reason? Can you tell us exactly what these demands are? Are you quite sure of the stage when you can say, "Yes, just here are the demands of *my* reason completely satisfied, and the system need do nothing more, nothing less"? Supposing even for a moment, for the sake of argument, that you are able to say this, it will not mend matters still. For, all

that will be true so far as you yourself are concerned with the system. What about the myriads of others? Their powers of reception and grasp may not be as keen and developed as yours, or may be developed in a different fashion altogether, they may not be able to assimilate experiences so readily and accurately as you do. And in that case, a system of philosophy which you say satisfies the demands of your reason will very naturally fail to satisfy the demands of their reason, and *vice versa*. What should be the way of escape out of this fix? Whose Reason must be taken as the standard to which the system must comply, if it is to satisfy the demands of Reason? And, further, will not such a persistence mean that in the end we are trying to reduce everything to subjective likes and dislikes? If that is what we, in the ultimate analysis, demand of philosophy to satisfy, philosophy is bound to fail sadly and always.

In the objection above considered, there is also implied a suggestion that *Sruti* cannot be regarded as a valid *Pramâna* at all. If this means that it is not valid because it is opposed to reason, we say we have answered it sufficiently and at length in all that has gone before. If, however, it means that in order to establish the truth of Advaitic position, *Sruti* need not be introduced as a valid *Pramâna* at all, we say we are at one here. Even Sankara himself grants this when he says in the very famous introduction with which he begins his *Bhâshya* : अविद्यावद्विषयाद्येव प्रत्यक्षादीनि प्रमाणानि शास्त्राणि च । Advaitism is a system which establishes the non-existence of duality. Like Descartes, the father of modern European Philosophy, but in a manner quite different from his, Sankara arrived at the doctrine that the Self, the Knower, is the only true existence. It does not and cannot admit

of any doubt. Having arrived at this, the entire purpose of Sankara's philosophy consists in proving the unreality of what is perceived or known, and also of its relation to the knower or consciousness. And this he achieves without appealing to the scriptures. Thus the kernel of his philosophy does not require to be substantiated by the *Srutis*. It is based completely on Experience with reason applied to it. Not that the *Srutis* do not contain that truth, but that Sankara is too much alive to the fact that the ultimate truths of a philosophical system must be based on experience, reason, and a little bit of faith, too. Not *Sruti* alone, not *Yukti* alone, not *Anubhava* alone, but all intertwined in proper proportions will lead you to truths most fundamental and real.

It is in connection with the so-called truths of Vedântic Theology that Sankara has to revert often and often to the texts of the *Srutis*, as giving the ultimately valid *Pramâna*. The *Vedânta Sûtras*, e.g. start with the dogma that God is the cause of this world. Now, the question is : How is this dogma to be justified? Can any amount of reasoning do it? Sankara says, "No reasoning can prove the causal relation between God and the World." We can justify it by a reference to the scriptures alone. And this has exactly been the general consensus of opinion among philosophers of all climes and at all times. To the philosopher, strictly speaking, all efforts to prove the existence and the attributes of God by means of arguments, call it theological, cosmological, or whatever other kind of "ological" you like, but arguments based on reasoning, pure and simple, have always counted as arguments all in vain. It is a problem that cannot be proved. Belief in it must flow out from the heart alone. Its truth is based

on faith alone. This is the underlying spirit of Sankara's attitude towards the so-called truths of Vedântic Theology. But the spirit, as has always been the case, is mistaken for the letter, and Sankara dismissed too soon by dubbing him a theologian merely, a dogmatist only, as one who follows the *Srutis* blindly and implicitly with no appeal to Reason at all.

The second objection states that Experience is not *explained* in his philosophy. Having arrived at the position that the ultimately Real is the Atman or the Brahman alone, he finds it difficult what plane of reality to assign to our ordinary experience. He, therefore, as a matter of fact, does away with the latter altogether, and brushes it aside by declaring it to be all Mâyâ.

This objection, as I understand it, may be said to imply a hit at the fountain-head mainly. It implies that the position that the Atman or the Brahman alone is the only true existence is a position itself unwarranted. Let us see, however, whether this can really be maintained. It is not a mere matter of assumption with Sankara that he takes the Atman or Brahman alone to be ultimately real. He regularly proves it. The world that appears to us changes from moment to moment, whereas that to which it appears is ever the same. We can doubt away anything and everything in this world, but *that we doubt* we can never doubt away. In other words, Sankara gives some solid grounds in support of his fundamental position; it is not as unwarranted as it is supposed to be. Now, if we find that our ordinary experience cannot be held to be real in the same, and the only true, sense, the only course left open to us is to declare that it is unreal. This is no arbitrary manipulation, no brushing aside of facts. How else to explain experience?

Here, at this stage, an *ad hominem* question may be raised, "What is the meaning of explaining experience?" Will experience be said to be explained if we simply take stock of each and every phase of our experience and declare it to be real? Or, does explanation consist in tracing it to its proper ultimate ground, and then declaring from there what we find to be its true nature? I believe the latter is the only real sort of explanation. The former, we do not hesitate to say, is no explanation at all. And the Vedânta of Sankara explains our experience in the only true sense in which an explanation of a thing is possible.

To be clearer still, let me suppose I were to refer to one who has studied physical science well for the explanation of my experience of the blueness of the sky. How will he explain it to me? Surely, he will say "It is a big illusion, my friend. There is nothing like sky, a limitless sheet of something spread overhead, as you see. The colour that you ascribe to it is a bigger illusion still." Is not this explanation the only real explanation that can be given of the experience in question? Can I, then, in the face of it, still maintain and say that physical science does not explain the experience of the blueness of the sky? Similarly with so many other scientific explanations of our various other experiences. This is, however, so far as the sciences go. And we know that the sciences can explain our experiences only in the limited scope in which they can, by their very nature, handle them. If we want to get an explanation of the whole of our experience, we must seek the light from philosophy. And the Vedânta, I believe, as philosophy, views the whole of our experience in its true light, and declares, quite consistently, in the sense of explaining it, that in themselves the

experiences that we have have not a jot of reality, that they appear as real only on the background of that which is eternally and essentially real, the Self, the Atman, Brahman. Some have also gone to the extent of saying that there is no scope for experience to be possible at all from the Vedântic point of view. The objector here, so far as I know, grants that experience is explained, he only fails to understand how one who has known the final truth of the Vedânta can be said to be having any experience at all. He must, it is contended, be reduced to the state of a statue only—no experience, no work, nothing of the kind. It is hard to follow by what magic of logic is one led to arrive at such a conclusion. To know the true nature of a thing does not, and cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be believed to mean that we cease to experience that thing as it is ordinarily experienced, from that very moment. Even though the scientist knows too well that the experience of the blueness of the sky is an illusion, his knowledge of the true nature of that experience will not reduce him to a blank and vacant state in connection with that experience. That is to say, whenever he turns his eyes up, it will not be that he will not see anything there, or will only stare and gaze at it like a mad man. No. This can never be the case. He will see the sky, as long as he lives and looks up, as blue and blue only. He will not see it as white, or he will not be able to say that he sees nothing there up at all. Only the existential value of that experience has been transformed in his case, and transformed so completely as never to mislead him again. Similarly in the case of the Vedântin, the true nature of the world-appearance, he knows, is not as and what it appears to us. Now, how will this knowledge react in his

case? It cannot be maintained that with the rise of this knowledge he will cease to experience the world-appearance as he actually experiences it in his ordinary everyday life. For he has not ceased to be a man, just as we are—with eyes to see, ears to hear, and so on. Only the existential value, the real import of this world-appearance, will have been transformed. And therein all the difference between a Vedântin and a layman will be seen to lie. So that where, we as laymen, will strike, love, envy, fear, laugh, cry, or be sorry for, the Vedântin will have no reason to be perturbed and upset in that fashion at all.

Thirdly, it has been urged that the doctrine of Mâyâ gives a serious setback to the scientific activity of man. I am inclined to believe that those who put forward this objection against Sankara must be supposed to have a very poor or no clear idea of what the scientific activity involves and implies. How is science possible and what is the ultimate aim of the scientific activity—these are what they seem to have mistaken completely. I would rather put the matter otherwise, and say that the doctrine of Mâyâ it is which supplies the basis to the splendid superstructure of science. I might as well say, paradoxically, that if the scientists were not Mâyâvâdins, to start with, their very activity would have been impossible. If, that is to say, they had taken things to be just what they appear to us, no science about them would have been possible at all. It is only because they can doubt, and do doubt, that what appears to us is not what is ultimately real, that they can embark upon their journey at all. And, in the end—what does Science prove? Just this that what appears to us cannot be taken to be what really exists, it is not the ultimate reality. A stone as it really

is is not what it appears to us; a plant as it really is is not what it appears to us. This is what Science shows to us so conclusively. I believe a study of Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Biology, and all these sciences may go only to confirm the above view. Just take a very commonplace truth taught by Astronomy: "The Earth revolves round the Sun." Can one imagine that the astronomers would have arrived at this truth if, to start with, they had not doubted the stability of the earth, the immovability of the earth, as it, in ordinary everyday experience, appears to us? Indeed, nothing can be more contradictory to our ordinary everyday experience, and yet nothing more true than this scientifically. The room in which I live and move; the earth on which I tread, run, and jump; the tennis-court on which I can perform all the skills; and I myself walking so straight and erect, clad up in the best of suits; and what not?—all, all are revolving! How can I believe it? A close study of one or other of the Sciences teaches me to believe it. In the same way, if the stars above were looked upon as what they appear to us, that is to say, as some luminous little jewels fixed steadfast in the dark blue background of the spacious firmament no high,—what Science about them would have been possible?

Would that I had known more of Science to talk to you in some authoritative tones and with a wealth of details at my command! It would have been possible to show that the objector in raising an objection of the type considered is totally in the false. Now, then—the Sciences disillusion us practically with regard to the true nature of *actual particular experiences*. And Vedânta, as philosophy, only continues this work of science further on in a wider field on a wider expanse. It only wants to

disillusion us practically with regard to the true nature of the *whole of our experience*. That is what Mâyâvâda really stands for. It is difficult to understand why this Vâda then should be regarded as giving a setback to the scientific activity of man. It rather, is an impetus to it, adds force to it, and corroborates it, but in a larger, wider sphere.

Fourthly, the objection has been raised that Absolutism of the type of Sankara negates all moral categories. An *ad hominem* question may be raised here also: "What is meant by negating all moral categories?" I don't know whether the objectors are in their lighter veins or rather serious when they talk that the objection, in other words, implies that a Vedântin will not mind much the recognized moral distinctions, will rather go to the other extreme; will, that is to say, be quite immoral, and, at the same time, be all that with a sort of bravado about it, will be actually revelling even in his immorality. Thought out rather consistently, and in consonance with the point of view of a strict Vedântin, nothing can be more perverse and prejudicial than the engrafting of such an immoral type of conduct on the part of a true Vedântin.

To put it in plainer words, the objection implies that the Vedântin will steal, will murder, will tell lies, and will do all this on the strength of being a Vâdantin only. I believe, it will be truer to state, in his case, that he will have transcended all these empirical moral distinctions. Let us go into the question a bit more deep. Stealing is bad, stealing is wrong, stealing is immoral, because we believe that the man who steals is a man quite distinct from us and that he has no right to our possessions. Thus, its wrongness is based upon a dualistic, or a pluralistic view of the universe. We are all

individuals separate, distinct, and independent of one another, everyone having his own circle of individual rights and possessions. None should interfere with the private rights and enjoyments of others. But, let me ask, is this a philosophically tenable view? Does the actual state of affairs also really countenance this view? Surely not. Interrelation, mutual co-operation is what we, at every moment of our life, need and do pray for. Without that, life itself would be impossible. Now, the circumstances under which we are bred up, the environment that reacts on us, are all much too subtle and heavy-laden on us to shirk off its weight and rise up to a still higher view of life. Otherwise, are there not many refined forms and ways of sterling etc., prevalent in the life of inter-relation and mutual co-operation also? Why do we not resent them as strongly? Why do we not feel their sting so pricking as we do when something from our own pockets is stolen away? On the contrary, however, we have learnt to reconcile ourselves with these latter forms of steahing etc. in some big catchy names, e.g. as Industrialism, Business Methods, Political Tactics, and so on. Looked at from such a point of view, life is all a big chain of inconsistencies and paradoxes; moral distinctions, sense of rightness and appropriateness are all relative. Vedânta alone gives us an escape from all these, an escape quite well deserved, and the only true escape it is philosophically possible to have. It may be that we are weak and fail to find support in that. It may be that in the present circumstances of our life, we are too much obsessed by the idea of Mine and Thine—mine as something totally different from thine—to see it clearly that mine is ultimately thine, or thine mine. But this is a view of life clouded, indeed, by ignorance. And

the ignorance is there because we have not the strength necessary to pass through, and submit ourselves to, a life of hard and regulated discipline. The Vedântin has already passed through the rigorously regulated life before even entering on the studies of the Vedânta itself. How then can it be believed that, in the end, he would be behaving in a manner totally subversive of all morality? The correct view would be to state that he will have transcended all ordinary empirical moral distinctions. Now that he has known the true nature of the world-appearance as such, what motive will he have yet within him which would impel him to adopt the course of action it is suggested he would mostly be following? Only were he moving in a world of distinctions and oppositions, would he have found a motive here or a motive there, either to steal, or to murder, or to lie, or to covet. But where duality is not, where multiplicity is not, where Jiva is Brahman,—not his own Jiva alone but the Jivas of all equally,—who will have the motive to steal from whom? or to possess for oneself in distinction to his neighbour? Again, the way of life in which he has been disciplined, one cannot believe, will fail him so sadly and miserably. Rather will it keep him all through quite quiet and unruffled. Moral and immoral actions no longer remain questions with him.

