

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. XL

MARCH, 1935



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

America,
October 18, 1899.

At lunch on Friday, Swami talked about Sri Ramakrishna. He abused himself for being filled and poisoned with the Western reaction of those days, so that he was always looking and questioning whether this man was “Holy” or not. After six years he came to understand that he was not “Holy,” because he had become *identified with holiness*. He was full of gaiety and merriment and he had expected the Holy to be so different ! Later he began to talk of the functions of the nations, apropos, I suppose, of the Boer War. And as he passed to the problems of the Sudra, which would first be worked out here, his face took on a new light, as if he were actually seeing into the future, and he told of the mixture of races, and of the great tumults, the terrible tumults, through which the next state of things must be reached. “And these are the signs,” he quoted from old books : “The Kali Yuga is about to thicken, when money comes to be worshipped as God, when might is right, and men oppress the weak.”

At one of the meals, Mrs. B. turned and pointed out how his poetry had been the weak point on which he had been beguiled to the loss of honour. And she said her husband was never sensitive to criticism about his music. That he expected. He knew it was not perfect. But on road engineering he felt deeply, and could be flattered. Then, in our amusement, we all teased Swami for his carelessness about his religious teacherhood and his vanity about his portrait painting, and he suddenly said : “You see there is one thing

called Love, and there is another thing called Union, and Union is greater than Love. I do not love religion, I have become identified with it. It is my life; so no man loves that thing in which his life has been spent, in which he really has accomplished something. That which we love is not yet oneself. Your husband did not love music for which he had always studied; he loved engineering, in which as yet he knew comparatively little. This is the difference between Bhakti and Jnâna; and this is why Jnâna is greater than Bhakti." All morning his talk of the great sweep of the Mughal Hordes under Genghis Khan had been going on. It had begun in his talking about Law, the old Hindu conception of it as the King of kings who never slept and showing that the Hindu had in the Vedas the true notion of it, while other nations only knew it as regulations. On Sunday evening three of us accompanied a guest to her home. We had been reading Schopenhauer on "Women" aloud. Coming back it was wonderful moonlight, and we walked on up the avenue in silence; it seemed as if a sound would have been desecration. About it Swami said, "When a tiger in India is on the trail of prey at night, if its paw or tail makes the least sound in passing, it bites it till the blood comes." And he talked of the need we Western women had to absorb beauty quietly, and turn it over in the mind at another time.

One afternoon so quiet was everything, we might have been in India. I had been feeling quite inferior to the people who wanted Advaitism and the Vedic texts, but oh, what a dose of the other was here.

It began with a song of Râm Prasâd, and I'll try to give you the whole of that early talk.

RAM PRASAD

From the land where there is no night
Has come unto me a man.
And night and day are now nothing to me,
Ritual-worship is become for ever barren.

My sleep is broken. Shall I sleep any more?
Call it what you will, I am awake.
Hush! I have given back sleep to Him whose it was.
Sleep have I put to sleep for ever.

The music has entered the instrument,
And of that mode I have learnt a song
And that music is always playing before me
And concentration is the great teacher thereof.

Prasâd speaks, understand O Mind, these words of science,
The secret of Her whom I call my Mother.
Shall I break the pot before the market?¹
Lo, the six philosophers² could not find out Kâli.

¹ To make public a secret.—*Ed.*

² The six systems of Hindu philosophy.—*Ed.*

The world hast thou charmed, Mother,
 Charmer of Siva.
 Thou who playest on the Vinâ,
 Sitting on the huge lotus of Mulâdhâr.³

This body is the great Vinâ,
 And Sushumnâ, Idâ and Pingalâ are the strings thereof
 And thou playest on the three gamuts,
 With the great secret of qualitative differentiation.

Ramakrishna used to see a long white thread proceeding out of himself. At the end would be a mass of light. This mass would open, and within it he would see the Mother with a Vinâ. Then She would begin to play, and as she played, he would see the music turning into birds and animals and worlds and arrange themselves. Then She would stop playing, and they would all disappear. The light would grow less and less distinct till it was just a luminous mass, the string would grow shorter and shorter, and the whole would be absorbed into himself again. And as Swami told this, he said: "Oh, what weird scenes this brings before me, the weirdest scenes of my whole life! Perfect silence, broken only by the cries of the jackals, in the darkness under the great tree at Dakshineswar. Night after night we sat there, the whole night through, and He talked to me, when I was a boy. The Guru was always Siva and was always to be worshipped as Siva, because he sat under the tree to teach and destroyed ignorance. One must offer all one's doings, or even merit would become a bondage and create Karma; so Hindus getting you a cup of water will say: 'To the World' or maybe 'To the Mother.' But there is one soul that can take it all without harm—One who is eternally protected, eternally the same, unspoilt—He who drank the poison of the world and only made Himself the blue-throated. Offer all you do to Siva."

Then he talked of Vairâgya, how much grander to give one's youth, how miserable to have only age to offer. Those who come to it old, attain their own salvation, but they cannot be Gurus, they cannot show mercy. Those who come young shall carry many across without any benefit to themselves.

Then he talked of the school, "Give them all you like, Margot, never mind A, B, C. It matters nothing. Give them as much Râm Prasâd and Ramakrishna and Siva and Kâli as you like. And do not cheat these Western people, do not pretend it is education and A B C you want money for. Say it is the old Indian spirituality that you want and demand help, do not beg it. Remember you are only the servant of Mother, and if She sends you nothing, be thankful that she lets you go free."

³ According to the Yogis there are two nerve currents in the spinal column called Pingalâ and Idâ and a hollow called Sushumnâ running through the spinal cord. At the lower end of the hollow canal is what the Yogis call the Kundalini—the coiled up energy. When that Kundalini awakes, it forces a passage through the hollow canal and as it rises up step by step, as it were, through the various plexuses of the spine or Chakras as the Yogi conceives them, different visions are seen by him. The Kundalini starts from the basic centre, the Mulâdhâra Chakra and when it reaches the brain or the Sahasrâra Chakra, the Yogi is perfectly detached from the body and the mind.—Ed.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[IN HIS OWN WORDS]

“In that part of the country (meaning Kamarpukur) the boys are given puffed rice for luncheon. This they carry in small wicker baskets, or, if they are too poor, in a corner of their cloth. Then they go out for play on the roads or in the fields. One day, in June or July, when I was six or seven years old, I was walking along a narrow path separating the paddy fields, eating some of the puffed rice which I was carrying in a basket. Looking up at the sky I saw a beautiful sombre thunder-cloud. As it spread rapidly enveloping the whole sky, a flight of snow-white cranes flew overhead in front of it. It presented such a beautiful contrast that my mind wandered to far off regions. Lost to outward sense, I fell down, and the puffed rice was scattered in all directions. Some people found me in that plight and carried me home in their arms. That was the first time I completely lost consciousness in ecstasy.”

*

“Even in my boyhood, I felt the presence of God within me. I was then about ten or eleven years old. While I was going through the fields to visit the goddess, Visâlâkshi, I saw something and lost all outward consciousness. Everybody said that I had no consciousness at all. From that day forward, I became another man and began to see Somebody else within me.”

*

“Oh, what days of suffering I passed through! You can't imagine my agony at separation from Mother. That was only natural. Suppose there is a bag of gold in a room and a thief in the

next, with only a thin partition between. Can he sleep peacefully? Will he not run about and try to force the wall to get at the gold? Such was my state. I knew that the Mother, full of infinite bliss, compared with which all earthly possessions were as nothing, was there, quite close to me. How could I be satisfied with anything else? I had to seek Her. I became mad for Her.”

*

“I was then suffering from excruciating pain because I had not been blessed with a vision of the Mother. I felt as if my heart were being squeezed like a wet towel. I was overpowered by a great restlessness, and a fear that it might not be my lot to realize Her in this life. I could not bear the separation any longer : life did not seem worth living. Suddenly my eyes fell on the sword that was kept in the Mother's temple. Determined to put an end to my life, I jumped up like a mad man and seized it, when suddenly the blessed Mother revealed Herself to me, and I fell unconscious on the floor. What happened after that externally, or how that day or the next passed, I do not know, but within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss altogether new, and I felt the presence of the Divine Mother!”

On another occasion he gave the following description of the same experience :

“The buildings with their different parts, the temple and all vanished from my sight, leaving no trace whatsoever, and in their stead was a limitless, infinite, effulgent ocean of Consciousness or Spirit. As far as the eye could reach,

its shining billows were madly rushing towards me from all sides with a terrific noise, to swallow me up! In the twinkling of an eye they were on me and engulfed me completely. I was panting for breath. I was caught in the billows and fell down senseless!"

*

"I scarcely realized their (of people who gathered about him) presence, they looked more like shadows or painted pictures than real objects, and I did not feel the least abashed at displaying my feelings before them. But the moment I lost outward consciousness in a paroxysm of pain at separation from the Mother, I would find Her standing before me in Her matchless radiant form, granting boons to Her devotees and bidding them be of good cheer! I used to see Her smiling, talking, consoling, or teaching me in various ways."