To those, therefore, who attack Sankara on the side of negating all moral categories, the only retort would be: Let us not shut our eyes to this fact that in those days moral acquisitions were preliminary requisites to the study of philosophy. A student who had first to deserve himself for the study of the Vedânta by passing through the solid test of acquiring those fourfold qualifications, viz. (1) नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः । (2) इहामुद्वार्थभोगविरागः । (3) श्रमदमादि साधन संपत् ।

(4) मुमुक्षुत्व it is plain perversity of view that at the end of his study, he will be behaving in the manner in which he is supposed he will do. In one word, he will have acquired a habit, so to say, to be moral and nothing but moral in whatever he thinks, feels, and wills. In modern days conditions may have changed, and we may find it difficult

to conceive how there can be any necessary relation between our thoughts, feelings, and actions. But that is no reason why we should criticize Sankara's philosophy—a philosophy the very initiation into which has to begin only after what we call our moral aspirations have been satisfied, and yet persist in saying that it does not satisfy our moral aspirations.

NOTES OF CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI SARADANANDA

I

Disciple.—instructs his disciples not to practise Japa without taking bath etc. Are such observances compulsory?

Swami. The Master came to make religion easy. People were being crushed under the weight of rules and regulations. To repeat the Lord's name and to worship Him no special time and place are necessary. In whatever condition one may be, one can take His name. The Master never used to give too much importance to these external observances. As to means, whichever suits you best. If you like God with form, that will also lead you to the goal. If you like God without form, well and good; stick to it and you will progress. As to how to worship Him, or if you even doubt His very existence, then better put the question to Him thus: "I do not know whether Thou existeth or not, whether Thou art formless or with form. Do Thou make known to me Thy real nature." As to changing of clothes, taking bath, and other external observances, if you can observe them, well and good; if not, go on calling on Him without paying much attention to all these. The Master once sang a song to me and told me,

"Assimilate any one of these ideas and you will reach the goal." The song runs as follows :

"O Lord, Thou art my everything, the sole support of my life, the quintessence of reality. There is none else besides Thee in this world whom I can call as my own.

"Thou art happiness, peace, help, wealth, knowledge, intellect, and strength; Thou art the dwelling and the pleasure garden; Thou art the friend and relative.

"Thou art this present life, the sole refuge; Thou art the life hereafter and the heaven; Thou art the injunction of the scriptures, the Guru full of blessings, and the receptacle of infinite bliss.

"Thou art the way and the goal; Thou art the creator and preserver and the worshipped; Thou art the father that punishest Thy child, the loving mother, and the receptacle of infinite bliss art Thou."

Disciple. What do you think about astrological calculations as to auspicious and inauspicious moments?

Swami. Sri Ramakrishna used to observe these things. He believed in auspicious and inauspicious times. And because he used to observe these things we too observe them. But then, these

calculations, nowadays, are not absolutely correct. There have been many changes in the position of the constellations and planets, but these calculations have not been corrected accordingly. So, nowadays, I do not observe them so much.

Disciple. The Master used to say that Srâddha food is harmful to Bhakti. Why is it so?

Swami. The object of food is to build a strong body and a fine intellect. Unless the body and the mind are pure it is not possible to go through spiritual practices. It is the food that is offered to God, that builds a pure body and mind. The Srâddha food is offered to the manes and not to God and as a result instead of building a pure mind and body it affects them otherwise. Food builds the body and the mind and according to the nature of the food it affects them also. In Chaitanya's life we have a case where an ordinary man who happened to touch him in a state of ecstasy was also overpowered by religious emotions. He was prescribed to take Srâddha food to get over these emotions and as a matter of fact this food did put an end to that person's ecstatic moods.

Disciple. Why is the time of an eclipse considered auspicious for the practice of Japa?

Swami. Man becomes thoughtful when such a natural phenomenon takes place. Eclipse brings a great change in the sphere of nature. At such a juncture when nature passes from one condition to another, the mind becomes calm and so the time is favourable for the practice of Japa and meditation.

II

Disciple. Have any realized God through mere work?

Swami. Through selfless work the mind gets purified. And when the

mind becomes pure, there arise Knowledge and devotion in it. Knowledge is the very nature of the Self but being covered with ignorance it is not manifest. The object of selfless work is to remove this covering. As a matter of fact Knowledge dawns as soon as the mind becomes pure. In the *Mahâ-bhârata* you have the story of the chaste lady who attained Knowledge through service to her husband and through other household duties. In the *Gîtâ* also you find, "By work alone Janaka and others attained perfection." Not one but many attained perfection through work, for the text adds "and others".

Disciple. Does work here mean Japa, meditation, etc.?

Swami. No. That meaning is given by the commentators. If it were so then Sri Krishna would have asked Arjuna to ring bells and wave lights before an image of God. Instead he made him fight.

Disciple. Did Arjuna fight without any sense of ego, as an instrument in the hands of the Lord?

Swami. Certainly. If the ego persists even after the vision of the Universal Form then what end will this vision serve? Arjuna says, "My delusion is destroyed and I have regained memory through Thy grace".

Disciple. What is the meaning of the word 'memory' in that verse?

Swami. Arjuna had forgotten the teachings of the scriptures and of the Guru. All those principles, adhering to which Arjuna was progressing he had forgotten, being overcome by delusion. Fear, love of relatives, and respect for his elders had given rise to this delusion. The Advaitists interpret 'memory' as 'the regaining of the consciousness of his real nature'. They too have given a very fine interpretation.

When the Vaishnavas progress in their spiritual practice and reach the Advaita consciousness they avoid it and try to keep permanently a relationship with the Lord. They consider that to become one with Him is an obstacle in their way and so the moment they get a scent of this consciousness they get alert to ward it off. In fact to Shânta-bhâva, or the peaceful devotion, which is the culmination of Advaita Sâdhanâ, they give the lowest place. They develop the emotional side and direct it towards the Lord—this they think is the highest goal. From the highest pitch of emotion we have the Madhura-bhâva or the sweet conjugal relationship with the Lord.

Disciple. What is the meaning of the verse, "Relinquishing all Dharmas take refuge in Me alone" etc.?

Swami. Here Dharma means ritualistic works, Japa, etc. Tilak interprets it as the Dharma spoken of in the *Mahâbhârata*, viz. service to parents, guests, etc. But this is not correct, for even through such service some attained Knowledge. His interpretations of the *Gîtâ* is one-sided, for he wants to show that the object of the whole *Gîtâ* is to establish the path of Work. The *Gîtâ* praises highly self-effort (Purushakâr). In this verse the Lord hints that this self-effort has a limit.

Disciple. Which is the best season for spiritual practices?

Swami. The rainy season is not suited for spiritual practices. One gets

drowsy when one tries to meditate. We experienced this. In that season the restlessness of the mind increases. Winter is best suited for meditation. Those who want to meditate must take healthy and substantial food. Ghee, butter, etc. are good.

Disciple. Why is the Kundalini imagined to be like a snake?

Swami. I am not sure of the exact reason. Probably it is because the impressions of myriads of lives are heaped up in coils or probably it is because the upward motion of the awakened Kundalini is in a zig-zag way like that of a serpent. Describing the Kundalini the Master, in a state of ecstasy, once said, "Have you seen the serpent?"

Disciple. What is the nature of the meditation on the formless?

Swami. The meditation of the Lord in the Sahasrâra which you do at the time of Bhuta Suddhi in ceremonial worship is meditation on the formless. When you do not like any form meditate on the formless. If the meditation on the form of the Guru is more appealing at any time then better meditate on the Guru, for the Lord manifests through the Guru.

Disciple. Is mechanical repetition of the Mantra of any use?

Swami. The Tantras say that through the repetition of the Mantra realization is attained. I should think so.

"Work and worship must go hand in hand. It is very good if one can devote oneself solely to spiritual practice. But how many can do it? Two types of men can sit still doing nothing. One is the idiot, who is too dull to be active. The other is the saint who has gone beyond all activity. As the Gita says, 'Without performing work none can reach worklessness'."

—Swami Brahmananda.

SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO VEDIC CULTURE

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

(Continued from the last issue)

VEDIC POSITIVISM

The ideals of the Rishis of the Vedic culture "complex are not very metaphysical or other-worldly, the atmosphere of sacrifices, hymns, prayers and gods notwithstanding. The literature is pre-occupied with the annihilation of the enemy, the seizure of enemy properties, the distribution of the booty, the expansion of one's territory, the attainment of the highest position in the society of men. It describes jealousies, ambitions, hatreds, wars, elections, harangues, rivalries for accession to the throne."¹

The regime of *stena* (thieves) is feared in the *Rig Veda* (II. 23, 16). The *Atharva Veda* (XIX, 17) writes of the fears and dangers of the night, such as thieves, wolves and snakes.

The *Rig Veda* (X, 178) furnishes us with a hymn sung on the occasion of installing an elected king. It speaks of the steadfastness of the rock, Indra, the heaven, the earth, and the mountain, and it calls upon the king to be true or loyal to the *vis* (folk).

The *Atharva Veda* describes the ceremonies associated with the election of kings. In I, 9, prayer is being offered to Agni to the effect that he should advance the person that is being elected as king to the *sresthya* i.e. the first place among the *sajatanam* or kith and kin.

The blessings to be showered on the elected king are likewise the stuff of some of the hymns of the *Atharva Veda*. In III, 4 one of the greetings to the

king from the people is described as life up to the 100th year. Indra is prayed to in IV, 22 in order that the king may rise to the highest of human kings and become the only ruler of the world.

The poets of the *Atharva Veda* likewise are not often carried away by extra doses of idealistic imagination. In IV, 11 we read certain things such as might inspire a Marxist to discover the "economic interpretation of history." The draft-ox is there described as sustaining the earth and sky. He sustains the wide atmosphere. He sustains the six directions. He has entered into all existence. "With his feet treading down debility, with his thighs extracting refreshing milk, with weariness go the draft-ox and the ploughman unto sweet drink."

At another place (VI, 142) the barley is being asked to "rise up and become abundant with its own greatness, to be unexhausted like the ocean." The "increase of barley" as furnishing the material foundation of life and prosperity has further evoked from Visvâmitra the following verse:² "Unexhausted be thine attendants, unexhausted thy heaps, thy bestowers be unexhausted, thy eaters be unexhausted." From food resources to population the entire gamut is embodied in this prayer of a Vedic Rishi.

It is not necessary to be monistic enough to describe the *Atharva Veda* as nothing but a document of economic

¹ Zimmer: *Altindisches Leben* (Berlin 1879), pp. 162-165.

² Whitney and Lanman: *Atharva Veda* (Harvard Oriental Series 1905), First Half, pp. 163-166, 387. For the homage to the cow (X, 10) see pp. 605-609.

ideas and institutions. But such verses, and their name is legion, should compel indologists to banish from their mentality the ultra-Hegelian and romantic conception of Vedic literature as being nothing but religious, metaphysical or mystical. It is only necessary to be adequately oriented to Vedic positivism at the threshold of investigations into the literature and life of the thousand years previous to the rise of powerful kingdoms in the age of Bimbisara, Mahavira and Sakya the Buddha.

THE PERSPECTIVES OF VEDIC POLITICAL THOUGHT

The right place of Vedic thought in the history of political speculations requires yet to be appropriately grasped by indologists as well as students of sociology and comparative culture-history. Neither the polity nor the political thoughts of the Vedic Rishis, should there be any, can be adequately explained if one approaches the subject from the angle of mythology and religion or from that of the life-history of the sacrificial priest like Vasishtha or Visvâmitra, nay, of the tribal chief like, say, Sudâsa. This is why, generally speaking, indologists are misled into one-sided views and fail to visualize the genuine problems of the "fire-sages." One does not require to be a tremendous Vedic philologist in order to understand the most elementary fact that the problems of those *Riks* on fire were oriented essentially to *Rassenkampf* or race-struggle. The conflicts were both inter-group and intra-group. The fire-sagas were harnessed to colonising and expansion on the one hand and to inter-tribal war and peace on the other. Altogether, we encounter the atmosphere of jealousy and rage, for instance, like that of Visvâmitra (*Rig Veda* III, 33, 53, 9-11) and the evocation and develop-

ment of the aggressive personality of the *vis* (race, tribe of folk)-group.

An important, perhaps the most important item in the Vedic complex is the *vis* itself. It is not enough to know only the chief or the priest, oriented to warfare as each is. We cannot afford to ignore the real centre of political as well as social and economic interest in the Vedic *milieu*, namely, the *vis* (people).

A paramount element in the public life of Vedic India is furnished by the wars of the colonising i.e. Aryan *vis*-groups with the Dasyus (original inhabitants). Wars among the colonising i.e. Aryan *vis*-groups themselves e.g. the five *Kristayah*, *Ksitayah* or *Jatah*, namely, Yadu, Anu, Druhyu, Turvasa and Puru constitute a second factor of importance. External or foreign politics, to use modern categories, form the foundations of *vis* activities. It is the *vis*-nucleus that is abroad conquering and to conquer, and it is the "world-conquests" of these *vis*-groups that the fire-Rishis or sages are promoting in and through their *Riks* (X, 84, 3).³

Vedic polity cannot be identified with the polity of the chieftain and the priest. It is essentially the polity of the *vis*, the *demos*, the mass. It is the harangues in the "crowd" and addressed to the crowd, no matter whether hymns, prayers or incantations, that constitute the ideological atmosphere of the Vedic complex. It is the movements, the mobilizations *en masse*, the *charaiveti* (move on)⁴ of the folk that furnish the *élan vital* of Vedic men and women.

³ See the chapter on "Voelker und Staemme" in Zimmer: *Altindisches Leben* (Berlin 1879) pp. 103-104, 118-122, 127-128, 162-163; and A. B. Keith's chapter on "The Age of the *Rig Veda*" in *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I. (1922), pp. 81-86.

⁴ *Aitareya Brahmana*, VIII, 15.

The *Yajurveda Taittiriya Samhita* (I. viii, 12) is well up in harangues. The following hymn tells its own tale :⁵

"Notified is Agni, lord of the house; notified is Indra, of ancient fame; notified is Pusan, all-knower, notified are Mitra and Varuna, increasing holy order; notified are sky and earth, of sure vows; notified is the goddess Aditi, of all forms; notified is he, N.N. descendant of N.N. in this folk, this kingdom, for great lordship, for great overlordship, for great rule over the people :

"This is your king, O Bharatas;

Soma is the king of us Brahmanas.

"Thou art the bolt of Indra slaying foes;

With thee may he slay his foe.

"Ye are overcomers of foes.

"Protect me in front, protect me at the side, protect me from behind, from the quarters protect me; from all deadly things protect me."

One of these harangues is worded as follows in the *Aitareya Brahmana* (VIII, 12-15) :⁶ "Do ye proclaim him, O Indra, as overlord and overlordship, as paramount ruler and father of paramount rulers, as self-ruler and self-rule, as sovereign and sovereignty, as king and father of kings, as supreme lord and supreme authority." The manifesto goes on in the same strain. The *vis* is being told that "the lordly power hath been born, the eater of the folk hath been born, the breaker of citadels hath been born, the slayer of Asuras hath been born, the guardian of the holy power hath been born, the guardian of law hath been born."

Another harangue may be quoted from the *Atharva Veda* (III, 3), which

refers to the restoration of a king who has been deposed.⁷

"For the waters let king Varuna call thee," says the hymn, "let Soma call thee for the mountains; let Indra call thee for these subjects (*vis*); becoming a falcon, fly unto these subjects.

"Let the falcon lead hither from far the one to be called, living exiled in others' territory; let the two Aswins make the road for thee easy to go; settle together about this man, Ye his fellows.

"Let thine opponents call thee; thy friends have chosen thee against them. Indra and Agni, all the gods have maintained for thee security in the people.

"Whatever fellow disputes thy call and whatever outsider—making him go away, O Indra, then do thou reinstate this man here."

Such political harangues, in tune as they are with the democratic atmosphere of the *vis*, form a signal feature of Vedic literature.

THE PLURALISTIC MAKE-UP OF THE VEDIC CULTURE-COMPLEX

For certain purposes we may go so far as to say that there are virtually not more than two *Veda Samhitas*, the *Rig* and the *Atharva*. To the *Rig* belong as a matter of course the *Sama* and the *Yajus*. This *Rig Vedic* complex may be taken to be the embodiment, as suggested above, of the "culture-lore" in contrast with the *Atharva Samhita* which embodies, say, the "folk-lore." Some of the popular, mass, democratic and secular, worldly or materialistic elements of Vedic life and thought are by all means to be found in the *Rig Vedic* complex. But it is in the *Atharva Samhita* that we are to look for them in specialized or concentrated

⁵ Keith: *The Veda of Black Yajus School*, Part I. (1919) pp. 123-124.

⁶ Keith: *Rigveda Brahmanas* (Aitareya and Kausitaki), Cambridge, Mass. 1920, pp. 329-330.

⁷ Whitney and Lanman: *Atharva Veda Samhita* (Cambridge, Mass. 1905), First Half, pp. 87-88.

forms, although of course the presence of "culture-lore" in this *Samhita* is not entirely to be denied. To one dealing with Hindu positivism of the Vedic period the *Atharva* is therefore bound to loom large.

The complexity and pluralistic make-up of the Vedic literature are suggested from other angles too. It does not require too much of creative imagination to believe that the 1017 hymns collected in the *Rig Veda Samhita* do not constitute all that the people of the period produced in that line. Nobody can be charged with being too suspicious if it is believed that the entire *corpus* of belief of the Vedic tribes is perhaps not to be found in that compilation. The *vis* (people) may be taken to have cherished other faiths and created other hymns through other Rishis. Some of those other beliefs are but incidentally referred to in the collection that we possess to-day.

The later manuals of domestic rites speak of certain customs and beliefs that are at least as old as the *Rig Veda* and may be even older. The concept of *Rita* (cosmic order, right etc.), corresponding to the Chinese *Tao*,⁸ indicates an ideology which is opposed to the animistic theory that dominates the extant *Rig Veda Samhita*. Another non-animistic concept is to be found in the doctrine of *Tapas* (self-mortification).⁹ This is a practice which produces its results even without prayers to the gods. The concept of the Vedic sacrifices betrays likewise a strand of thought which is somewhat independent of the gods. Indeed, the gods themselves are subject to the power of sacrifices and hymns. This sort of mysti-

cism is independent of the gods and will have to be treated as representative of some other forces without which the Vedic complex is not complete. The incidental and almost ignorable references to such beliefs in the *Rig Veda* point but to the other worlds of life and thought whose *Beziehungen* or relations to the society described in the Vedas, as Simmel or von Wiese would say, cannot be overlooked in a comprehensive treatment of Vedic institutions.

The diverse regional values of the Vedic texts must not be overlooked. The territory is divided into four regions, North, South, East and West in the *Atharva Veda Samhita* (III, 27, XII, 3), the *Yajurveda Samhita* (*Taittiriya* IV, 4, 12, 2) and the *Vajasaneyi Samhita* (XV, 10-14). According to the *Aitareya Brahmana* (VIII, 14) of the *Rig Veda Samhita* the "midland" (*Madhyadesa*) knows only of *Rajyas* (lesser political organisms) whereas the East is used to *Samrajyas* (larger statal entities e.g. "empires"). The rulers in Eastern India are accordingly known as *Samrats*. In these Eastern *Samrats* of the *Aitareya Brahmana* one may easily see the counterparts of Janaka of Mithila (North Bihar) who is known as *Samrat* in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanisat* (IV, 1) of the *Yajurveda*. Jarasandha of Rajagriha (South Bihar) whom the *Mahabharata* (III, 14, 9-10) describes as the "great sovereign and master" can be regarded as another exemplar for the *Aitareya* authors.¹⁰

The *Brahmacharin* of the *Atharva Veda* (XI, 5, 6) is described as a person wandering to the Eastern Ocean. The *Purva Samudra* (Eastern Ocean) is known to the *Rig Veda* (X, 136) too.

⁸ B. K. Sarkar: *Chinese Religion Through Hindu Eyes* (Shanghai 1916), pp. 13-15, 26.

⁹ T. W. Rhys Davids: "The Chakravatti" in the *R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume* (Poona 1917), pp. 125-131.

¹⁰ H. Chakladar: "Contribution of Bihar to Vedic Culture" in the *Proceedings and Transactions of the Sixth All-India Oriental Conference*, Patna, December 1930 (Patna 1933) pp. 507-508.

The *navah samudriyah* (Rig, I. 25, 7) or sea-going vessels need not be taken as referring to the Western Ocean alone but to the Eastern as well.

Altogether, the Eastern origins of some of the earliest strands of Vedic literature seem very plausible. It cannot be reasonable to look upon North-western India and the midland as the original home of the entire Vedic institutions and ideas. Eastern India, especially Magadha and Videha *i.e.* Bihar (North and South), will have to be accorded a due place in the making of the Vedic culture-complex.

While acknowledging the debts of Aryan or Vedic culture to Eastern India it should at the same time be reasonable to suspect that the Aryanization of Magadha (North Bihar) and Videha (South Bihar) was skin-deep.¹¹ The Aryans of the *Madhyadesa* (Kuru-Panchala) region could not but look upon the inhabitants of the *Prachyadesa*, the region to the East of the *Sadanira*¹² (Gandaki) River, as wanting in sanctity and unsuitable for the performance of sacrifices.

In much later works like the *Manu Samhita* (X, 5) Magadha and Vaideha are to be found among the "mixed castes," and described as owing their origin to *Apasada* or low birth, *e.g.* the union of a higher caste woman with a relatively lower caste man. Now *Mâgadha* literally denotes an inhabitant of Magadha and *Vaideha* an inhabitant of Videha. One can easily suspect, therefore, that in the tradition represented by Manu these regions of Eastern India are treated with contempt as being extra-Vedic or extra-

Brahmanic, perhaps semi-Vedic and semi-Brahmanic. In Manu's ethnology, again, the Lichchhavis of Vesali and the Mallas of Kusinara are Kshatriya-Vratyas. Now Kshatriya-Vratyas are Kshatriyas who became Vratyas *i.e.* lost the genuine Kshatriyahood on account of neglecting to perform the initiation (Upanayana) ceremony. In this instance, also, the suspicion is strong that these "republican" races of Eastern India, well-known in the Jataka stories relating to Sakya the Buddha's contemporaries, are treated in the hundred per cent. Vedic tradition as somewhat inferior in social status.¹³

THE PURUSA SUKTA NO INDEX TO CASTE ORIGINS OR SOCIAL ORDER

Among the indologists there is often a tendency to read into the Vedic literature some very modern *mores* and institutions. The *Purusa Sukta* (Rig Veda X 90), composed by the poet or philosopher Narayana, has been the subject of much modernistic interpretation. The castes and caste morals of recent times are alleged to be already in evidence in the Vedic formula incorporated in those verses. But, strictly speaking, neither the origins of classes or castes nor the facts of social superiority or inferiority can be discovered in that atmosphere.

At one place, the Sukta says that the Purusa's mouth became the Brahmana and at another we read that Indra and Agni sprang from the mouth. In the one case the mouth is mentioned first, but in the other instance the mouth is mentioned third, the first place being given to the mind and the second to the eye.

According to this latter arrangement, then, the Moon that springs from the

¹¹ N. Dutt: *Early History of the Spread of Buddhism* (Calcutta 1925) pp. 36-38, 81-84, H. C. Chakladar: "Eastern India and Aryavarta" in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Calcutta for March 1928.

¹² Macdonell and Keith: *Vedic Index* Vol. II, (London 1912) pp. 421-422.

¹³ R. Fick: *Die sociale Gliederung im nord-oestlichen Indien zu Budhas Zeit* (Kiel 1897), Ch. I.

mind is perhaps superior to the Sun that springs from the item that is mentioned next, namely, the eye. And, therefore, Indra and Agni are to be taken as inferior respectively to the Moon and Sun.

Further, the Sukta mentions the mouth twice but in two different positions. Similarly the feet are mentioned twice and this, again, in two different ways. In the first instance, the feet occupy the fourth place and the Sudra is supposed to have been sprung from them. In the second instance the feet have the seventh place and from there arose the earth. In the first instance, the feet are the last to be mentioned, but in the second instance the feet have precedence before the ear, which is the eighth in order.

In the Sukta, again, at one point the breath of the Purusa gives rise to the god of wind. But at another point the air arose from the navel. In other words, the gods of wind and air are two different categories with two independent origins, and these are as different as the breath and the navel.

On the face of it, the enumeration should be treated as indiscriminate. If the authors of the *Purusa-Sukta* are to be credited with a certain amount of coherent thinking, logical order or sense of system we shall have to understand them as having propounded a dogma of precedence or pre-eminence in which the navel (and correspondingly the air) is superior to the head (and correspondingly, the sky), the head (sky) as superior to the feet (earth), and feet (earth) as superior to the ear (four quarters). And, again, as already indicated above, the mind (moon) should be superior to the eye (sun), the eye (sun) superior to the mouth (Indra and Agni), and the mouth (Indra and Agni) superior to the breath (god of wind).

Unless the navel be conceded to be superior to the head, and the feet superior to the ear,—simply because the authors have cared to mention these items in that order,—the Brahmana cannot be superior to the Râjanya and the Vaisya to the Sudra. One is not at liberty to have two or three different logics in one and the same Sukta. We find that the items have been mentioned in a very haphazard manner. The string of names that we come across here does not constitute a system in any sense. Neither the students of astronomy nor of physics would be inclined to fight over the “value” or the significance to be attached to the place assigned to the natural agencies, the air, the sky, the earth and the four quarters in the Sukta schedule. No value ought, therefore, to be reasonably attached to the order in which the Brâhmana, the Râjanya etc. have been mentioned in this “award” of the *Rig Veda*. The question of the precedence or superiority of some in relation to the others cannot be said to arise in the enumeration, illogical and incoherent as it is.

The chief value of the *Purusa Sukta* consists in the fact that the social category Sudra is already known. But it does not say anything about his relations *vis à vis* the other social categories. Nor do we know anything about the relations of the other categories *vis à vis* one another.

Other “Vedic” texts, e.g. *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas* may perhaps be cited for approaches to the conditions as understood by the caste system. But the *Purusa Sukta* cannot be interpreted to yield anything like that.

The social condition of the castes described in the Buddhist *Jatakas* and *Vinaya* or in the *Dharmasastras* is not to be projected into the *milieu* of the *Purusa-Sukta*.