*

"I could distinctly hear strange rattling sounds in my joints from the ankle upwards, as if one were locking them

up one by one, so that the body might remain fixed. I remained perforce in that position till the end of the meditation, when the same rattling sounds would again be heard as the joints were unlocked in the reverse order. Not until this was done could I move or stand up. Sometimes I saw specks of light like a swarm of fireflies before my eyes, at other times a veil of luminous mist would envelop me. Again, I would see, with closed as well as open eyes, luminous waves like molten silver pervading everything. Not knowing what these meant, or whether they were helpful or detrimental to my spiritual progress, I would lay open my heart to Mother saying, 'Mother, I don't know what these things are. I am ignorant of Mantras and all other things requisite to realization of Thee. Teach me, Mother, how to realize Thee. Who else can help me? Art thou not my only refuge and guide?' This was my earnest prayer night and day. I used to weep bitterly in the extremity of my grief."

MEN WHO STAND FOR GOD

BY THE EDITOR

I

A modern writer observes: "Why do the Christian saint, Indian Rishi, Buddhist Arhat, Moslem Sufi, all seem to us at bottom men of one race, living under differing sanctions one life, witnessing to one fact?"

If God is great, man is so none the less. Man is great because he has discovered God. There are *men* among men whom we call men of God. It is they who bring the tidings of God in the world of man. It is they who bridge the gulf between man and God. Heaven and earth are knit together,

as it were, by the string of their love. In them, we find a happy blending of the human and the divine. They exhibit in their life and character the greatness of *man*. We do not know how much we are indebted to God-men. They are loftier than any sublime philosophy, for philosophy lags behind their teachings. It fears to tread in the sacred precincts of their life. They are higher than what we can imagine them to be, for our imagination falls below the sphere they soar in. We try in vain to measure their greatness with our intellect. In so doing, we make mere carica-

tures of them. Only God-men can appreciate God-men. We stand in awe and reverence before them. Not because they perform miraculous deeds, but because we are lost in the vastness of their greatness. They appear in society like angels whose visits are few and far between. The world would have been a dreary land but for their advent. Men would have no resting place in the midst of their miseries. It is they who prove the existence of God—not by words but by life. All that is best in the literature of the world owes its origin to the thoughts, words and actions of these extraordinary men. Romance, poetry, music, art and philosophy are replete with the glories of their life and career. The little incidents of their life carry the weight of a thousand sermons. These men to whatever race they might belong are a source of solace and inspiration to humanity at large. It is true to the letter that they form a race by themselves. There is a close kinship among them in spite of the fact that they appear at different periods in history.

They see the same Truth from different angles of vision. The languages they use might differ from one another, the usages and customs they adopt might be contrary, still they all search after the same Truth, struggle for and live It. If we analyse their methods of approach, we find the same spirit and earnestness behind them. Even their utterances have remarkable similarity. Buddha used to say, "Knowledge is not the letter, but the spirit." If we probe deep into the meaning of different scriptures, we find the same spirit underlying them. The word and power of conviction are the two things that permeate all the sayings of God-men. The strong affirmation of Truth is the common factor that we find in the

words of all great men of God. Sincerity, purity and earnestness are the virtues that are equally imprinted on their thoughts and activities. They are all men of selfless motives. They all feel equally for erring humanity. Love of power, name or fame is completely conquered by them. Their love knows no geographical limits. They live and stand for Truth—they ultimately die for It. Such men cannot be the property of a single race or a particular country to which they might happen to belong in their mortal frame. Had it been so, they could not have appealed to all men.

The late Pandit Siva Nâth Sâstri, the minister of the Sâdharan Brâhmo Samâj, writing in 1910 about his reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna says :

"A Christian preacher of Bhowanipur, who was my personal friend, once accompanied me on my visit to Ramakrishna. When I introduced my friend to him, I said, 'Today I bring a Christian preacher to you, who having heard of you from me, was very eager to see you.' Whereupon the saint bowed his head to ground and said, 'I bow again and again at the feet of Jesus.' Then took place the following conversation :

"My Christian friend : How is it, sir, that you bow at the feet of Christ? What do you think of Him?

"Ramakrishna : Why, I look upon Him as an Incarnation of God.

"My friend : Incarnation of God ! Will you kindly explain what you mean by it?

"Ramakrishna : An Incarnation like our Râma or Krishna. Don't you know there is a passage in the Bhâgavata where it is said that the Incarnations of Krishna or the Supreme Being are innumerable?

"My friend : Please explain further ; I do not quite understand it.

Bagdad experienced, "I am God." He had to pay a heavy penalty for spreading this message. But even in the midst of horrible persecutions he remained steadfast in the truth. Jesus affirmed: "I and my Father are one." The same truth was realized by the Indian Rishis and they proclaimed: "I am Brahman."

Buddha spoke out after his enlightenment: "Give ear, O recluses. The ambrosia has been won by me. I will teach you. To you I preach the Law."

The goal of our life is the same though told variously by these men of God. What the Buddhists call Nirvâna is what the Indian Rishis call Mukti. Nirvâna has been described as the Supreme, the Transcendent, the Uncreate, the Tranquil, the State of purity, the Ambrosia and so forth. These are the very epithets which the Rishis apply to Brahman or Knowledge Supreme. The Christian, Moslem and Hindu saints mean the same One, when they address Him: "O Thou most sweet and loving Lord!" or "O Love divine!"

Lastly, we find all these men uniformly compassionate to all beings high and low. Their love spreads among all, regardless of any differences. They live for others and stretch their helping hand to all who take refuge in them. They give solace and relief to those whom people turn out as sinners. How lovingly do they all exhort others to seek after Truth! How affectionate is their behaviour to the fallen men and women! Their sublime personality takes away the fear of death and the miseries of life. People unknowingly feel safe and blessed in their company. The greatest of teachers are those who bring about reformation in others without the least effort on the latter's part. Books, lectures and sermons are no doubt effective in their own way. But God-men preach through their

smallest actions. Sometimes they work wonders with fewest possible words. Their glance, touch or even silence is sufficient to move men of hardest heart or of dullest intellect. We preach through words, they teach through the spirit. This is true of all saints whether Hindu, Christian, Buddhist or Moslem.

III

If all God-men have so much in common among them, why do we, their followers quarrel? The ideas of separation, compulsion and dogmatism have originated from our mutual misunderstanding.

We feel harmony when we are balanced. Balance presupposes right judgment. When our intellect is prejudiced, our judgment is naturally depraved. In spiritual matters, purity of heart is essential for right judgment. Pure souls feel and see things in a right and similar way. Impurity makes us narrow-minded. It is when our heart is narrow that we propound a narrow philosophy. Narrowness begets bigotry. It brings in discord and distorts our vision and we are carried away by a fanatic zeal. Sentiments gets the upper hand of reason. They betray us and we hatch short-sighted doctrines. We fail to see that we are distorting Truth. Truth cannot be the monopoly of any particular person or creed. It can hardly be put in terms of philosophy. How then can we preach It in a dogmatic way? It is because we do not understand this fact that there is so much rivalry among different religions. We want to combine into groups according to colour, custom or race. This leads to some sort of communal bigotry. We hasten to win a communal victory instead of victory over untruth. We do just the contrary of what God-men teach us. The ideals

they set up for us are lost sight of. We do not really follow what they say though we boast of our loyalty to them in so many words. In their names, we engage ourselves in strifes and bloodshed.

Some hate Christ but adore Krishna. Others love Mohammed but hate Buddha. This sort of bias makes us forget about the unity of God and the greatness of God-men. Men of great intellect satisfy their intellectual vanity by propounding false doctrines. People of light and leading carry the banner of fanaticism. This is why there is so much quarrel among religions. The worse side of it is that people even vilify and dishonour men of God. "No sadder proof can be given," said Carlyle, "by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men. There

is no sadder symptom of a generation than such general blindness to the spiritual lightning with faith only in the heap of barren dead fuel. It is the last consummation of unbelief. In all epochs of the world's history, we shall find the Great Man to have been the indispensable saviour of his epoch—the lightning, without which the fuel never would have burnt."

It is idle to expect a genuine love of God without having any reverence for the men of God. A real fellowship may dawn among the adherents of all religions, if we learn to adore and respect all great saints and prophets. We worship the heroes of the world and pay homage to great men in art, literature, science and so forth. Can we not do the same towards all God-men of the world?

PREPARATIONS FOR HIGHER LIFE

BY SWAMI PREMANANDA

Nothing real can be achieved in the field of Religion by mere talk. It is a thing to be practised—with all the intensity of life and soul. We can never hope to attain even a bit of religion, if we rest contented by simply making a verbal reproduction of the teachings of our scriptures like a talking machine, and make no further move. He alone has spirituality who has the internal realization of it. To him alone who has the seed of religion comes its gradual unfoldment. Just as a seed of a banian brings forth a mighty tree wherever it falls, so there must be the *seed* of spirituality in us first; and then we have to rear up the *tree*—we should attempt to realize it—we must try to get our mind moulded by that one thought. Otherwise, none can become

spiritual by simply stuffing the brain with a mass of stock-phrases, and now and then making a parade of them before others, though thus one can pass for a great scholar. He can never be a spiritual man for all that. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that Pandits are like vultures which soar high up in the air, but whose eyes are all the time fixed on charnel-pits in search of putrid carcasses—on lust and gold.

The first thing needed to be spiritual is *Verity of Purpose*. Never forsake truth, even for all life. God is truth itself and is at the command of one who is devoted to truth. Spirituality is impossible to him who does not cherish truthfulness in thought, word and deed; without these all attempt is in vain. So, first of all, try to be unflinchingly

truthful with all heart and soul. Truth is ever victorious, in all times—past, present, and future.