The *Purusa-Sukta* makes it clear incidentally that the *Sudra* is not a non-Aryan. Or even if he be a non-Aryan the Aryan has already accepted him as a member of his own societal organization.

THE VAISYA IN THE TAITTIRIYA "SOCIAL AWARD"

Certain phrases are often quoted from the Vedic encyclopædia to seemingly fortify the dogma of the alleged social inequalities or of superiority and inferiority among the four orders. The *Taittiriya Samhita* (VII, 1, i) furnishes an illustration of the "social award" as embodied in the caste system. But there we are told simply that one (the Brahmana) is the "chief" and another (the Kshatriya) is "strong" and so forth. It is not possible to wring out of that passage the idea that one is superior to or enjoys precedence over the other. The only social philosophy that can be discovered here is that each one is somebody in one's own field.

We need not forget that the Vaisya who is described there as "fit to be eaten" is likewise somebody in his own field. Nay, the *Sudra*, who is dependent on others, is "not created after any gods" and is "not fit for the sacrifice" is also important enough to be regarded as somebody. His position in the social economy is at least equal to that of the horse, as we are told. Thus the question of inferiority in the cases of the Vaisya and the *Sudra* cannot come in automatically. We are to understand from the *Taittiriya Samhita* award simply that each serves a distinct function in the social complex.

But perhaps the *Taittiriya Samhita* already relegates the *Sudra* to a relatively subordinate position. The *Sudra*

has been declared in this "award" to be "not fit for the sacrifice." In the cases of the other three, especially of the Kshatriya and the Vaisya no such discriminating award has been made. The social inferiority of the *Sudra* as unprivileged may therefore be taken to be an item in the Vedic thought of the period in question.

But so far as the Vaisya is concerned, we find that he does not have to *kowtow* to the others. He is of course superior to the *Sudra* and is on a par with the Kshatriya and the Brahmana. Indeed, in so far as he is fit for the sacrifices he becomes "divine" as a matter of course like the other two orders (*Satapatha Brahmana* III, 2, 1, 39-40). The dogma of social precedence is robbed of all substantial significance by this doctrine of the Vaisya's equality with the Brâhmana and the Kshatriya.¹⁴

Nay, the *Taittiriya* is quite aware of the Vaisya's special rôle in the social economy. We are told that the Vaisyas were "more numerous than the others, for they were created after the most numerous of the gods." It is implied that the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas who are not superior to the Vaisyas have, however, in point of numbers to yield the palm to the latter. And as the Vaisya represents the factor "to be eaten" like the cow, another item created along with him, the importance of the economic element appears to have been seized by the authors of the *Taittiriya* school or period.

(To be concluded)

¹⁴ B. K. Sarkar: "On some Methods and Conclusions in Hindu Politics" in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Calcutta, December 1926, pp. 859-861.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

By PROF. B. N. GHOSH, M.Sc.

Twentieth century is an age of enormous and intensive developments in science. A man of the street knows science only by its industrial application. He supposes that scientists are ever engaged in preparing for the people dynamos and engines, wireless telegraphic and telephonic instruments, machine guns, and aeroplanes. It is because nowadays people in general have a great attachment to the material things of the world, which has developed insatiable greed, national egoism, discontent, and ruthless exploitation of the weak by the strong. These scientific researches, which do not bring material wealth and power to this world, is supposed to be of no importance by the general public. Dr. Norwood, the famous headmaster of Harrow, very recently said that the danger and unrest of the present age is due to the reason that the present system of education is not based on religion. Hence people, educated or uneducated, give no importance to an education which does not bring material power and wealth. It is almost forgotten that the real aim of all kinds of education is to broaden the vision, widen the outlook of life, and hold before the students noble ideals which would lift their minds from the unreal and take them to reality. The scientific age has thus been converted to a machine age, which has made this world unhappy.

It is genuinely believed by many that scientific researches are mainly responsible for the world-wide problem of unemployment, and it is suggested by some that there should be a moratorium

on scientific investigations for some time. But if we think dispassionately, we will at once understand that scientific discoveries are not at all the cause of unemployment. Scientific discoveries suggest devices of saving time and labour, and if we all aim to adjust the economic and industrial conditions of the world in such a way that all will get more leisure but none will suffer from unemployment, scientific discoveries will be the greatest blessing to the world. It will help people to finish the work of the material world in a short time, and people, in general, will have more time to study religious scriptures, which will help them in the realization of the truth.

People nowadays are in a hysteric frenzy as to how to increase their creature comforts, and thereby they have almost descended to the level of lower animals to whom if a bone be thrown, there will be an incessant fighting till all the weak are thrown to the wall and only the one who has physical strength enjoys the whole of the bone. All the confusion and chaos of the present world are due to the general inclination of the modern man to give more importance to the animal in man than to the divine in him, hence the love for sense enjoyment is continually increasing at the cost of self-sacrifice, self-control, modesty, and other divine qualities, which are deemed, according to all the principal religious teachings of the world, to be the qualities for liberation, the highest ideal of man.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. E. A. H. Waller, Bishop of Madras, in the course of an

outspoken address at the Secunderabad Y.M.C.A., has rightly pointed out that a system of education divorced from religion is not fit to turn out a complete man, and all the chaos, danger, and unrest of the present world is due to the deficiency of religious education in the people on account of which all kinds of good knowledge are being utilized in satisfying the insatiable greed for material wealth. Everyone is busy hoarding up as much of wealth as possible at the cost of starving millions, and this desire of the human being has upset the equilibrium of the world.

It is opined, in certain quarters that in India—a country of diverse beliefs—religious teaching in educational institutions would present great difficulty; but if we study and compare the teachings of the principal religions of the world, we will find that they have many things in common. Sri Ramakrishna has practically followed different religions and has come to the conclusion: “Religion, however, is one: it has been so from all times, and it shall be so for ever.”¹ In the sixteenth discourse of the *Gita*, the Blessed Lord said,² “Fearlessness, cleanness of life, self-restraint, sacrifice and study of the scripture, austerity and straightforwardness, harmlessness, absence of crookedness, compassion to living beings, uncovetedness, mildness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of envy and pride—these are his who is born with the divine properties, O Bhârata.”

“Hypocrisy, arrogance, and conceit, wrath and also harshness and unwisdom are his who is born, O Pârtha, with demoniacal properties.”

¹ Studies in Universal Religion, Ramakrishna, by M. N. Chatterjee.

² Bhagavad-Gita translated into English by Dr. Annie Besant.

“The divine properties are deemed to be for liberation, the demoniacal for bondage.”

Compare these teachings with the teachings of Christ given in the holy Bible or with those of Islam given in the holy Qoran or with the teachings of any other principal religion of the world. They will be found to be essentially the same. The only teaching that is to be given to the students on the basis of religion is that “The purpose and end of existence is to be fellow members in living well, in creating a common life as noble as we can make it. There are rules for right living which are quite definitely ascertainable, not only based on the experience of the races and the authority of our ancestors but themselves in conformity with reason and justice.”³

Science, which is the investigation of the natural phenomenon, helps one a good deal to lead a righteous life, if one only understands the deep meaning of the natural laws investigated by the great scientists.

Sri Ramakrishna says, “‘This is gold’ and ‘This is brass,’ ignorance sayeth so. But the true knowledge sayeth, ‘All is gold that is, all is God, and when one seeth the Lord, one ceaseth to discriminate.’”⁴

The most modern researches in science conducted by J. J. Thomson, Rutherford, and Bohr have shown that atoms of all elements are made up of electrons which revolve round the protons like planets. Thus science teaches that all matter in this world is made up of essentially the same thing, namely, the proton and the electron, and thus teaches to cease discrimination. Two of the most general laws of science—

³ Dr. Norwood’s speech.

⁴ Studies in Universal Religion, Ramakrishna by M. N. Chatterjee.

laws which all the phenomena in the universe obey—are “the law of the conservation of mass and the law of the conservation of energy.” According to these scientific laws, it is beyond the power of human being to create or destroy energy or mass—the two cardinal, and in fact, the sole elements of the universe. What a great religious teaching the laws are! They show and prove experimentally that the creator and the preserver of everything in this world is God—the All-powerful. The great scientists who have discovered these important laws of nature are the true believers in God. If the students of science learn these laws keeping in view the deep meanings of these laws, they will no doubt be God-fearing and religious citizens of the world.

The theory of Relativity developed by Albert Einstein says that energy is not weightless, because it has a definite mass. The mass of energy is, however, very small, and hence energy was for a long time regarded as a weightless fluid. But now, by the development of the scientific researches, it has been proved beyond doubt that energy has mass. The relation between energy and mass is expressed in another way, “Every mass is the seat of energy.” To find the energy which corresponds to one gram of any body we must multiply its mass by the stupendous number equal to the square of the velocity of light. One gram of matter thus represents the energy of nine thousand milliard of kilogram meters. Now the question arises: if it is really so, if we have energy all around us, why do we toil and labour to dig coal from the interior of the earth for the supply of energy? The energy enclosed in a small piece of copper would suffice to drive monster ships along the ocean or to set in motion the largest fly-wheel in the largest factory of the world. It is

because the inexhaustible energy stored in the material all round us has remained up till now beyond our reach. We do not know how to set free these vast resources of energy. It appears to me that it is not the will of the Almighty God that the method of releasing these energies be known to men of this age when the world is in such a great chaos. Scientists have, however, good reason to believe that in the enormous laboratory of the universe, perhaps at the high temperature of the stars, lumps of matter lose their mass, which become transformed into energy.

So science has discarded the differentiation between matter and energy, and says that everything in this world represents a store of enormous energy. Does not this piece of scientific research give the same teaching as all religious scriptures do by saying, “Everything that thou seest, O pupil, is but the power, the attribute of the Lord. Everything in this world is illusion, the only reality is All Powerful.”

Scientists are the seekers of truth. They spend their life in an effort to unveil the mysteries of Nature—the creation of God. As there is but one truth, all investigation of the truth, whether it be through the material bodies or by having direct communion with God, will lead to the same result. Even the simplest scientific law, namely, the law of gravitation, discovered by Newton, shows that attraction between matter and matter is but natural. When inanimate objects attract each other with such a great affection, there is no reason why human beings, who are supposed to be rational beings, should not take lesson from them and love each other. Imagine the condition, if the sun which is the storehouse of energy, refuses to exert its power of attraction towards other heavenly bodies in the cosmos, equilibrium will

be lost and destruction will be the result. Similarly hatred and selfishness in human being is daily taking the world more and more towards destruction. Prevost's theory of exchanges shows that it is but natural that bodies, which have got more power, energy, or wealth, whatever you call it, should impart it to those who are poor; otherwise there will be no equilibrium. Quite the reverse of this natural principle is being followed by the capitalists of this world, who are trying to accumulate as much wealth as possible at the expense of the poor, and this is the real cause of the miseries of the world, which are daily increasing as this tendency is increasing more and more.

Consider for a moment what will happen if the sun refuses to give its energy to the earth and other heavenly bodies in the cosmos and stores up all its energy in a strong box which nobody can break open and at the same time tries to rob the energy of other bodies by its great power. It is quite plain that the whole creation will come to an end and destruction is inevitable.

Exactly the same will be the effect if money and power is accumulated by a few in this world and the majority are allowed to starve. If capitalists only understood the principle, on which the machines, with which they are earning, depend, they will never venture to do what they are doing. Principles of science and principles of religion are not different as both of them are investigations of the truth.

Let us then not be beguiled by supposing that the aim of science is to manufacture machine guns, aeroplanes, and poisonous gases for the destruction of the world, but these contrivances should only be used for the protection of the good and the destruction of the evil doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, and this can only be done if scientific and religious education are imparted side by side. Let us not suppose that it is the aim of science to manufacture various kinds of machinery for the ruthless exploitation of the poor by the rich, but they are only contrivances for saving time and labour, so that in this short life we may have more time for acquiring true knowledge. Scientists have shown that the laws of nature are the same for all and have no distinction for caste, creed, or colour and they are such as to establish harmony in the universe by mutual attraction and partaking of the wealth between the rich and the poor. Through the development and progress of modern science we become ever more profoundly sensible of the disparity between wealth and abundance of reality around us and the limitations and poverty of our comprehension. True scientists are untrammelled by the rampant commercialism of the present age and always freely pursue the trial of truth wherever it may lead; and if people, like these scientists, be the seekers of truth and reality, this world is sure to be transformed into heaven.

THE CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

BY SWAMI AKHILANANDA

Some time ago, a lady came to our place for certain business reasons, and in the course of our talk she asked, "Do the Hindus worship the same God as we do? And the Chinese, do they worship the same God?" My answer was that I did not know any religion that did not worship the same God. Then I took her around our temple and showed her the inscriptions on our walls to prove that all religions were worshipping the same God. Many persons have such ideas about other religions due to their ignorance. When we study different religions without any preconceived notions, then we know them properly; consequently we appreciate them.

Mohammedanism was founded on the life and teachings of Mohammed, just as Christianity was founded on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. In the sixth century, 561 A.D. was his birth date. He used to call his religion Islam. Islam means resignation to the will of God. It is the way of living.

Mohammedanism in general has more than one conception of God like the Jewish conception of God. It is an offshoot of Judaism just as Christianity is. Mohammedans believe that God is separate from us and that we are His children and creatures. We are His lovers, but we cannot approach Him if we deviate from the will of God and if we live disharmonious lives. According to the Mohammedans, a man suffers or enjoys according to his own actions. Like other religions Islam emphasizes a right way of living.

From their conception of God the Mohammedans have established a uni-

versal brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. They treat all members of their religion equally regardless of their position. You do not find such an expression of brotherhood of man in any other religion. They believe in the equality of man. The Mohammedans do not observe any caste system whatsoever. An Emperor and a commoner will not only worship together, but they will also have their social functions together without any hesitancy.

An idea, generally expressed by our Western friends, is that the conception of God according to Mohammed is a God of vengeance. But when we read the Koran and other Mohammedan scriptures we find that they greatly emphasize the love of God and compassion of God. The Mohammedans accept only one God and regard Mohammed as the Prophet of God. They differ from the Christians in the conception of Jesus as the Son of God. According to the Koran, Jesus is the apostle of God and not the Son of God. They wholly reject the trinitarian idea of God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. They emphasize the unity of God. Mohammed says, "Believe then in God and the apostles and say not Three." He was against the use of symbols.

The Mohammedans developed another school of thought, Sufi-ism. It does not give the Monotheistic conception of God. It is more or less Pantheistic. Some of these Sufis give us the Monistic idea of God. They teach the identity of soul and God, or over-soul. "The Self is the deity" is the declara-

tion of the Sufis. They have highly developed mystical practices. They are the true lovers of God. They have certain methods for communing with God or for realizing the identity of soul and God. Sufi mystics are practical in their religious methods: Give up the pleasures of the world, then you can commune with God. The Sufi mystics are very broad and Catholic. Some Mohammedan scholars think, Sufi-ism originated even during the lifetime of the Prophet. Other thinkers are of opinion that Sufi-ism was influenced by Vedânta (Hinduism) and Neo-Platonism.

Now let us consider the other extreme form of Religion, that is Buddhism. Buddhism is the only religion in the world which is purely agnostic. Once a disciple of Buddha asked him, "Am I to understand that there is no God? Is there no God?" He replied, "I did not say that there is not and I did not say that there is." The position of the Buddhist is that Reality is so infinite that it cannot be said that it is or is not. There is a great philosophical discussion about that. "I cannot say He is, nor can I say He is not." That is the position of the Buddhists. Buddha said: What is the use of speculating about the existence of God? Live the right life. You will then know what really is. But the modern Buddhists place Buddha just in the place of Jesus or Krishna. The Buddhists worship Buddha for all practical purposes just as you worship Jesus or as the Hindus worship Krishna and others. Buddhism teaches us that one can reach the highest state of consciousness even without thinking of any personal aspect of God.

Buddha declared four great truths: there is suffering; and there is a cause of suffering; that cause can be eliminated; and there is a way to the cessation of suffering and consequently to abiding happiness.

The path that leads to abiding happiness is eightfold: right comprehension, right resolutions, right speech, right actions, right living, right efforts, right thought, and right state of peaceful mind. These are the methods of avoiding suffering. The suffering of man is due to desires. Is not this also the substance of the teachings of Christ? It is Buddha who says, "Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good, let him overcome greed by liberality, the liar by truth. Hatred ceases by love." The moment you remove your selfishness, wrong thoughts, and feelings, that very moment you enter into Nirvâna. This word Nirvâna is greatly misunderstood by our Western friends. They say it is negative and pessimistic. Nirvâna is not a negative state. It is the most positive experience. This is the highest attainment of consciousness, or the culmination of consciousness. In that state sorrows and sufferings completely cease to exist. The Buddhists lay great emphasis on the ethical life.

I would like to say a word in connection with Buddhism. It does not make people negative. Buddhists are not a group of dull and inert persons. During the days of Buddhist civilization they had all the cultural activities. Science, painting, art, sculpture, and literature were all greatly developed by Buddhist kings or monks. In fact, Buddhist monks actually civilized Asia as well as part of Europe. So they were not all dreamers or pessimistic persons as we are often told by Western friends. If Buddhism is pessimistic, then Christianity is equally so.

Now let us understand Taoism. Taoism was founded by Laotze. He was born in China in the sixth century B.C., and was a contemporary of Confucius. According to Laotze, Tao is The Great. Tao is the great

Eternal Being, the Infinite, Bodiless, Beginningless, Endless, and Nameless. Laotze says in his book, that because Tao is nameless, we cannot give him any name, so we call Him The Great. Because he is infinite he cannot be defined. Tao is one. He was in the beginning and He will remain for ever. He is prior to Ti (Personal God).

Tao is the actual cause of this universe. This world is in a mysterious way the manifestation of that infinite Tao. There is a very logical principle behind this expression. How this world came into being cannot be explained but we can understand that there is only one being and that is Tao, the Great. Taoists developed certain wonderfully practical methods to realize Tao. They give us certain breathing exercises and other practices to keep the mind quiet. The main point emphasized by the Taoists is to make the mind free from all waves and ripples—disturbances. These practices are more or less like the Rája Yoga practices of the Hindus. Taoism is also very mystical and highly ethical. It seems that many Westerners do not understand the philosophical aspect of this religion. But a Hindu can easily understand and enjoy Taoism—its philosophy and practices. Though Taoism teaches Tao (principle), yet it advocates symbols and substitutes for the training of undeveloped persons.

Taoism does not make one lazy and negative as it is often accused of doing. The Taoists also had a highly developed civilization including all the cultural activities.

Let us now study Hindu religion. Hinduism is not the proper expression for this religion. It should be Vedântism because the Hindus follow the teachings of Vedânta. Vedânta forms a part of the Vedas. The Vedas are the accumulated treasures of spiritual laws and religious truths discovered by

different great spiritual leaders at different times. Hinduism is not based on any one particular personality as other religions are. Nevertheless, the Hindus understand and appreciate the place of great spiritual personalities in religion. They are the highest manifestation of Divinity in human form. But for these personalities we would not have understood anything about God. They are as if the connecting link between the Infinite and man. They show us the methods of God-realization.

From the highest impersonal conception of God to the undeveloped symbol worship, each and every conception has a place in the religion of the Hindus. According to them there cannot be *the* conception of God. Every man comprehends God in his own way, and realizes God by following his own method. The peculiarity of the Hindus is this: they do not condemn any of the methods of divine realization. On the other hand, they preserve them for the persons suited to them. Moreover, Hindus say that Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, or Hinduism are all the different methods of Religious unfoldment. According to the Hindus there is only one God. "Truth is One, Men call It by various names." And that Truth or God is understood, realized, and comprehended by different types of people in different ways. They have three distinct schools of thought, Dualism, Qualified Non-dualism, and Non-dualism. I have no time to explain them elaborately.

Hindus are not polytheists. A friend of mine sent me a book by a very eminent missionary of this country with the request that I first look through this book and then speak on this subject. It amused me very much. How grossly these missionaries misunderstand the symbols of other religions! It seems that when they themselves use a symbol

it is all right, nay, it is the only symbol. But if anyone else takes another symbol signifying the same spirit, it is all wrong. The Lord alone knows the logic behind it!

Many of our Western friends do not understand the meaning of the symbols of the Hindus, and they think the Hindus worship different Gods. The Hindus know that they worship the same One in His various aspects in and through different symbols. We use symbols very extensively. Moreover, we say that they are absolutely necessary for the vast majority of persons in all religions. In fact, the great religions do use different symbols in their own ways for the religious growth.

We all understand that you can come into this room through different doors. All these doors are leading into the same room. Similarly, we can approach God through different doors—the different religions. They are the different angles of vision. So the Hindus use different symbols and different methods, which are the different ways of understanding and realizing the Truth—God.

We know that an ordinary man cannot comprehend God without certain concrete expressions and illustrations, without certain concrete symbols. Perhaps a few can dispense with symbols and substitutes, but they are few and far between in the world. A personal God, according to the Hindus, is the highest understanding of that Impersonal Being. When man tries to comprehend the Impersonal Being with the help of the human mind, he associates human attributes to Him. Man takes a personal God or symbol due to psychological necessity. We say, there is one Infinite, but there are different under-

standings, experiences, of the same Infinite.

According to the Hindus, man is divine. His true nature is eternal. Due to ignorance he feels limitations. In fact, he is one with Existence. In the light of this teaching, we actually understand the ideas of Jesus when he says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Love your fellow-beings, love all creatures. If we could only understand the oneness of life and existence, we could remove many of our national and international troubles, social and industrial troubles, as well as religious troubles.

Hindus give various practices to the different types of persons for their divine realization. In fact, Hindus feel that man does not really become religious unless he has supersensuous experiences. These experiences, or Samâdhi, can be attained by us only when we follow methods that are according to our inner tendencies. These are innumerable practices which are generally classified into four distinct methods as given by the Hindu teachers: the path of devotion and love, the path of unselfish action, the path of introspection and discrimination, and the path of meditation and mental control. If we follow one or more of these methods we are sure to reach God. They greatly emphasize the ethical principles of life. In fact one cannot follow the above mentioned methods properly unless one is thoroughly established in the higher principles of ethics. This Samâdhi is a positive blissful state.

The Hindu view of the divinity of man has tremendous value in our present-day civilization. This is one of the greatest contributions of the Hindus to this distressed world.

SPIRITUAL TRAINING

By DUNCAN GREENLEES, M.A. (Oxon.)

Man is a spirit, and as such has four desires. The religions all agree in this, though they may use different names and veil the truth in various ways. Man desires *experience*, to *work* for human uplift, to *pay* his debts to Nature, and to *seek* the Real, the Eternal, which is God.

Under these four heads we shall consider the spiritual education of the child, which is of supreme importance. Yet let us beware how we speak of these things to the pupil in clear words, for his child-mind will not understand us, and he will either be bored or, through pretending an interest he cannot feel, be led into hypocrisy.

EXPERIENCE. Lord of the inner worlds where he has his home, man comes forth as an adventurer to conquer this outer world of ours. He wills to know and rule the mind, heart, body, so that he may attain perfection and blossom forth as the Lord of all.

Entering realms strange and foreign to him, he needs two qualities, fearlessness and faith. *Courage* is required when he darkens his spiritual eye with the confusions of gross matter, and faces the unknown as a helpless human being lost in ignorance. *Faith* is required if he would rely wholly on the guidance of the mentor hidden in his heart.

In order to gain the fullness of every experience, to draw the honey from life's every flower, man must be continually aware in search of understanding. This leads to introspection, which must however be held in bounds, lest it isolate him from true contact with his neighbours.

SERVICE, to "make the world a little happier, a little better, than he found it." This demands a bubbling source of *energy* within the heart, and a plenitude of living *sympathy* with all. Only thus can a man know how to help, by "putting himself in the rags of the needy," and seeing things through his eyes. Only thus can he be strong and patient to endure in service to the end, despite the scorn of the worldly and ambitious, and the misunderstanding of those whom he would serve. So he must keep in his heart a sense of the privilege of being allowed to help another, and treasure always the sense of his equality with all. One who tries to condescend can never help another; his pride creates an impassable barrier. Giving equal honour to mental, manual and menial labour, he will be free of the childishness of caste pride. Thorough preparation for his work will give him efficiency in service, and self-discipline will enable him to do what he can quietly, without desire for reward or recognition.

REPAYMENT of the debt he owes for the bodies Nature has given him, for his education, food and covering; and repayment of the debts brought down from the past, can only be made by *readiness to serve* all with a joyous sense of adventure. His parents' and teachers' kindness he can return to the future generation; his debt to Society can be paid only by the utmost carrying out of every duty life may bring to him, incurring no enmity, checking all evil thoughts in his own mind, adhering to absolutely unwavering truth and honour, devoted wholly

to the helping of mankind to grow in freedom.

SEARCH. Taking the conscience, his inner sense of what is right and true, as his supreme Guide, the student will learn to look for lesser authorities only where this is silent. Then the Scriptures and teachings of Religion and the Law will fall into their proper place, and he will obey them gladly whenever the conscience can approve.

Having glimpsed the right, the way of duty, he will follow that clinging to *sincerity* whatever happens. His promise given, he will keep it though death itself may threaten him; if he has promised ill, he will frankly say so to the recipient, and beg to be excused. Without a passionate, an almost mad, adherence to the truth he has already seen, none can advance upon the path which leads to the supreme eternal TRUTH, "from whence we came, to which we shall return."

Such is the height of spiritual learning, out of which the student must select all that he can use in his *own* daily life. This, which is the very heart of Education, the "harmonious development of the Individual in

Society," can only come from personally living in day-to-day intimate contact with a real Guru. No teaching of theory will do, no lectures or moral stories. From the Teacher's very being it must filter in into the student's own mind and soul; and that will happen, if there be a real, living sympathy, a union of hearts between them. This is the formation of character, the essence of true education; if of it we cannot give even a little, then we had better have no schools or pupils at all, for all teaching without this is poison.

Bhajans, Kathâs and prayers, recitation of the *Quran*, *Gîtâ* or Gospel, will only help if the teacher, the reciter, is a real *man*, a man of God, a Brahman in the fullest sense; otherwise, they had better be avoided, for they will only lead to superstition and hypocrisy. And in the presence of a real Teacher, these are of little value, for his mere presence and the power of his daily conduct, an example gladly imitated by the earnest student, will lead him

from the unreal to the Real,
from darkness into Light,
from death to Immortality.

WHERE DO WE GO TO ?