Many do know theoretically much of what spirituality is; but alas! how few are there who put their knowledge into actual practice. The achievement will be *his* only who would follow up truth. We hear many say that it is impossible to be truthful in business. But I do not believe it. Where truth reigns there the Lord Himself abides. If the man of business carefully enshrines truth in his house, he will be looked upon as the greatest of all virtuous men and his business too is destined to thrive. Nâg Mahâshaya (a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna) was greatly devoted to truth. Once he went to buy something in the market and the shopkeeper charged four annas for that. As he was truthful, he took the shopkeeper also at his word and did not bargain. A bystander seeing him pay four annas thought within himself, "What sort of man is he, he did not even care to bargain!" But when he came to know that he was Nâg Mahâshaya, the saint, who believed that no one would dupe others, he took the shopkeeper to task for charging four annas for what was worth only two annas. The shopkeeper took this to heart and so the next day when Nâg Mahâshaya came to buy something, he charged only two annas for a thing which was worth five annas, at which Nâg Mahâshaya with folded hands addressed the shopkeeper thus: "Why do you behave like this with me? This is worth more than two annas. Please take from me the proper price." The shopkeeper was deeply moved at this and fell at the feet of the saint. Therefore I say that you will never be a loser if you stick to truth. If you stick to truth, Divine Grace is sure to flow to you through all channels—you

will prosper not only in worldly affairs, but in spirituality as well.

If you have truthfulness, every other virtue is sure to come in its wake—even self-control. But we have lost this truthfulness, and that is why we have come to such a pass—groaning under the crushing weight of misery and degradation. Now all our efforts must be directed first to retrieve it—not by mere empty speech, but by sincere action, pledging all our heart and soul to it. The principal element in spiritual practice is this sincerity of life—making the inner life tally with the outer, thought with speech. At present we are hypocrites, for we think one way and talk in a different strain. We are not sincere. This is delusion, this is ignorance. He who wants to be spiritual must give up talk and take to practice. God's Grace descends upon such a person—he is sure to prosper here and hereafter.

Sri Krishna urges us in the Gita to perform work without attachment, to attain Freedom even in this life. It is not a myth nor a figment of a morbid brain. We have actually seen such lives with our own eyes. We too have to attain this Freedom, in this very life. We must attain it, even if we are to sacrifice everything for it. Otherwise all tall talks of devotion (Bhakti), religion, etc., will ever remain muffled in speech, without being realized in actual life. Unless we attain Freedom we cannot get pure devotion (Bhakti). In whatever station of life we may be, let us all say with all the force of our soul that we must become Jivan-Muktas, the 'living-free'. But then we will have to sacrifice our whole life. Many do like to hear of Bhakti, indeed it is very pleasant to listen to it, but it demands the very life-blood as it were, when one goes to practise it. Once a man wanted to have Prema (intense

love) for God. Just then he saw a vendor passing by the street with a basket on his head, crying: "Ho, here is Prema. Who wants it? Who would buy it?" Hearing this, the boys cried out, "Oh! We, we shall eat Prema;" the grown-up people also called out, "Oh! yes, we want Prema, we shall buy it." At this, the vendor lowered the basket from his head and said, "Come, let me know how much Prema each of you want. I sell Prema by weight. How much do you want, a pound, eh?" And with this he drew out a sharp knife and said, "Look here! cut your head off with this, and I shall give you Prema as much as your head weighs." If you want Prema you will have to give the price—

your head! Verily, never has spirituality been attained by mummary—by empty words! Sacrifice, terrible sacrifice of one's own life is the price for it. Have you not heard of Sri Radha? She gave up everything—everything that one could hold dear in life; and so she got Him. We have also seen such lives ourselves. The sublime lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Nâg Mahâshaya and others are ever shining brightly before our eyes. If you want spirituality follow such examples. To have wife, children, money, business, and all other felicities of life, and at the same time religion, is an impossibility. You have to give up everything, then alone can you have religion and spirituality.

RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA

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

RAMAKRISHNA, THE SILENT MAN OF GOD

One of the most potent forces in the present-day cultural and spiritual life in India is Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Ramakrishna was the *silent man* of God. He used to live in a sequestered place at Dakshineswar, six miles to the north of Calcutta. Ramakrishna was a child of nature. He was a child of the Divine Mother. His character can be summed up in one word, God-centric. He was God-intoxicated. Nothing in life—the warmest relations, the family ties—could make his being deflected from the quest of his soul—God.

His God-centricity removed him from all touch with life, and he was often supposed to be a *lunatic*. So are the elect of God always supposed to be! Far removed from the noise of civilization, confined within the temple of the Divine Mother, he was often heard to cry out: "Mother, I want Thee, and

nothing else—neither name, nor fame, nor power. Give me the love, the intense devotion which can reveal Thyself to me." The child of God can be anxious for God alone. Such men are so finely attuned and delicately sensitive and responsive that they cannot be satisfied with anything short of direct vision and realization. Their soul always pants after God. It is indeed difficult to understand them intellectually.

Mystics are a unique race. Their language is different. Their approach is different. They blossom like flowers in the hand of God; Ramakrishna was a super-mystic. Hence his message and teachings have a unique importance; for they proceed direct from the divine impress upon his being. Intellectual fineness cannot always reach this level; unless the psychic being is trans-

parent, the spiritual aspect of our being cannot be penetrated and its secrets revealed. Spiritual revelation is a subtle stage of knowledge which comes with pure being. To read a spiritual life requires spiritual sympathy, and spiritual vision, otherwise there is every possibility of false reading and wrongly interpreting its message. Ramakrishna showed many phases of spiritual experience. Without a catholic, free and elastic mind, there is every chance of committing mistakes in our attempt to explain and interpret him. Ramakrishna will appear to some as a clear pathological subject, to some as a man of exuberant feelings, to some as a powerful lover of the Divine Mother, to some as a man always giving the correct judgment in worldly affairs, and to some as a man of wisdom who has attained the highest philosophical truth. This moment, he is a sane man, next moment he is almost insane. This moment, he is absorbed within himself, next moment, he is in ecstatic dance. This moment, he is a sober teacher solving subtleties of life, next moment he is in a fit of righteous indignation giving a slap to the lay proprietress of the holy temple as she was thinking of worldly affairs before the Mother. This moment, he is a sober Vedantist, next moment, he exhibits the Mother's power to Totâ, his Vedantic teacher, who refuses to accept the truth of Sakti, the dynamic divine. He used to exhibit fine shades of religious feelings and sentiments in their infinite varieties. Far removed from human eyes, his life flowed in love, devotion, and divine wisdom.

His being was a veritable spiritual laboratory in which he had experiments with every kind of spiritual experience. He felt them, measured them and judged them. He was born at a time when the Hindu religion was attacked

by the advanced and liberal thought, and it was not a small task for Ramakrishna to revive unconsciously people's faith in the ancient religion. He was not a conscious revivalist, like Swami Dayananda, for he had no conscious purpose, save and except a union with the Divine Mother. A spiritual rose that he was, blossoming under the fond eyes of the Mother, he could not be a conscious founder of any sect. He had indeed the prevision that disciples were hovering round him; yet he showed the least conscious effort to establish a sect or a cult.

Whatever he did it was under the inspiration from the Divine Mother. He had a soft corner for the suffering humanity. So very spiritually sensitive was he, that he could not but be responsive to the spiritual needs of the age, yet in his teachings or preachings there was no conscious effort or any studied art. His heart had its natural outflow in love, like the stream of the Ganges on the bank of which he used to sit.

During the early years of Ramakrishna Brâhmo Samâj had its palmy days; the synthetic intellectual spirit of Ram Mohan together with the æsthetic intuitionism of Devendranath and the living ecstatic faith of Keshab Chandra had made the Brâhmo Samâj movement a very strong and effective movement amongst the cultured people. Orthodox faith was shaken to its foundation. Ramakrishna by his intense spirituality which he had attained by the time-honoured disciplines and methods, showed the dynamism, power and potentiality of the orthodox faith. He had the spiritual genius to establish that Hinduism was not idolatry, that there was a fine scientific discipline in the orthodox cult to evoke spiritual powers and extensive vision.

Though he began with the traditional method of worshipping the Divine Mother, he attained the greatest blessing of wisdom transcendental. Ramakrishna discovered the esoteric path leading to esoteric wisdom.

He practised many forms of Sâdhanâs. Before his time even in the fold of Hinduism differences prevailed between the worship of Vishnu and the worship of Sakti; the adherents of the faiths naturally claimed superiority for their own. The sensitive being of Ramakrishna could not tolerate these differences in the fundamental convictions of human life; and before he could give out any solution he practised these faiths and found their fruition. Nay, he practised even the Islamic and the Christian faiths and personally felt their power and potentiality. After practising all of them, Ramakrishna, with the true spirit and conviction of a spiritual experimentalist gave out his famous declaration: as many doxies, so many paths: all paths lead to the same goal.¹

But what was the goal to Ramakrishna?

It is possible to realize the height of spiritual realization in the oneness of being and ineffable delight when the self loses itself in the oceanic calm. Ramakrishna used to say that the doll of salt when thrown into the sea dissolves into it and no sign of it can be traced. But the case of Sri Ramakrishna was different. His being used to oscillate between spiritual calm and spiritual dynamism; sometimes his being used to be absolutely silent in

the depths of spiritual life and at other times it was vibrant under the impress of spiritual dynamism.