BY BHIKKHU SUVRATA

Where does man go after death?—is one of the deep problems that have been troubling humanity from the very dawn of creation. In our workaday life we are too much engrossed with our affairs. But suddenly we find one of us has dropped down in harness, and then the questions perturb us, "Where has he gone?" "What is the meaning of this life?" "What is the end of all this struggle, we are inces-

santly undergoing?" "If death be the end of all, why shall our life all struggle be?" But such is the influence of *Mâyâ* that such questions do not perplex us long. Or else we could not continue the routine work of our life; we would become "other-worldly," as the phrase goes; we would become unfit to live in the world or society. Like the north gate of the Indian fairy tale, which was forbidden for the newly arrived prince

to enter, many of us go on plodding with the drudgery of our daily life, carefully stifling all thoughts and considerations about death.

But can we at all avoid death thereby? No. Amidst all the uncertainties of the world, death is the only thing which is certain. Some people will not stir even their little finger, unless they can fathom the deep meaning of this problem of 'life and death.' They will solve this problem first, and then set themselves to work. These people outwardly seem to be crazy, but they are, in fact, the salt of the earth. It is they who come to our rescue, when our life becomes stranded or humanity suffers a shipwreck on the shoals of life. It has been truly said, meditation on death is a great help to reach God.

It is interesting to note how, from the very beginning of creation, many people, belonging to different climes and nationalities, have approached this problem. We find a gradual development in the idea of death, as humanity has progressed in the scale of civilization, i.e. has become less and less attached to enjoyment and selfishness. Many of us hanker after enjoyment and fear suffering. So we begin to think that good deeds will lead us to enjoyment in the life to come and bad deeds to sufferings and miseries, till at last a race of men began to think that merit is as much an illusion as demerit, enjoyment is as much unreal as sorrows, life is as much meaningless as death; for, man is above all these dual things, man is Brahman, man is that Eternal Existence which is the substratum of this universe.

According to the Christian beliefs, man after death will remain in the grave till the judgment-day, when the universe will come to an end and God will send the sinners to eternal hell and the pious to everlasting heaven.

To some extent, similar is the idea of heaven and hell according to the followers of Islam. In the Mohammedan religion there are very gorgeous descriptions of the enjoyments in heaven. According to Zoroastrianism, a good soul travels, after death, for three days and nights, and at each night "tastes as much of pleasure as the whole of the living world can taste", till on the dawn of the fourth day, it attains Good-Deed-Heaven, where there is the culmination of luxury. In the opposite way, an evil soul passes three days and nights and at each night "tastes as much of the suffering as the whole of the living world can taste", and then on the fourth day the soul finds itself in to "Evil-Thought-Hell." According to the Zendavesta also these heavens and hells are everlasting. Now the very idea that we shall be damned to eternal sufferings makes our heart recoil. We ask ourselves, "Why such an absurd punishment? Even according to human law, man is not given eternal perdition without any chance of betterment. Is Divine justice more cruel than human?" If we think deeply over these things, we very often begin to doubt whether they are not the concoction of imaginative minds. In the primitive stage such ideas of heaven and hell could stimulate a man to virtuous deeds and prevent him from falling into evil paths; but in an age, when critical spirit of man is immensely developed, they are hardly sufficient to lead us Godward.

According to Hindu ideas, life after death is determined by our Karmas and desires: we come again and again to this earth or to the spheres where the desires may be fulfilled or Karma can work out; when all the desires are destroyed, we get final freedom, becoming one with Brahman, who has

got no desire or is beyond the pale of Karma.

According to the Upanishads, those persons who have attained Brahman in this very life, become one with Brahman after the dissolution of this body. Those who perform good deeds, but with desires, take to the Pitri-yâna (path of the manes) and go to the Lunar Sphere (Chandra-loka), where they enjoy the fruits of their good deeds. After that they come again to this earth. Those persons, who perform good deeds without any attachment and meditate on Brahman, take to the Deva-yâna (way of the gods) and go to Brahma-loka, where they remain in contemplation of God till the end of the Cycle, when they will be merged in Brahman. Those who do nothing but evil, are born, according to the Upanishads, as insects and worms, plants and trees, etc., till the effects of their evil deeds wear off and a fresh opportunity presents itself for them to improve their life. In the different Upanishads there are various details of the Deva-yâna and Pitri-yâna. Sometimes the Upanishads differ in the description of these details, and attempts have been made to bring about a consistency amongst them. The main things are, as has been said in the *Gîtâ*, those who follow the Deva-yâna pass through fire, flame, day-time, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern passage of the sun, till they go to Brahma-loka; and those who have to take to the Pitri-yâna, pass through smoke, night-time, the dark fortnight, the six months of the southern passage till they attain to the Lunar Sphere. Now, what do these fire, flame, smoke, night, etc. mean? Various interpretations have been given to them, some of which it may not be possible for

the modern minds to believe in. According to some, fire etc. indicate the different spheres, through which the soul travels. According to Swami Vivekananda, these different spheres denote the different planes of consciousness, as we go to or away from Brahman, which is nothing but our own Self.

One thing very significant about all these things is that, so long as we have desires we cannot escape these rounds of life and death. However much we may enjoy by going to the Lunar Sphere—corresponding to Heaven of the Christians, there will come a time when all our enjoyments will come to an end. The best thing, therefore, is to have no desire.

The *Brahma-sutras* narrates how the last thought in our dying moments determines what kind of body we shall take in the life to come. Now, how will our last thought be determined? Is it by chance? In that case all the struggles of our life to better ourselves will be vain. So it is said, that will, as a matter of course, come as a last thought, which has been prominent in all our life. A parrot may be repeating the name of “Râma” throughout day and night, but when a cat pounces upon it, it gives out the yell of a parrot—because the thought of Râma or God has not entered deep into its life. So it is said in the *Gita*:

remember Me,
and fight with mind and intellect
absorbed in Me,
and thou shalt doubtless come to Me.”

If amidst all the activities of our daily life our thoughts turn towards God like a magnet, Him we shall remember in the dying moments, and merge in Him after death.

THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

CHAPTER IV

SECTION I

In this chapter the result of Knowledge and some other topics are taken up for discussion. In the beginning, however, a special discussion connected with the means to Knowledge is dealt with.

Topic 1: The meditation on the Atman enjoined by the scriptures is to be repeated till Knowledge is attained.

आवृत्तिः, असकृदुपदेशात् ॥ १ ॥

आवृत्तिः Repetition (is necessary) असकृत् repeated उपदेशात् on account of instructions by the scriptures.

1. The repetition (of hearing, reflection, and meditation on the teaching of the Self is necessary), on account of the repeated instruction by the scriptures.

“The Self, my dear Maitreyi, should be realized—should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon” (Brih. 2.4.5). “The intelligent aspirant after Brahman, knowing about this alone, should attain intuitive knowledge” (Brih. 2.4.21). The question arises whether what is enjoined in this is to be done once only or repeatedly. The opponent holds that it is to be observed once only, even as sacrifices like Prayâja are to be performed once only to yield the desired result. This Sutra refutes the view and says that the hearing etc. must be repeated till there is intuition of Brahman. Of course, if the knowledge of Brahman is attained by a single act, it is well and good; otherwise the necessity of repetition till the Knowledge dawns. It is repetition of these acts that finally leads to intuition. The case of the Prayâja is not to the point. For there the result is Adrishta, which yields fruit at some particular future time. Here the result is directly perceived, and so, if the result is not there, the process must be repeated till the result is seen. Moreover scriptural texts like the first one cited above give repeated instruction, thereby signifying the repetition of the means. Again ‘meditation’ and ‘reflection’ imply a repetition of the mental act, for when we say, ‘he meditates on it’, we imply the continuity of the act of remembrance of the object. Similarly with respect to ‘reflection’. It follows, therefore, that there must be repetition of the instruction. This holds good even in those cases where the texts do not give instruction repeatedly, as for example, in the second text cited above.

लिङ्गाच्च ॥ २ ॥

लिङ्गात् On account of the indicatory mark च and.

2. And on account of the indicatory mark.

“Reflect upon the rays, and you will have many sons” (Chh. 1.5.2). This text prescribes repeated meditation by asking to meditate on the Udgitha as the rays instead of as the sun. And what holds good in this case is equally applicable to other meditations also. And it is not true that repetition is not necessary. If it were so, the Sruti would not have taught the truth of the statement ‘Thou art that’ repeatedly. There may be people who are so advanced, and so little attached to the world of sense objects, that in their case a single hearing of the statement may result in Knowledge. But generally such advanced souls are very rare. Ordinary people, who are deeply rooted in the idea of the body and the senses, do not realize the truth by a single enunciation of it. This wrong notion of theirs goes only through repeated practice of the truth, and it is only then that Knowledge dawns. So repetition has the effect of removing this wrong notion gradually, till even the last trace of it is removed. When the body consciousness is completely removed, the Self manifests Itself in all purity.

Topic 2: In the meditations on the Highest Brahman the meditator is to comprehend It as identical with himself.

आत्मेति तूपगच्छन्ति ग्राहयन्ति च ॥ ३ ॥

आत्मा-इति As the self तु but उपगच्छन्ति acknowledge ग्राहयन्ति teach च also.

3. But (Sruti texts) acknowledge (Brahman) as the self (of the meditator) and also teach others (to realize It as such).

The question whether Brahman is to be comprehended by the individual soul as identical with it or separate from it, is taken up for discussion. The opponent holds that Brahman is to be comprehended as different from the individual soul on account of their essential difference, for one is subject to misery, while the other is not. This Sutra refutes the view and holds that Brahman is to be comprehended as identical with one’s self, for in reality the two are identical, the experience of misery etc. by the individual soul—in other words, the Jivahood—being due to the limiting adjunct, the internal organ. (*Vide 2.3.5 ante.*). For instance the Jâbâlas acknowledge it. “I am, indeed Thou, O Lord, and Thou art indeed myself.” Other scriptural texts also say the same thing: “I am Brahman” (Brih. 1.4.10); “This self is the Brahman” (Mân. 2). These texts are to be taken in their primary, and not secondary sense, as in “The mind is Brahman” (Chh. 3.18.1), where the text presents mind as a symbol for contemplation.

Hence we have to meditate on Brahman as being the self.

Topic 3: Where symbols of Brahman are used for contemplation, the meditator is not to comprehend them as identical with him.

न प्रतीके, न हि सः ॥ ४ ॥

न Not प्रतीके in the symbol न is not हि because सः he.

4. (The meditator is) not (to see the self) in the symbol, because he not (is that).

“The mind is Brahman” (Chh. 3.18.1). In such indications, where the mind is taken as a symbol of Brahman, is the meditator to identify himself

with the mind, as in the case of the meditation "I am Brahman"? The opponent holds that he should, for the mind is a product of Brahman according to Vedânta, and as such it is one with It. So is the individual soul, the meditator, one with Brahman. Hence it follows that the meditator also is one with the mind, and therefore he should see his self in the mind in this meditation also. This Sutra refutes it. In the first place, if the symbol mind is cognized as identical with Brahman, then it ceases to be a symbol, even as when we realize an ornament as gold, we forget its individual character of being an ornament. Again if the meditator is conscious of his identity with Brahman, then he ceases to be the individual soul, the meditator. The act of meditation can take place only where these distinctions exist, and unity has not been realized; and where there is knowledge of diversity, the meditator is quite distinct from the symbol. As such he is not to see his self in the symbol.

Topic 4: In meditations on symbols the latter are to be viewed as Brahman and not in the reverse way.

ब्रह्म-दृष्टिः उत्कर्षात् ॥ ५ ॥

ब्रह्म-दृष्टिः Viewing as Brahman उत्कर्षात् on account of the elevation.

5. (The symbol is) to be viewed as Brahman (and not in the reverse way) on account of the elevation (of the symbol thereby).

In meditations on symbols as in "The mind is Brahman", "The sun is Brahman" the question is whether the symbol is to be regarded as Brahman, or Brahman as the symbol. The Sutra says that the symbols, mind and the sun, are to be regarded as Brahman and not *vice versa*. Because it is only by looking upon an inferior thing as a superior thing that we can progress, and not in the reverse way. Inasmuch as our aim is to get rid of the idea of differentiation and see Brahman in everything, we have to meditate upon these symbols as That.

Topic 5: In meditations on members of sacrificial acts the idea of the divinity is to be superimposed on the member and not vice versa.

आदित्यादिमतयश्चाङ्गे उपपत्तेः ॥ ६ ॥

आदित्यादि-मतयः The ideas of the sun etc. च and चङ्गे in a subordinate member (of the sacrificial acts) उपपत्तेः because of consistency.

6. And the ideas of the sun etc. (are to be superimposed) on the subordinate members (of sacrificial acts), because (in that way alone would the statement of the scriptures) be consistent.

"One ought to meditate upon that which shines yonder as the Udgitha" (Chh. 1.3.1); "One ought to meditate upon the Sâman as fivefold" etc. (Chh. 2.2.1). In meditations connected with sacrificial acts as given in the texts quoted, how is the meditation to be observed. For example, in the first cited text, is the sun to be viewed as the Udgitha, or the Udgitha as the sun? Between

the Udgitha and the sun there is nothing to show which is superior, as in the previous Sutra, where Brahman being pre-eminent, the symbol was viewed as Brahman. This Sutra says that members of the sacrificial act, as here the Udgitha, are to be viewed as the sun and so on. Because by so doing the fruit of the sacrificial act is enhanced, as scriptures say. If we view the Udgitha as the sun, it undergoes a certain ceremonial purification and thereby contributes to the Apurva, the invisible fruit of the whole sacrifice. But by the reverse way, the sun being viewed as the Udgitha, the purification of the sun by this meditation will not contribute to the Apurva, inasmuch as the sun is not a member of the sacrificial act. So if the statement of the scriptures, that the meditations enhance the result of the sacrifice, is to come true, the members of the sacrificial acts are to be viewed as the sun etc.

Topic 6: One is to meditate sitting.

आसीनः, सम्भवात् ॥ ७ ॥

आसीनः Sitting सम्भवात् because of the possibility.

7. (One has to practise Upâsanâ) sitting, because (in that way alone) is it possible.

As Upâsanâ or contemplation is a mental affair, the posture of the body is immaterial—says the opponent. This Sutra says that one has to meditate sitting, for it is not possible to meditate while standing or lying down. In Upâsanâ one has to concentrate one's mind on a single object, and this is impossible if one is standing or lying.

ध्यानाच्च ॥ ८ ॥

ध्यानात् On account of meditation (implying that) च and.

8. And on account of meditation (implying it).

The word 'meditation' also means exactly what Upâsanâ means, viz. concentrating on a single object, which is possible only in a sitting posture.

अचलत्वं चापेक्ष्य ॥ ९ ॥

अचलत्वम् Immobility च and अपेक्ष्य referring to.

9. And referring to (its) immobility (scriptures attribute meditateness to the earth).

"The earth meditates as it were"—in such statements meditateness is ascribed to the earth on account of its immobility or steadiness. So we learn that steadiness is a concomitance of meditation, and that is possible only while sitting and not while standing or walking.

स्मरन्ति च ॥ १० ॥

स्मरन्ति Smriti texts say च also.

10. Smriti texts also say (the same thing).

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

In the Editorial we have tried to show how the division of life's activities into *The Sacred and the Secular* is based upon a wrong notion of our outlook on life. . . . Mr. Drupad S. Desai is a new contributor. He was a Senior Research Fellow at the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner. The present article, *Some Stock Objections against Sankaracharya's Advaitism Considered* is the result of his research studies. . . . Swami Saradananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. His spiritual talks were recorded by a disciple. They are presented to our readers as they are highly illuminating. . . . Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar's article on *Sociological Approaches to Vedic Culture* will be concluded in the next issue. . . . Prof. B. N. Ghosh belongs to St. Andrew's College, Gorakhpur. He is a new contributor of ours. His article on *Science and Religion* attempts to bridge the gulf between the two. . . . Swami Akhilananda is the Head of the Vedānta Society, Providence, U. S. A. *The Conceptions of God* is the summary of a lecture delivered by him. . . . Mr. Duncan Greenlees gives us his thoughts on *Spiritual Training* and they are worth our close attention. . . . Bhikkhu Suvrata's *Where do We go to?* is the counterpart of his last article, *Where do we come from?* . . . In this issue Swami Vireswarananda selects a few Sūtras, from the fourth chapter of the *Brahma-sūtras*, which deal with the meditation on the Supreme Brahman with and without the aid of symbols.

EDUCATION IN BENGAL

The Government of Bengal in the Department of Education have issued

a communique adumbrating a tentative scheme of education in the province and have invited opinions from the public. The best brains of Bengal met at the Albert Hall, Calcutta and condemned the scheme in the strongest language possible; and the press has shared the view. If the communique means what it says (viz. its "object is to try to evolve a rational scheme of education" in the light of these criticisms), then the "tentative views of Government" will have to be substantially changed.

As it is, the scheme is extremely unsatisfactory in more ways than one. Firstly, by reducing the number of primary schools from 60,000 to 16,000, it would set up five-square-mile schools instead of about one-square-mile ones. When the age of infants is taken into consideration, this is sure to restrict education. Secondly, the multiplication of the undesirable Middle Vernacular Schools and the reduction of High English Schools by two-thirds will make darkness still darker. Thirdly, Clauses 18, 19, and 29 are the most unfortunate ones in the scheme—they are sure to intensify the communal feeling and thus lay the axe at the very root of nationalism.

Fourthly, the creation of a Secondary Board of Education on the line suggested, if it means anything, means the absolute control by the Government of the entire field of education directly and indirectly—the Secondary education indirectly by making the University impotent in more than one way.

Education in India has always been in the hands of the people be it under Hindu or Mohammedan kings. It is only after the advent of the English

that the education of the country has been partially controlled by the Government. Education is the means through which national ideals are inculcated upon young minds, so that when they grow up they may rightly guide the destiny of the nation. And different nations have different ideals, which are their life forces. Our present system of education tends to make the students out of touch with the national ideals and makes them foreign in outlook, thought, and manners. The future depends on the organization of education in such a way that it will be at once modern and true to the genius of the people. That can be possible, if only the educational policy be directed by the people themselves and not by the Government, for a foreign government with different ideals is not in a position to understand the needs of the country, however interested and well-meaning it might be in its efforts. As such we wish that the Government withdraw even their existing control over the educational policy rather than introduce a scheme which purposes to get it completely under their control.

Lastly, the Government at present meet only a small fraction of the educational expenditure of the province, as the following extract from Acharya Roy's speech at the Albert Hall shows :

"Bengal spends about 80 lacs on primary education, which caters to about 18 lacs of pupils, boys and girls. Government contributes only about 21 lacs ; i.e. about 25 per cent. of the whole cost ; the rest is met from fees, private benefactions, and District and Municipal funds. The secondary system comprises about 3,000 (high and middle) schools, teaching about 5 lacs of pupils, and spends about a crore and a half, to which contribution from Provincial Revenues and local funds is only near about 21 lacs. The total expenditure of Government on education is thus extremely small."

If under the present circumstances the Government stop private endeavour

in Bengal in the cause of education by introducing the present scheme, they will be undoing the work of a century without anything substantial to give in return.

TO PROSELYTIZE OR NOT?

True Hinduism or Brâhmanism includes all religions of the world. Even those who repudiate all conventional religions are not outside its limitless fold, for it is equivalent to nobleness itself. Believing in the divinity of man and its sure and gradual unfoldment, Brahmanism embraces all and rejects none. Being all-inclusive, it is impossible for it to proselytize, for it means that there is something outside it, something other than itself, which it seeks to make its own. Brahmanism cannot convert. The editorial of the June 22 issue of *The Indian Social Reformer* has our support.

But we do not think that the Arya Samâjist correspondent, Lala Devi Chand (in the same issue) is wrong either. His support of proselytization is as good as the *Reformer's* editorial repudiation, but only on different grounds. Brâhmanism is universal but it comprises almost an infinite variety of sects and subsects differing from one another not merely as the Protestants do from the Catholics, but as the Christians from the Mohammedans. Now, is it wrong for a Brâhmo to win over, morally and spiritually, a Sanâtanist to his own fold, or for a Vaishnava to win over a Sâkta? The losing sects grieve their loss as intensely as the losing religions. This is a fact. But this ought not to be. If the mere preaching of truth convinces a man that a certain sect or religion is better suited to his mentality, then others ought not to stand in his way of self-development. If we leave aside the question of oughtness and stand on facts, we must treat

all sects and religions equally. So long as there goes on conversion in certain quarters, other quarters cannot be advised to view their losses with philosophic equanimity. The sense of loss is not a monopoly of any particular sect or religion; it is something universal. To ask one who feels the loss to go on losing and sit weeping at home is certainly not a good piece of advice. Let them who feel the prick of loss act as aggressively as they can; and let them philosophize on universalism who will.

Many of us have a very poor idea of universalism. Universalism is not an empty abstraction; it expresses itself in particulars in the same way as the Infinite expresses itself in the finite. Universalism as it is in itself is not to be found in any society or form or church of religion, it is something to be felt, not in an empty void but in, through, and beyond everything. But these "everythings" are things with forms, limited concrete things, requiring protection, and subject to expansion as well as dissolution. Very few there are who can dispense with concrete things and live in pure abstrac-

tions. This being a fact, our societies and churches ought to be protected and expanded by all moral means. Proselytization in this sense and in this way is a desirable thing, which, Brahmanism as a church or society or a group of either, cannot wisely and dutifully forgo.

But all people cannot and do not see the universal in the particular; and they are the fanatics, who are destroyers wrongly engaged in works of construction. There are people again whose eyes are fixed more in the universal than in the particulars. These preachers of universalism bring peace and goodwill among differing, and sometimes warring, sects and religions; but they too do not neglect the particulars nor preach against them but see and show their beauties and thus preserve and expand them. Both kinds of protection are necessary. The world we live in is not merely a world of ideas but a world of things and persons as well. The practical, though a somewhat narrow, method of proselytization is as necessary for the one world, as the ideal method of the preaching of the universal in the particulars is for the other world.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY. By Manubhai Pandya, M.A., B.Sc., LL.B. *D. B. Taraporevala and Sons, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay.*

We welcome the appearance of this book with its laudable aim of combating the evil of the "growing tendency to indifference towards religion on the part of students which develops into antipathy and sometimes even into animosity towards religion"—an unhappy state of affairs for which not religion but its imperfect exposition and appreciation are to blame.

The author gives a sound, though rambling, summary of the Hindu philosophical thoughts

contained in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad-Gitâ*, the *Epics*, and the *Smritis*. This book is therefore calculated to give pleasure as well as profit to the young and growing minds for whom it is primarily intended.

However, the book has several serious defects which tend to defeat its own purpose. An unduly elaborate prominence has been given to the rules and regulations of the *Dharma Sâstras*, which regulated the lives of orthodox Hindus in by-gone ages, and under completely different social, political, and economic circumstances and environments. For example, much of the hygienic

rules went under the guise of religious injunctions, and there arose an elaborate code relating to eating and drinking, the rules whereof would be mere anachronisms today. Again, the book would have justified its title better if Chapter VI had been omitted altogether.

The author's views about the rôle of the caste system in present-day Hinduism are, to say the least, reactionary. But he rightly remarks that, "the Hindu religion was never rigid at any time, as wrongly understood by some, but it had a wonderful capacity for adjusting itself to changed circumstances." And nobody can take exception when he remarks, "Thus Hindu Law, secular as well as religious, is a growing law, and necessary changes are always made therein according to the exigencies of times and changed circumstances, provided however, that they did not offend against any express commandment or precept of the Sâstras, and were not repugnant to the fundamental doctrines of the Hindu religion." Yet, strange to say, he unnecessarily falls foul of Mahatma Gandhi and the Hindu reformers, who would purge Hinduism of its defects such as Untouchability and other social iniquities and inequalities, which, however much a historical basis they may have, are but mere clogs to the progress of Hindu Society. The author has not attempted to quote chapter and verse from the more authoritative *Srutis* to substantiate his point. Rather, when he quotes on page 173 the sloka about the Châturvarnya from the *Gîtâ*, he would interpret it to mean a permanent fixation of castes by birth alone, he makes himself liable to the charge of text-torturing. To quote the author's very words: "It is therefore wrong to suggest, as is done by some modern reformers, that the institution of the four castes was an innovation, introduced in later times by Brâhmanas for selfish purposes, nor is it correct to say that according to the *Gîtâ* the caste of a man is determined not by birth, but by the qualities and actions of a man in this life. Krishna distinctly says as an incarnation of the highest divinity, that it was the Supreme Deity that created the four castes by giving birth to each man in such family in society as accords with his deeds in previous life." Again, the verse regarding Varna Sankara in the argument of Arjuna for not desiring to fight—an argument which Sri Krishna refutes by the knowledge of the Atman—is, strangely enough made to support the rigid and fantastic caste

divisions obtaining at present. The same inability to appreciate the changed conditions in modern times marks his statements about caste on page 273 and again on page 283, when he attacks the Sudras and their inborn incapacity or absence of right to study the Vedas. Yet in trying to prove his point he relies upon a translation of the Vedas by Mr. Griffiths, a Mlechchha! Mr. Pandya, however, promises on page 286, "Thus a Sudra by leading a well-regulated life can aspire to be born as a Brahmin in the distant future." (Italics ours.) But fortunately for Hindu Society, the major portion of which are Sudras, the Sudras are not content with this. They are whole-hoggers: either they will be fully Hindus, or they will become Mohammedans or Christians, for they will no longer tolerate, and rightly so, an unwarranted position of social inferiority within the Hindu fold. As the great Swami Vivekananda said, it is the duty of every aristocracy to dig its own grave and to pass on its accumulated experience to the generations that will succeed them in the social or political sphere. Mr. Pandya is merely drawing a red herring across the path when he says on the same page, "It would be doing a great disservice to the Hindu religion as also to the motherland to preach the new lessons of the equality of all, irrespective of caste, creed, educational and cultural qualifications, purity and so on, as they are likely to create dissensions among Hindus, raise a spirit of revolt against the established order, and ultimately lead more to a spirit of degradation rather than amelioration or uplift of this very class of persons for whose benefit the so-called reformers are assiduously carrying propaganda work and are even invoking the aid of certain proposed legislation." The author reverts to the same topic on pages 348 and following. It would be outside the scope of this review to examine his arguments in detail. Suffice it to say, that the author's defence of Hindu orthodoxy is mere wasted labour. The time spirit is working and Hinduism, which is being rejuvenated, will show that it is not always identical with Hindu orthodoxy. We are also constrained to add that his remarks on Communism and Bolshevism, though well-meant, will undermine his laudable efforts to give wider publicity to the truths of the Hindu religion, as he thus lays himself open to the charge of using religion as an 'opiate' for the masses.

EVOLUTION OF HINDU MORAL IDEALS. By Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer. *Calcutta University.* Pp. 242. Price Rs. 2/8. Foreign Sh. 4/6.