And it is natural with one who aspires to its realization through life. In the course of realization, the spiritual life manifests many phases and they are due to the ingress of the forces of spirit into being. The exhibition of the different shades of transparent delight is due to the impress of the spiritual power upon the psychic and vital dynamism of being. When the spiritual force penetrates into our being, all the finer forces get spiritual colouring and spiritual transfiguration. And the psychic dynamism becomes, as it were, a fit vehicle for the expression of spiritual Ananda, and spiritual powers. The intensity of the spiritual ingress may be so high that sometimes it overcomes the normal consciousness and withdraws the soul from its association with the mental-vital functioning into the realm of luminous consciousness and ineffable delight.

Spiritual life, when it takes the finest turn, exhibits a tendency not only to pass into an ineffable calm, but also a contrary tendency to bring down a genial ray from the height of luminous consciousness and to infuse the whole being with it and to diffuse and scatter its effect all round to help the surrounding humanity.

This indeed is possible in the case of the fit souls who can keep up a continuity between the unfathomable depth of being and the ordinary normal consciousness.

The mystic opening in many of us may be occasional; the flicker of light comes and passes away. There may be alternate opening and closing. But in Ramakrishna it was different. It was all opening; though at times the intensity of the spiritual urge would remove his consciousness from the

¹ The differences in religions follow from the basic philosophic concepts. But with psychic opening and luminosity which early religious realization presupposes, the differences of the creeds almost melt away; the live experiences in spirituality are almost the same.

psychic surrounding and vital expression, still he could have a hold upon the spiritual consciousness even in normal attitudes of life. The spiritual sense was in his case too true to be absent from him.

Ramakrishna had this uniqueness in him that he was not at all anxious for losing himself in the illumined silence. It is difficult to understand him, as it is difficult to understand all spiritual geniuses that want to be centres of dynamic relations between Heaven and earth. Intellectually an association with or absorption in God is welcome as the height of spiritual venture. This is spiritual life understood in intellectual concepts, but spiritual life is not exactly like that. It is at once a life of absorption, illumination and inspired activity. Spiritual life when fully developed does not leave the other parts of the being unaffected. It moulds our vital and psychic being in such a way as to make it a fit medium of spiritual expressions; hence the spiritual genius exhibits different tendencies. A class is there who becomes quite absorbed. They cannot intermediate between the quiet of spiritual life and its masterful expression as formative and moulding influences.

Such a type cannot bring into the world the formative influences of spirit. Ramakrishna was not of this type. His genius could freely move both in the sphere of spiritual silence and expression. In fact, he gave up his choice completely between spiritual calm and spiritual expression. This choice presupposes an intellectual and categorical determination of spirituality. Ramakrishna could not make that. The Divine Mother could withdraw him into silence, she could also instil his being with her spiritual charges.

Ramakrishna's life was a play in the

hands of the Divine Mother. Though Ramakrishna held the height of transcendence as the end of spiritual quest, still his life and psychic being was just like a stringed instrument in the hands of the Divine Mother from which he used to emanate various shades of spiritual melodies.

Ramakrishna used to feel the ingress of dynamic spirituality in his being which used to make him dance in joy and ejaculation and make him a veritable spiritual force. This dynamic spiritualism had its fine exhibition when he used to wake up fine spiritual perceptions, luminous intuitions and radiant feelings by simply touching the physical body of his disciples. One day Hriday, a nephew of Ramakrishna, when he was touched by him, began to shout, "Ramakrishna, you are the Brahman, I too am the Brahman, there is no difference between us." Once Vivekananda had the same inspiring touch when his doubtful mind was not ready to accept the Divine Master.

The superior spiritual fineness of Ramakrishna had its best expression when he could make the holy spirit descend into his wife, Sâradâ Devi, and make her realize her Divine Motherhood.

Ramakrishna's art was very simple, because his life-energy was directly connected with the divine-energy. This made Ramakrishna's life unique. The men of God have shown their extraordinariness in every age. They have removed human sufferings and privations. They have instituted divine philosophies on earth and have started cycles of new civilization.

But Ramakrishna withdrew the veil of ignorance directly from many and revealed the potentiality of a life in the divine. He could change life immediately and could throw off the ignorance of centuries. Himself a direct

centre of spiritual dynamism, he could transform initiates easily and make characters immediately changed. Testimonies to such powers have been held by persons who came under the spell of his spiritual influence. The unlettered used to get illumined.

Ramakrishna felt the dynamic identification with the Divine. Apparently he had the mood of the son withdrawn completely into and resting in the Divine Mother; but this outward attitude in the psychic being had its complementary one in the inner, the constant identification with the Divine. Ramakrishna's external attitude was of the devotee, his internal realization was the clear sense of an identification with the Divine. He used to feel this identification and expressed it many times and convinced the doubtful Vivekananda of this during his last illness.

Christ used to feel the identity of the sonship and the fatherhood of God. So did Ramakrishna feel the identity of the divine child and the Divine Mother. This identification was the secret of their powers. The power was not of the son or the child, but of God.

The Son of Man has his being in God, his whole self is introverted. This extreme withdrawnness makes him a fit medium for God-expression. This sense of a unity does never drop and does never fail.

Spiritual life has an ascent and a descent, ascent from the sense of self-division and the limiting influence of matter, and descent in light, love and Ananda. This descent is different from the original descent in self-alienation in creation; it is descent in love and knowledge to reveal the treasures of divine life and to establish it on earth. And this spirit of God takes hold of the elect and scatters its influence on earth. There is this necessity in the Divine, for life has its root in it and occasions arise

when the flow of life needs a replenishing from the divine source. The obstruction of matter is to be set aside to make life free, easy, serene and delightful. The elect are the medium of transmission. In their being there must be some fitness which alone makes them the fit recipients of the divine inspiration and the fit transmitters of the same. The sonship is not confined to one individual. Potentially it is everywhere, but it becomes apparent in some centres because of their finer responsiveness.

There is a *law of spiritual insersion* in spiritual discipline and realization. Ramakrishna could base the synthesis of faiths upon this law.

There is a constant tendency in man to be God, and a contrary tendency in God to become man. Without these tendencies there can be no spiritual life in the concrete. Indeed the mystery of concrete spiritual life lies in this law of contradiction. Without this constant contradiction life either in the Divine or in the human, cannot grow so rich and so exquisite in beauty.

Spiritual life has its charm because there is a constant seeking of the Divine by the human and a constant yearning for the human in the Divine. This yearning and that seeking make the spiritual life a majesty which cannot always be understood categorically.

This law of inversion really explains away the differences that are found in religions. These differences arise because of a too much categorical understanding of religion. Because Ramakrishna could proceed directly in the path of life, the difficulties which beset the intellectual understanding of the different paths could not obstruct him. During his time as now, there were in Bengal, different sects like Vaishnavism and Saktism.

The Vaishnavas emphasize an approach and a realization different from those of the Sâktas. Their approach is theistic, their realization is a spiritual fellowship with the Divine in love; they insist always upon a difference between the human and the Divine. The Sâktas' initial approach is theistic, but in their realization, they insist more upon an identity than upon difference; their outlook is to overcome the sonship of man and to realise the Siva-hood.

Spiritual life, whatever be the form, has no meaning, unless there is nearness and likeness with God, but the Vaishnavas with all the akinness of spirit emphasize the categorical distinction between the human and the Divine. Their philosophy won't allow a complete merging or dynamic identification. But even the Vaishnavas could not escape the law of spiritual inversion in spiritual life, for they freely recognize the divine inspiration of man, his divine possession; nay, they feel the necessity of God delimiting himself and appearing as man. The finest expression of God according to them is possible in human figure and human form.

However they may characterize it as the Divine in quintessence, they cannot help recognizing the law of contradiction. If the devotee aspires after the Divine, the Divine aspires to realize the intensity of feeling and inspiration of the devotee and so changes His nature into an ideal devotee. The devotee is anxious to be more and more God-like. God is anxious to enjoy the blessedness of the devotional consciousness. Devotion is really centric attraction and is a fine expression of spirituality. To exhibit the finest beauty of God at times assumes the attitude of the Seeker and reveals to humanity the dynamic identification of the lover and the beloved. God is the objective.

God is the path. "I am the light, I am the path." Such is the contradiction involved in spiritual life. Man ascends, God descends.

Saktism also exhibits this *contradiction*. The son in the beginning becomes the Siva or God in the end. The Divine Mother reveals the Siva-hood where the sonship is sincere and complete. The son becomes the Father even as the Father becomes the son through the intervention of the Divine Mother.

Whatever may be fixed as the highest ideal, spiritual life exhibits fulfilment through a contradiction. The Vaishnavas differ from the Sâktas in their ideal but Ramakrishna through his life found out that though the approach and the philosophy may be different because of the stress and emphasis on this or that side of life, yet spiritual life in essence implies a fulfilment through a contradiction.

The Vaishnavas fight shy of a complete inversion, though they see the necessity of inversion for the rich experiences in spiritual life; they see the law but are not bold enough to forgo the joy of a fellowship with the Divine. Inversions to them are states that are experiences in the intensity of love; they represent the rare exceptions in spiritual experiences, but not the law. Sâktas categorically accept them as exhibiting the profounder secrets of spiritual life. The Vaishnavic emphasis on the distinction of the human and the Divine does not allow the satisfactory working of the process of inversion.

Ramakrishna saw the affinities of spiritual existences and felt that such inversions speak for the identity of reality; for inversions can be possible only when there is affinity and identity of nature; spiritual inversions instead of proving the eternal distinctions between the human and the Divine, speak of

their identity in essence; for they dispossess us of the conviction of the eternal distinction of the finite and the infinite and point out to their essential community of being. The dynamic spirituality cannot of course enjoy the finest nature of spiritual consciousness in illumined silence. And, therefore, the identification must be through contradiction, and must be different from the Transcendent illumination beyond all dynamism. Ramakrishna was conscious of this illumination, but he was also alive to the divine play in the cosmos, and the deification of the ardent seeker and his divine movements. Ramakrishna was not all for the Transcendence, but was eager to open into humanity the *chapter* of spirituality sealed in the bosom of the divine, the chapter continuing the story of the divine play side by side with the divine silence. The Transcendence which becomes the all-absorbing concern in Sankara and the play which becomes the all-absorbing concern to the Vaishnavas demanded equal attention from him; for he realized the Transcendence, tested the undying sweetness of the play, and the interference of the Divine in the cosmic affairs of men, and the intense love of the Divinity to save humanity from ignorance.

Ramakrishna pinned his faith to the Transcendence as the best form of spiritual experience, and he could feel that this experience presupposes all other experiences and has in it something which is unique, for it presents an aspect which is nowhere presented, the spiritual life beyond expression either through nature or

through space and time or through history. This unique Transcendence gives us the taste of freedom in spiritual life because here we transcend humanity and divinity and come to feel the supra-mental silence and Ananda. Ramakrishna accepts this to be the finest experience, for it gives the unique experience of self as complete freedom from the blessings of life and pangs of death, a freedom which is its essence and being. And this revelation has a force of wonderful elasticity on us, for it releases us from the thought of self, however fine and glorious, and sees that the life is a projection of self on the canvas of space and time. It is the Eternal Now. "For the *now* wherein God made the first man and the *now* wherein the last man disappears and the *now* I speak in, all are the same in God where there is but the *now* (Meister Eckhart : Sermon and Collections, page 37.)

Gods, angels and men are our creations, Christs and Buddhas are our dreams. This kind of spiritual life beyond the bounds of space and time, modified all the previous experiences of Ramakrishna and he could now see that love and service have no meaning apart from this central thought of an uncovered and unbounded existence. This existence is everywhere. However the soul may appear as wrapped up in ignorance, the soul remains always the same in its purity, simplicity and transcendence. Love is the attraction of the soul after itself. Service is the concern of the soul for itself. Soul is all. This vision of the all-embracing soul modifies the conception of love and service.

(To be concluded)

IMMORTALITY IN THE LIGHT OF EVOLUTION

BY DR. J. T. SUNDERLAND

(Concluded from the last issue)

But we are not yet through. Other and even stronger arguments for immortality still remain, that have not yet been touched. Let us spend the time that remains in a brief consideration of the more important of these.

1. First of all, it seems to be a well-nigh universal *belief* of men—a belief so deep as to be a very part of their nature—that death does not end all, but that there is another existence beyond the present scene. It is doubtful if a single people in the world can be pointed to, savage or civilized, that does not cherish this belief in some form. Even the Buddhists are no exception, as I could easily show if I had time.

Now what does this mean? Is it an accident? Has this belief been wrought into the nations and races of mankind by chance? This cannot be. The universe has wrought this faith into man's soul. May we then believe it a lie? Is there no reality corresponding to it?

Tell me, why has the universe wrought for man eyes? Because there was something to see. Why ears? Because there was something to hear. Why reason? Because he was in a universe that was rational. Why a sense of beauty? Because there was beauty all around him waiting to be recognized. Why love? Because there were beings to be loved, and to love him in return. Why his belief in right and justice? Because there are right and justice in the world. Is man's belief in immortality an exception? While all else in his being is grounded in reality, is this ineradicable faith of his, that he

was not born to die, only a delusion? It cannot be.

Do you say it is simply a superstition, like witchcraft, or faith in signs? Then why does it not show some *marks* of superstition? Why is it not confined to dark ages and uncivilized peoples? Why does it not tend to pass away with enlightenment? Instead of that, it is found nowhere in such strength as in enlightened ages, and among enlightened peoples. Nor is it the worst, but the best persons, that hold it most firmly. The greatest believers in immortality, as a rule, are the greatest and noblest souls of every age.

I think all this means that the belief is rational, and rooted in great realities which men may trust. I think man's instinct that he is greater than the brute beasts, greater than a clod, greater than death, is a voice of the universe, and this means a voice of God, speaking in his soul.

2. Somewhat similar to this, yet different, is another argument, which I think ought to be regarded as having weight. It is the argument of *justice*, based on the fact that man everywhere *wants* immortality, *longs* for it, as for nothing else. There are here and there exceptions—men who say, one life is enough. But they are so rare as to be scarcely visible amid the multitudes of those who long and pray for a life that has no death. Now what has put this desire into men's hearts? Did they create it for themselves? Certainly not. It came to them from the Creator of their being. Did he give it to them in

mockery? Can he of right withhold immortality from men into whose hearts he has himself put such desire for it?

8. Still further, have we not a right to base a faith in immortality on the *greatness of man's nature*? Think of minds that can work out the intricacies of mathematics in all its endless forms; that can create sciences; that can write literatures; that can bridge the ocean with swift steamships, and speak from shore to shore beneath its waters, and harness the lightnings and measure and weigh the worlds of space, and rob surgery of pain, and say to pestilence: Stay thy hand of death, and transform deserts into paradises, and build great cities, and rule vast empires, and connect all sections together by trade, and link every city and town of every civilized land with every other by mail routes, and lift the world up century by century to higher and higher civilization! Can minds that accomplish all this be snuffed out as a candle at the end of a brief three score years and ten?

Is man built on a pattern suited only for a day? Look at these powers of his that are unearthing, restoring, reconstructing the past—actually creating the world's past over again! We are digging up Rome, and opening its buried centuries and its forgotten histories to the light of day. We are excavating Mycenae and Troy, and finding cities hidden beneath cities, and learning more about their history, their art, their civilization and their life, than even Plato or Aristotle knew. The same with Egypt! A little while ago the great Egypt of the past was lost to the world. Men looked on her wonderful monuments with blind eyes that could not see. Not a word of the inscriptions that covered her temples and tombs could they read. The history and civilization of her almost numberless centuries were as if they had not been. The same was

true of Babylonia and Assyria. But within our century man has unlocked the secrets of these lands and is bringing them all to light. So too, he is creating anew the mound-builders and their lives, and the cave-dwellers and theirs, and the still earlier ages when only brute beasts inhabited the earth, and ages yet more remote when there was no life. It seems as if there is no secret of the past that he will not read. Is such a being only a creature of a day?

4. Once more, are there not *prophecies* wrapped up in man which declare that he was not born to die?

Man's nature seems to be full of prophecies of something greater than he has yet attained, or can attain in this world. Such a prophecy is seen in his capacity for growth and progress. The brute animals may advance a little way. Then the end of their tether is reached, they can go no farther.

But man's capacities for development are practically infinite. None may lay down a line beyond which he may not go. None can draw a circle bounding his knowledge or his thought. Only the universe is large enough for his home; only eternity long enough for the realization of the possibilities that sleep in his great nature.

I know not how anything can be more clear than that human life as we see it in this world is a fragment—a thing unfinished, incomplete. Does this incompleteness mean nothing? Look around you. Everywhere you see "great powers and small performances; vast schemes and petty results, 'thoughts that wander through eternity,' and a life that

'Can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die.'

Who has ever lived to accomplish his utmost aim? What career is so complete as to comprehend all that is want-

ed of this world? We all retire with imperfect victory from the battle of life. The campaign is not finished when we strike tents. . . . The scholar has still unsolved problems at which he is labouring. The philosopher is summoned in the midst of experiments he cannot stay to complete. The philanthropist is overtaken in projects of reform that are to add new value to human life."

Martineau at eighty, though his life had been marvellously full of attainment, exclaimed, "How small a part of my plans have I been able to carry out? Nothing is so plain as that life at its fullest on earth is a fragment."

Sir Isaac Newton at the end of a life that achieved more for science than almost any other of modern times, compared himself to a child who had merely picked up a few pebbles on the beach, while the vast ocean lay beyond unexplored.

Victor Hugo, in his old age declared: "For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and verse: history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, and song. I have tried all. But I feel I have not said a thousandth part of what is in me."

Now what is the explanation of all this strange, dark riddle of the incompleteness of human life—the fragmentariness of even the fullest earthly career? If man is at the beginning of his existence, all is plain. If he is at the end, all is midnight darkness. I know of no philosophy that gives us a ray of light except that of Hugo, who completed the passage which I have quoted from him by adding: "When I go down to the grave I can say, like so many others, 'I have finished my day's work,' but I cannot say, 'I have finished my life.' I shall begin again next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. I close on

the twilight to open with the dawn."

With this philosophy of life, all is luminous. Fragments that are parts of larger wholes we can understand. Beginnings that are meant to go on until some worthy end is reached, we can understand. We can understand incompleteness that is on its way to completeness. But fragments that have no meaning, incompleteness that ends with itself, beginnings that were never intended to be anything else but beginnings, throw us into utter intellectual confusion. We are dazed and dumb. We have the sense that all intelligence has gone out of the universe, and that the rational foundation of things has given way.

5. This brings me to a fifth reason why I find myself simply compelled to believe in immortality for man. It is that I may keep my faith in the *rationality of nature*, or, to express it better, in the *reasonableness of God's work*.

Wherever I look in the heavens or in the earth, there are signs of a divine wisdom. Indeed with such wisdom the whole universe is ablaze, from mightiest sun down to tiniest molecule. Order is everywhere; adaptation is everywhere; harmony is everywhere; law is everywhere. All this means that reason is at the heart of things.

But if this be so, then must man be immortal. For it is impossible to believe that rationality holds everywhere else and breaks down when it comes to man. Everything below man has its *raison d'être*; does man have none? Everything else has its clear aim and purpose; was man, the highest of all, made only to be destroyed as soon as completed? Everywhere below man there is progress. The inorganic prepares the way for the organic. The organic rises to the psychic. The psychic culminates in man, a being who can reason, and thus put himself into relations with the Infinite Reason; who can

think God's thoughts after Him; who can know, and admire, and consciously put himself into harmony with God's laws; who can understand justice, righteousness and truth; who can aspire and worship, and meet God's love with an answering love, as a child responds to the affection of a parent. Can we believe that God, having through an evolutionary process of millions of years, and at an expense so vast that we can only call it infinite, brought into existence a being so high, so near in nature to Himself, has nothing for that being but death and extinction as soon as made? Then the rationality of the universe breaks down. God is less intelligent than even a man; for no man would do anything so utterly without reason as that. If a man should plant fruit trees and cut them down as soon as they began to bear fruit, or paint pictures and destroy them as soon as finished, or build ships never intending to send them to sea, we should say he had lost his reason, and call him a fool and not a man. But even such folly would be as nothing compared with that which could bring man into existence as the crown and culmination of nature's infinitely vast and infinitely expensive evolutionary process, only to blot him out as soon as made.

No, I am compelled to believe that man will not be destroyed—that God has made him to partake of His own divine nature and be as immortal as Himself, because I believe in the reasonableness of God's work. Faith in God seems to me necessarily to carry with it

“faith

That, some far day, will be found
Ripeness in things now rathe,
Wrong righted, each chain unbound,
Renewal born out of scathe.

I have faith such end shall be.
From the first, Power was—I knew;
Life has made clear to me

That, strive but for closer view,
Love were as plain to see.

When see? When there dawns a day,
If not on the homely earth,
Then *yonder*, world's away,
Where the strange and new have birth,
And Power comes full in play.”

Here then for one I rest—rest and find great peace. I cannot believe the universe idiotic. I cannot doubt the wisdom or the fidelity of God. That God's work of creation means something great and worthy, I do not even know how to question. Much more easily could I question my own sanity. But if it *does* mean something great and worthy, then man is safe, and safe for all the future.

6. This brings me to my last point. Must we not believe that God has made man and put him in this world, not by accident, and not with indifference, but because He loves him, cares for him, and needs him? Yes, I say, needs him, and will need him forever.

Good men in this world are co-workers with God. Does He not care for that? What has He made us co-workers with Him for—willing and conscious co-workers—if He has no interest in the matter? And if He wants co-workers now, in this world, will He not want the same in the next?

Reverently I say it—I do not see how God could be happy in heaven without men. Has he not created us with a nature like His own, to know, to obey, and to love Him? And could He destroy us, and blot out our love for Him, without a pang? Could you be happy without your children? Could He without His?

Oh, I think God is the most to be pitied of all beings in this universe, if the best life that He has created ends in death.

We weep over the story of Rizpah and her slain sons. Our tears fall for

Niobe and her children dead. Should we not weep more sorely still for the Creator and Father of men, if His children all must die! Alone in his universe! bereft! bereft! No, no! God will not part with His child. Man has cost too much to be allowed to perish. God cannot afford it! The universe cannot afford it!

Do men build splendid palaces, spending on them years of time and millions of treasure, only to burn them as soon as they are completed? Then how can we believe that the Infinite Intelligence has built man's soul at a cost that is simply inconceivably great, only to destroy it as soon as it is finished? What right have we to think of God as less intelligent than we?

Do you say that God suffers *other* things to perish? Yes, but nothing whose cost bears any comparison with

that of man, or whose intrinsic greatness is to be mentioned beside man's.

It is not strange if a sculptor throws away the chips that fall from his chisel as he cuts his statue of beauty. But will he throw away the statue when that is done?

In a world where Evolution was the law, it was inevitable that man's body must die. But what need for his soul to die? The destruction of his body was a slight matter. The death of his soul would be an infinite loss.

Man's soul, dwelling for a little while on this earth in a perishable body, is like a splendid diamond placed for a time in a frail setting. When the setting is broken or worn out, will the jeweller throw the diamond away? Not so; it is too precious for that. Rather will he preserve it from harm, and give it a new, a finer and an enduring setting.

IS THE WORLD AN ILLUSION?

BY BRIJ LAL SHARMA

The problem of reality or unreality of the world depends upon what we mean by the world. Is it a system of ideas constructed by reason, or is it the world out there which is the object of sense perception? In other words, our world is either subjective or objective.

The world understood as a concept is evidently unreal, for concept is always of something which remains outside it. As knowledge grows, concepts are altered. A theory is merely an attempt to understand a thing, it is an interpretation whose truth has to be established. When, therefore, modern science tells us that the ultimate reality is electrical energy, the implication being that the wealth of qualities which we perceive in the world, *i.e.*, shapes,

colours, smells, tastes, sounds and touches, is unreal; when Russell holds up neutral particulars as the foundation of the universe, when Eddington comes out with his mind-stuff and Jeans with his mental relations, when Alexander declares space-time as the truth and Bergson discovers in duration his absolute, we must reserve our judgment. In his Commentary on the Brahma-Sutras Sankara urges that there can be no conflict of men's opinions about perfect knowledge. Strange perfect knowledge this is, which becomes now one thing now another, a spectral woof of implacable abstractions and unearthly ballet of bloodless categories! All these theories merely serve our pragmatic purposes and fail to provide a

key to the understanding of the world.

We thus come to the second alternative. If interpretation is false that which is interpreted cannot be so. The given is given and is an object of perception. By the world then we understand a reality which comes to us through the avenues of senses and provides a theatre for our activities. Is this world real? If we judge it to be unreal then we do so in virtue of our knowledge of some other existence which we regard as real. This knowledge may have two sources, intuition or intellect; it may be a direct vision or an ingenious product of thought. Reality whose nature is thought brings us back to the first alternative which we discarded above. It is as true to say that the concept of the world is false though the world is real as that the world is false though its concept is real. The unreality of the world, therefore, cannot be judged simply by reference to a set of ideas with which it happens to be discrepant. Only intuitive apprehension of truth can determine the nature of the world. This is the view which Sankara maintains in his Advaita philosophy.

Are we quite sure that we have defined the meaning of the world? For the world understood as an object of perception is a complicated affair. On the face of it we have only to open our eyes to see the universe. This is because, as Bergson has pointed out, the simplicity of function is combined with an extreme complexity of processes. What we perceive is a simple thing, but the manner in which it is perceived is so complicated, both physically and psychologically, that it is by no means easy to judge how far what we perceive is an object of sense. True, it is sometimes maintained that what is given is merely a succession or co-existence of sensations or sense-data, but what do

we mean when we make such a statement? Does this sensation or sense-datum possess a character or not? Unless it does, we can know neither succession nor co-existence, for these two relations demand terms, which must be distinct and different; if it does, our sensation or sense-datum has slipped through our hands, for only thought characterizes things. The controversy between Empiricists and Rationalists in Western philosophy arose out of this contradictory nature of sense-experience. Each party attempted to seize the fundamental thing in perception, and each party failed. Those who maintained that the knowledge of a thing depended upon the thing itself failed to explain how this knowledge could be acquired in the absence of categories, like substance and attribute, time, space and cause, which mind seemed to be already furnished with by its own nature, while those who insisted on the reality of *a priori* ideas became equally unintelligible, for how could the knowledge of *a priori* ideas be provoked without a specific instance apprehended through a sense-organ? That it is hard to define the meaning of the world will now be evident. We cannot take an object of sense for pure thought or sensation, for not only they are not discoverable in experience, but even if they were they would fall under the first alternative which we have rejected above. The only course left to us is to take the world as a product of subject and object, thought and things. Is this product real?

The 'world' is a complex of facts and fancies, it is, as Sankara says, an object of Adhyâsa. Neither the subject nor the object in it is clearly outlined, yet they are not altogether confounded with each other, for they can to some degree be distinguished. If we distinguish them they are divided, if we

identify them they are confused. In Brahmavidyâ, which is an intuitive apprehension, this division and discrepancy are transcended; in that experience, at once unique and absolute, there is neither time, nor space nor cause, neither contention nor conflict, neither one nor many. It is an awareness in which the whole of the subject becomes the whole of the object, and the Jiva realizes his identity with Brahman. The Upanishads tell us: "Speech goes not there nor mind." It is a state where, in the words of the Rigveda, "joy beyond joy dwells." When compared with this profound experience, the world is judged to be unreal.

As yet we have only begun the problem. The real difficulty is how far the 'world' is unreal? Can we distinguish the true and false elements in existence? Sankara emphatically replies that we can. The reality we perceive, urge the Buddhists and modern science, is a universal flux in which things take shape and dissolve again in an endless process. An object is not a solid enduring stuff, but a type or a direction of movement. All things come and pass away. This is a great truth, though a partial one. The Vedanta and the Bhagavad Gita, both emphasize the unbroken continuity of creation and dissolution of the world process. What they do not emphasize, however, is that the entire reality, immediate and ultimate, immanent and transcendent, is nothing but change. In our 'world' change is a fact among facts. There is something in it which does not change, namely Sat or existence. Even change to be known, must *exist*. It is beside the point to argue, as the opponents of the philosophy of change do, that if there is change there must be something which changes, for that is reasoning in a circle. There is no difference between a something that changes and change. Indeed to contend that

there must be something that changes is to imply that this something cannot change, since if this something itself is a change what is the good of positing it? Whatever be the nature of the 'world,' that nature, to be true, must exist. The 'world' is thus grounded in existence, which is Brahman. It shares being with the Absolute.

We said above that the 'world' is a mixture of subject and object. Have we grasped the implications of what this means? If the 'world' is a complex of soul and Nature, then we have in it, not only the wealth and movement of what we see, hear, touch and so on, but also the whole colour and quality of the percipient's psychic nature, his thought, actions and feelings, his ideals and achievements. However far we may carry our analysis of the 'world,' whether in the direction of subject or object, the perceived or the perceiver, we discover that the two factors, the knower and the known, are inextricably intertwined. Thus all our thoughts, actions and feelings are about some object and are inconceivable without it. In the same manner the object, as we found above, does not stand by itself, but is grounded in consciousness, for nothing can exist in independence of knowledge. If this is the case, what is the real element in our life? Jnânam, Anandam, Anantam, Brahma. Brahman is knowledge, joy and freedom. We get a fleeting glimpse of Reality when the heart is touched, when the mind is illumined by truth, when actions find freedom in universal benevolence and disinterested service. Man does not merely think, feel and act. He struggles—if we take a long view of history and if we, each, look within ourselves and study our mental life—to think truly, feel deeply and act nobly. He longs to be a prophet, poet and hero. We never regret wisdom, beauty

and love, we only regret ignorance, ugliness and hatred. Life and experience is like a glass which reveals the reality underneath. Only some parts of the glass are clean enough to let through a ray or two of the true nature of existence: these are truth, goodness and beauty. This is only a simile and is not to be taken too seriously. There is something which lies even beyond truth, goodness and beauty. In Moksha know-

ledge and object coincide, and truth, goodness and beauty melt into something before whose uniqueness the mind grows dumb in wonder. The entire empirical world and experience is not therefore unreal; on the contrary, in the very heart of it opens up a path which leads to the Infinite, in the very nature of it there is an illumination which is the light of Eternal Truth.

SPINOZA ON THE CULTURE OF THE UNDERSTANDING

BY PROF. SHEO NARAYANA LAL SHRIVASTAVA, M.A.

I

All the great souls the world over, who strove to unravel the mystery of life by a personal realization, felt the supreme need of transforming and elevating to a higher plane the ordinary life of man, the life as it is, in Emerson's words, lived merely by "the eating, drinking, sleeping man." The life of baser passions must be put to death, ere the soul begins to live its true divine life. "All who rightly touch Philosophy," says Plato, "study nothing else than to die and to be dead."

To live the true life is an uphill task. It is an endeavour compared by the Upanishadic sages to walking on the edge of a sharp razor. The pilgrim to the city of God must tread along with extreme wariness, for the shoals and ditches in his path are many.

Amongst those who have shed light on this difficult path of spiritual progress, the name of Baruch De Spinoza ranks very high. By all those, with whom Philosophy is a way of life, the God-intoxicated Jew shall ever be

remembered with gratitude for his illuminating discourse on "The Power of the Understanding," the power of reason in the "control and moderation" of emotions.

Like Thomas á Kempis, who declared it vanity "to love that which speedily passeth away," Spinoza defied things that are transient and craved for the Eternal. "Love to that which is eternal and infinite," says he, "feeds the mind only with joy—a joy that is unmingled with any sorrow." Here we have an echo of the voice of our Upanishadic sages: "यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नाल्पे सुखमस्तीति".

The practical suggestions for the ethical transformation of man are contained in the concluding portion of Spinoza's Ethics, "which is concerned with the way leading to freedom." The way to 'Freedom' or 'Blessedness' lies according to Spinoza in the control of emotions by reason.

Reason expresses the deepest nature of man; to live freely is to live rationally; it is slavery to live in submission to passions. By virtue of reason, man

is highest in the order of creation and is nearest to God, for in thinking man realizes himself in God, whose essential nature in Spinoza's view is thought or intelligence.

Intelligence is the main characteristic of man, distinguishing him from all other creations of Nature; and the highest ethical end of man, according to Spinoza, is realized, when his intelligence or Understanding attains its fullest development, that is, when God thinks in man, or when man becomes conscious of himself and of all things in union with God. To live in union with God, the soul must free itself from the thralldom of passions and attain perfect equipoise.

What gives the soul spiritual equipoise and rest in Freedom or Blessedness is, according to Spinoza, the improvement of the Understanding. The Understanding must gain an insight into the eternal nature of God, an insight which shall reveal that in love of God alone is there blessedness and not in things ephemeral and changeable. Out of this insight alone the realization comes "that spiritual unhealthiness and misfortunes can generally be traced to excessive love for something which is subject to many variations." Then the soul must retreat from "the busy dance of things that pass away." This love of God, born out of such deep insight, is what Spinoza means by the 'intellectual love of God.'

It may be noticed here in passing that the improvement of the Understanding or the awakening and development of its higher intuitional capacity is held to be a Sâdhanâ for God-vision, not only by the system of Spinoza, but by almost all the religious systems of the world. It is the Understanding that ultimately gains the power of spiritual vision and becomes the instrument for

the reception of the revelation of the Highest. In the Upanishads we often come across such texts as "मनसैवेदमाप्तव्यम्", "चातुः प्रसादादिभवत्येष आत्मा", "दृश्यते त्वय्या बुद्ध्या" etc. In the Bhagavad-Gita also we have "तद्बुद्ध्यात्मतौन्द्रियम्". So Spinoza is but right when he lays stress on the culture and improvement of the Understanding.

The final triumph of the Understanding, the crowning phase of its development, its top note, is, as has already been said, the intellectual love of God. This intellectual love of God, is in Spinoza's view, the highest ethical goal. It is at once the Alpha and Omega, the consummation and crown, of the ethical life of man. The highest law of living is to be attuned to the key of the Eternal. It is the ruling principle of Spinoza's philosophy that reality in all its infinite variety of forms is governed by the immanent necessity of God, and that things follow from the eternal essence of God with as much necessity, as it follows from the essence of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles. The true source of our emotions is, therefore, not an external something, but God who is immanent in all things. If we would live in tune with God, then, we should detach our emotions from external objects and centre them in Him. The Understanding should be constantly exercised in this.

Wisdom consists in gaining an insight into the eternal nature of God, the *ratio essendi* of all that is. When the Understanding is so cultivated as to acquire the clarified vision which sees all things in God, their cause and support, and unites all things thereto, man shall attain "the true acquiescence of his spirit." "For the ignorant," says Spinoza, "is not only distracted in various ways by external causes with-

out ever gaining the true acquiescence of his spirit, but moreover lives, as it were unwitting of himself, and of things, and as soon as he ceases to suffer, ceases also to be. Whereas the wise man, in so far as he is regarded as such, is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit, but being conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses the true acquiescence of his spirit."

Students of the Bhagavad-Gita will recall to their minds many a Sloka delineating the majesty of equipoise of man in union with the Divine. At one place it is thus described: "As a lamp in a windless place flickereth not, to such is likened the Yogi of subdued thought, absorbed in the Yoga of the Self."

II

We shall now try to describe here something of the processes by which the Understanding is to be improved so as to have power and dominion over emotions, for their control and moderation. The question naturally suggests itself: Why does Spinoza insist on the culture of the Understanding as a means for the control of our bodily passions? The answer of Spinoza is that the mind can control the body, for all our bodily modifications have invariably mental modifications as their correlates, and a change in the latter is bound to affect the former. "Even as thoughts and ideas of things are arranged and associated in the mind, so are the modifications of body or the images of things precisely in the same way arranged and associated in the body." (Part V. Prop. 1.) The process is the same in principle, though not precisely the same in form, as the Chitta-vritti-nirodha of Patanjali.

The cardinal process which Spinoza suggests for improving the Understanding is that all our mental modifications, our ideas, feelings and emotions, should be dissociated from external objects as their causes. In the Proposition following the one quoted above Spinoza states, "If we remove a disturbance of the spirit or emotion from the thought of an external cause, and unite it to other thoughts, then will the love or hatred towards that external cause, and also the vacillations of spirit which arise from these emotions, be destroyed." (Part V. Prop. II.)

The meaning of the above Proposition is thus cleared by Spinoza, in the proof he gives of it: "That which constitutes the reality of love or hatred, is pleasure or pain, accompanied by the idea of an external cause; wherefore, when this cause is removed, the reality of love or hatred is removed with it; therefore these emotions and those which arise therefrom are destroyed."

Disjoining all ideas from external objects as their causes and conjoining them to God, their true and eternal cause, is a fundamental principle in Spinoza's plan of elevating the Understanding. The Spinozistic system thus inculcates an inwardness, which is the *sine qua non* of all true spiritual progress.

Another principle which Spinoza lays stress upon is that in order to bring a disturbing emotion under control, we must have adequate knowledge of it. Knowledge is power; the full comprehension of a thing places in our hands the means to control it. To quote Spinoza himself: "An emotion which is a passion, ceases to be a passion, as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea thereof." (Part V. Prop. III.) He further clears the meaning of the above proposition in the Note he affixes

below it : "Seeing that there is nothing which is not followed by an effect, and that we clearly and distinctly understand whatever follows from an idea, which in us is adequate, it follows that everyone has the power of clearly and distinctly understanding himself and his emotions, if not absolutely, at any rate in part, and consequently of bringing it about, that he should become less subject to them. To attain this result, therefore, we must chiefly direct our efforts to acquiring, as far as possible, a clear and distinct knowledge of every emotion, in order that the mind may thus, through emotion, be determined to think of those things which it clearly and distinctly perceives, and wherein it fully acquiesces; and thus that the emotion itself may be separated from the thought of an external cause, and may be associated with true thoughts; whence it will come to pass, not only that love, hatred, etc., will be destroyed, but also that the appetites or desires, which are wont to arise from such emotion, will become incapable of being excessive."

It is due only to our clogged vision, our imperfect knowledge, that we are under the thralldom of morbid emotions.

One point more, and we shall have closed this by no means an exhaustive account of Spinoza's discourse on the

way to mental freedom or blessedness. That is concerning the question : Are we to be perpetually battling with our lusts, engaging in ever new warfares to put them down? Or, can we achieve final and decisive victory over them? The answer of Spinoza is : Until man is established in blessedness and begins to rejoice therein, he has to be engaged in an unrelenting warfare with his lusts; but when he is established in blessedness, and rejoices therein, he can deal a fatal blow to his lusts. The power, in other words, of finally vanquishing his lusts arises from blessedness itself, and grows in proportion to the intensity of the latter. To quote Spinoza's own words : "In proportion as the mind rejoices more in this divine love or blessedness, so does it the more understand; that is, so much the more power has it over the emotions, and so much the less subject it is to those emotions which are evil; therefore, in proportion as the mind rejoices in this divine love or blessedness, so has it the power of controlling lusts. And, since human power in controlling the emotions consists solely in the Understanding, it follows that no one rejoices in blessedness, because he has controlled his lusts, but, contrariwise, his power of controlling his lusts arises from this blessedness itself."

A GLIMPSE INTO HINDU RELIGIOUS SYMBOLOGY

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

HINDUISM

Hinduism is not a kingdom, but an empire. It is not a personal religion; it is a Cosmic Religion. It is not a particular system of thought, but a commonwealth of systems; not a particular faith, but a fellowship of faiths. In its all-

comprehensive aspect it represents a synthetic culture that includes what may be called Saivism, Vaishnavism, Tāntrikism and other paths aiming to realize more or less a common goal.

It is not the product of the spiritual genius of any single individual, however

great he may be. Under the inspiration of the Divine Cosmic Principle immanent in all, countless prophets, saints and seers have flourished from time to time since the most ancient days up to the present, all helping the eternal stream of spiritual life flowing with its many branches and tributaries towards the Ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

The term Hinduism that is used for the Indo-Aryan culture and thought is not a happy one. It is derived from the word Sindhu which was distorted by the ancient Persians who called both the river—the Indus of the geographer—and the people living on its banks by the name Hindu. Thus religion and philosophy of the Hindus have come to be called Hinduism.

But the orthodox Hindu prefers to use the term Sanâtana Dharma—the Eternal Dharma—which includes religious and philosophical thought and the practical code of conduct all in one.

We had various systems of thought in the India of the past. But nowadays modern Hinduism is practically synonymous with the Vedânta which includes not only monistic but also qualified non-dualistic and dualistic systems of thought and approaches to the Divine—all based more or less on the same scriptures but having different interpretations in certain matters.

Let us take the synthetic view of some of the greatest of the ancient teachers in India, including the great Sankarâchârya—a view that was taken by our modern prophet Sri Ramakrishna—who realized in this life the fundamental unity of Hindu Thought, nay, even of other systems of thought leading to the realization of the Divine Principle—the common goal of all seekers after Truth.

The Vedânta—which may be translated as the final word of Hindu spiritual culture—looks upon all religious systems

of thought, as different approaches to the one Truth, the Ever-Pure, Infinite, All-Pervading Being who manifests Himself in and through man and nature, and yet remains transcendental without exhausting Himself in His manifestations and expressions.

It recognizes all prophets and Divine Personalities as different embodiments of the same Principle who is at the back of them all and inspires them all.

It believes in the potential divinity of all souls, and encourages them to follow their own paths according to their spiritual capacity and tendencies.

It asks the followers of all religions and philosophical systems of thought to preserve their distinctive features and also assimilate the truths of others as much as possible.

The true Vedânta attempts to combine religion and philosophy, faith and reason, intensity and extensity of outlook and vision. It holds strict ethical discipline, scrupulous performance of duty and earnest spiritual culture to be the means to the realization of God—the Divine Principle in whom we live, move, and have our being.

NEEDED THE RIGHT INSTRUMENT OF VISION

Four blind men wanted to know what the elephant was like. One touched the leg of the animal and said, "The elephant is like a pillar." The second touched the trunk and said, "The elephant is like a thick club." The third touched the belly and said, "The elephant is like a big jar." The fourth touched the ears and said, "The elephant is like a big winnowing basket." Thus they began to quarrel amongst themselves. A passer-by, seeing them thus quarrelling, said, "What is it you are disputing about?" They told him all about the matter and asked him to settle the dispute. The man said,

"None of you has seen the elephant. It is not like a pillar; its legs are like pillars. It is not like a strong club; its trunk is like a club. It is not like a huge jar; its belly is like a jar. It is not like a winnowing basket; its ears are like winnowing baskets. The elephant is a combination of all these—legs, trunk, belly and ears, and is yet something more."

One of the morals of the story is that those who have seen only one aspect of the Divine take the part to be the whole, forgetting the other aspects, and quarrel amongst themselves. While the true seer who has known the Truth in its manifold aspects sees each in its own place in relation to the whole which is something more than the combination of its modes and expressions.

A WARNING

The other moral of the story is that it is not enough if we want to see a thing; we must have the eyes also to see it. It is not enough if we look at the distant invisible stars, we must have the necessary telescope also. Similarly, it is not enough if we want to receive the message broadcast from a distance. We must also know how to attune our radio set to it. It is not enough if we approach the Truth, we must possess the necessary instrument of knowledge without which we can never know the Truth, and even run the risk of forming a distorted idea about its true nature.

It is a pity that sometimes our distorted knowledge of a thing is just enough to lead to some misunderstanding. And this kind of "little" knowledge becomes more dangerous than utter ignorance.

Therefore it is essential for the aspirant to possess the proper qualifications or the means and capacity for knowledge. And without the preliminary moral discipline, and mental preparation there can never be any true spiritual

vision. All our spiritual teachers declare with one voice that the aspirant, in order to attain to the Highest, must possess a keen intelligence and a perfect control of the senses, should abstain from doing injury to others, should ever do good to others, must be perfectly clean and pure in body and mind, must possess a strong faith in himself and in the grace of the Universal Being from whom his existence is inseparable. "Such a person," says the Tantra, "is competent; otherwise he is unfit for spiritual practice."

It has become a fashion with some of us, modern men and women, to dabble in Yoga, sometimes for the satisfaction of idle curiosity, sometimes for the gaining of physical charms or for obtaining psychic powers. For good or for evil the term Kundalini is becoming popular in the West, so much so that some enterprising soap-manufacturers have brought out even what they call "Kundalini" soap. The dead soap-cake cannot do any harm to us. But we should bear in mind that it is dangerous to try to play with the "serpent-power" in us unless, like Siva, we know how to drink the poison that the snake is sure to vomit some time, unless we know how to remain unaffected and to follow steadily the spiritual path with a view to get the nectar which alone can make us immortal and blessed. Any form of sustained and uninterrupted spiritual practice brings a terrible reaction to the neophyte, and even to the advanced soul. And unless one has previously acquired the necessary moral strength and purity, one may not be able to retain one's bearings when some of the latent impressions would come up with all their strength and vehemence. I mean those impressions that lie dormant in the mind. In such cases sometimes there takes place a complete breakdown, physical and moral, ruining altogether

the spiritual career of the individual. And so we must be on our guard.

THE PRE-REQUISITES OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Fortunately for many, the study of Yoga is but one of the various pastimes of life, all followed in a light-hearted superficial manner, and so there is little risk. But those who seriously want to lead the Higher Life should know that, as Patanjali—the great author of the Yoga Aphorisms—declares: “Non-injury, truthfulness, non-acquirement of any possession by unfair means, chastity, etc.” form the first of the eight-fold limbs of