The book comprises the Kamalâ Lectures of 1935 of the Calcutta University and deals with the changes in moral and legal conceptions of the Hindus, and shows by the way after a due and impartial comparison with the conceptions of the Western countries that the Hindu ideas are not only not inferior to the latter but are superior to them in many respects, and that in those matters in which they are inferior the Western superiority is due to the unusual advancement of those countries in scientific and other modern knowledge. The book has shown, one might say conclusively, that the phraseology "Sanâtana Dharma" does not mean a negation of all progress in these matters and that the Sâstras themselves and the modern usages in different parts of Hindu India display distinct evidences of additions and alterations in these ideas in order to fit in changing minds to changing circumstances. The author has freely drawn from his juristic and oriental scholarship as well as from his studies of comparative ethics, and has thus heightened the value of the book to all students of Indian sociology and social reformers. He is not for cultural isolation nor a social no-changer or a mere revivalist. He invites all the winds of the world to play around him but he reserves the right to breathe in his own way. He will turn the contributions of all the cultures into tributaries to increase the current of "Sanâtana Dharma", whose ultimate ends are refined Kâma and Moksha, the former leading to the latter, the true *summum bonum* of Hindu life. What strikes one most is the splendid spirit of detachment in which the whole book has been written, as if the author has nothing to support or to oppose, but only to state truths and accept them, and yet his conclusions lean more to orthodoxy than to heterodoxy. Some of the changes seem to him to be inevitable despite the frantic efforts of the so-called Sanâtanists, and the modern caste system is one of them. But he finds nothing to deplore in it so long as the changes lead to the ultimate goal. He coolly weighs the various tendencies of the Feminist movement and confidently asserts that "there is no need to fear that the highest ideal of womanhood pictured to us in Hinduism will be found inadequate to the requirements of a rational,

wholesome, and happy life even under modern conditions." (p. 224). But his assertion that "the time perhaps is not far off (and I should indeed deplore the day) when the new generation may become incapable even of appreciating the beauty of the ideals depicted in our national epics" (p. 229 ff) does not seem to be prophetic. It shows that he has given undue emphasis on some movements and has failed to notice the slow and steady progress of other movements started by saner heads—the poets, philosophers, and prophets.

We congratulate the author and the University on the publication of such a timely volume, and request the public to go through its pages and think seriously on the many modern problems herein dealt with, before they pronounce judgment on them.

TEACHINGS FROM THE BHAGAWAD-GITA. Translation, Introduction and Comments. By Hariprasad Shastri. *Messrs. Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell St., London, W.C. 1.* Pp. 80.

BOOK OF RAM. BIBLE OF INDIA. By Mahatma Tulsidas. Translated into English by Hariprasad Shastri. *Luzac & Co., London.* Pp. 144.

The latter will prove a boon to the school students of India. Why the former has been written when there are so many similar editions, it is difficult to divine.

MIND: ITS MYSTERIES AND CONTROL. By Swami Sivananda. *The Gita Press, Gorakhpur.* Pp. 172. Price eight annas only.

The book is a medley of all moral and spiritual thoughts with common-place remarks. Minds which derive lessons from stocks and stones will find it a better inspirer. The writer is not aware that the imperative mood does not nowadays command so much respect as it used to do, say, a century ago. One thing must be said to the credit of the author: he does not preach anything wrong or mystifying—he wishes well.

LIGHTS ON YOGA. By Sri Aurobindo. *The Arya Publishing House, 63, College Street, Calcutta.* Pp. 100. Price Re. 1-4.

This little book, like its forerunner "The Riddle of this Universe," is a compilation of extracts from letters written by Sri Aurobindo to his disciples, and is almost of the same nature. But it differs in one very important matter, which will surely be hailed

by all readers interested in the class of literature created by him and his admirers. He has been using certain terms in a peculiar sense, which were veritable puzzles to many, specially to the non-Bengalis. This want has been greatly, though not wholly, removed by the publication of this book, where the readers will find many of them explained in the author's own way. As such the place of the book in this class of literature is somewhat unique. "Surrender" is the very bee in Aurobindo's bonnet. He shines most beautifully when he talks of this, and the last but one section of this book dealing with this "Surrender" is the best portion of the book. There is more appreciation and less criticism of Sankara Advaita in it, which to some of his admirers will be rather strange. We heartily welcome this little guest.

SANSKRIT

RIGVEDA-SAMHITA. PTS. I-III. *Published by Satis Chandra Seal, M.A., B.L., Hony. Secretary, Indian Research Institute, 55, Upper Chitpore Road, Calcutta. Price of each Part Re. 1-8 (inland) or 2s. 6d. (foreign).*

The Indian Research Institute, Calcutta gives us the hope of getting a really good edition of the Rigveda-Samhitâ. It has undertaken a very big task, viz. of presenting the Rigveda with Sâyana Bhâshya and a very able Tikâ in Sanskrit, and with English and Bengali translations mainly based on the Bhâshya and exhaustive critical notes in both the languages. Its editorial board consists of some of the best savants of India; and the Secretary himself is an indefatigable worker of great parts. The outline of the scheme of the English portion alone, as given by one of the editors, will give the readers an idea of what the book will be like.

The scheme: the names of deities and sages both according to Sarvânukramani and Brihad-devatâ with short notes on them, "the text of the Mantra in Roman character," "the references to the quotations of the Rik in other Vedic literature," "chronology of a complete hymn or a particular Rik," "the ritual application of the entire hymn or a particular Rik," "reference to the translations and critical notes of different Vedic scholars," "the translation based on Sâyana's commentary," "critical notes on individual words," "the highly probable significance of the verse," "the accents . . . considered with complete references to Panini's grammar and Rigveda-prâtisâkhya," "the philosophical significance as dealt with in several commentaries," and "the myths and interpretations from various points of view, e.g. astronomical, historical, geographical, geological, etc." All these, of course, do not occur always, but as occasions arise. The Sanskrit and the Bengali portions are, however, not so exhaustive nor so critical. But the Sanskrit Tikâ of Mahâmahopâdhyâya Sitârâm Sâstri of the Calcutta University will certainly be considered as of immense help to those who know what to do with it. It is proposed to finish the work in five years, if not earlier.

While all these are really hopeful signs, the change of editorial hands in the English portions within the short compass of 3 Suktas with perceptible differences of scheme and scholarship is somewhat disquieting. India has deep scholarship but it has not yet learnt collaboration. It would be a pity if the worth of the series, so finely displayed in its critical notes, be allowed to suffer for this one defect of collaboration.

The typography is excellent and proof-reading careful.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, BANKURA

REPORT FOR 1934

Missionary activities: In addition to the daily worship and the celebrations of the birthdays of all the important prophets and divine incarnations, regular and occasional religious classes on the Gita, the Bhâgavata, and the Mission publications were held by

the Sadhus of the Mission. Lectures on religious and cultural topics were delivered occasionally in the Ashrama compound as well as in various parts of the town.

Educational: The small library consisting of English, Bengali and Sanskrit books and fairly stocked with periodicals was well utilized by the students and the general public. Six students, five of whom reside in the Mission compound, are getting their

education in the Homœopathic and Allopathic sciences and in a local H. E. School. They join the regular prayers and take part in the manual works of the Ashrama. Two primary schools for the Harijans have been started.

Medical Help: The free Outdoor dispensary (dispensing both Homœopathic and Allopathic medicines) rendered medical help to 73,963 patients (old and new). Its surgery department, handicapped in various ways, is hard put to in meeting the demands of ever-increasing number of patients. The Mission workers did excellent service during the last Cholera epidemic, the District Board and the Municipality having supplied all the medicines and injections.

Needs: (1) In building some of the badly needed houses for the dispensary, etc. the Ashrama has incurred a debt of about Rs. 725. (2) The establishment of a Students' Home, and (3) permanent funds for the maintenance of the Dispensary and the workers of the Ashrama are also keenly felt. The attention of the generous public is drawn to these.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASRAMA, FARIDPUR

REPORT FOR 1929-33

The Asrama was originally started in 1921, under the name of Sri Ramakrishna Samity. After carrying on its many-sided activities for several years in rented houses, it was removed in 1928, to a site of its own comprising 3 bighas of land on the southern side of the town. It is situated in the bosom of the historic "Dhol Samudra" now dried up, and commands a magnificent view of the wide fields with their glorious sunrise and sunset. Though near the town, it is far away from the din and bustle of town-life and, as such, is a suitable habitation for contemplative minds. The Asrama has been made a branch centre of the Ramkrishna Mission in March, 1933.

Activities:—(1) The Asrama conducts a free primary School for depressed classes with 59 pupils on its rolls. (2) The management of the local Mahakali Pathshala—an M. E. girls' School of 22 years' standing—was transferred to the Asrama about 3 years ago when it was about to collapse owing to financial difficulties. The number of pupils on its rolls at present is 56. The institution has now got an efficient staff and its condition has improved considerably

during these few years. (3) There is a small Students' Home attached to the Asrama. The number of inmates is 5. Besides attending regular prayers, they are required to nurse helpless cases as far as possible. They are thus being trained in moral and spiritual discipline, so that they may cheerfully put forth their best efforts towards the uplift of the country. (4) Anti-malarial and Kala-azar injections were given twice a week. A Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary was started about 2 years ago. The number of patients in 1933 was 3,168. (5) There is a free library for the public. (6) Religious classes were held on Sundays in the Asrama premises. (7) Relief work—The Asrama conducted flood-relief operations in this district in 1931-32 and spent Rs. 628 in relieving the distress of 210 families.

With a view to giving a practical turn to the present system of secondary education prevailing in the country, it is proposed to start an Industrial and Agricultural School where besides the Matriculation curriculum boys will be taught agriculture, weaving, dyeing, carpentry, soap-making, umbrella-making and other cottage industries as far as possible.

Its Needs:—(1) A building which will be set apart as a shrine—Rs. 3,000. (2) A building for locating the library and the Charitable dispensary—Rs. 3,000. (3) A hostel for students:—Rs. 4,000. (4) Acquisition of land for the Industrial and Agricultural School, digging of a tank for raising the land, construction of houses, furniture and equipment:—Rs. 15,000.

CHANDIPUR RAMKRISHNA ASHRAMA

REPORT FOR 1933-34

The works undertaken by this Ashrama are mainly religious and educational. Free medical help and gratuitous relief are also among its activities.

The daily worship of Ramakrishna Deva is conducted by the Ashrama in a newly erected temple. Religious classes are regularly held, the number of such classes being 309 in 1933 and 205 in 1934.

A U.P. school for boys and girls is maintained by the Ashrama, the number of pupils on the rolls being 39 in 1933 and 70 in 1934. There is a small library containing 350 vols. for free use of the reading public. It is fairly stocked with English and Bengali periodicals.

The number of outdoor patients treated in the outdoor charitable dispensary (Homœopathic and Allopathic) was 1,143 in 1933 and 1,430 in 1934. The indoor patients admitted as special cases were 3 in 1933 and 7 in 1934. During epidemic seasons 14 cholera cases were treated in 1934 as against 7 in 1933. Anti-cholera vaccines were also given to 402 villagers in 1934 as against 373 in 1933. Temporary relief works are often undertaken in local fairs. Gratuitous help

is also given to the poor and the distressed as far as practicable.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY

In the last July issue we published a short report of the activities of the Centenary Committee and a list of donors. A mistake crept in through our oversight: Mr. B. M. Kharwar, Calcutta donated Rs. 1001/- and not Rs. 101/- as announced.

RAMKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF IN THE HOOGHLY, BURDWAN AND BANKURA DISTRICTS

The public is aware that the Ramkrishna Mission is administering relief in the Hooghly, Burdwan and Bankura Districts. The following is the latest report of work received from the different centres.

DISTRICT HOOGHLY, THANA PURSURA

Champadanga Centre :—On the 12th September 62 mds. 8 srs. of rice were distributed among 1,244 men, women and children of 353 families belonging to 16 villages.

Bhangamora Centre :—On the 13th September 35 mds. 23 srs. of rice were distributed among 691 men, women and children of 275 families belonging to 10 villages, besides 10 pieces of new cloths and some seedlings.

DISTRICT BURDWAN, THANA KHANDAGHOSH

Oari Centre :—On the 14th September 26 mds. 19 srs. of rice were distributed among 731 men, women and children of 276 families belonging to 14 villages.

Khandaghosh Centre :—On the 16th September 59 mds. of rice were distributed among 1,598 men, women and children of 653 families belonging to 15 villages, besides 25 pieces of new cloths.

DISTRICT BANKURA, THANA INDAS

Sansar (distributing) Centre :—On the 16th September 16 mds. 32 srs. of rice were distributed among 437 men, women and children of 178 families belonging to 7 villages.

The above five centres cover altogether 62 villages. The total distribution from the 16th August to the 16th of September was 950 mds. 36 srs. 8 ch. of rice, several mds. of other foodstuffs, 199 new cloths and 990 pieces of old clothes, besides, some other articles.

The condition of the people in all these areas is till very miserable. Regular supply of foodstuffs and provision of clothes are urgently needed. Above all, construction of huts has to be immediately taken up, for the plight of thousands of homeless and destitute men, women and children is indescribable.

The funds at our disposal are too insignificant to meet the heavy and pressing demands. We earnestly appeal to all our generous countrymen to contribute liberally to our funds for alleviating the distress of their suffering brothers and sisters. Even a little timely gift will count for much. Money and cloths will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses :—

1. The President, Ramkrishna Mission,
P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.
2. The Manager, Advaita Ashrama,
4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.
(SD.) SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
Acting Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission.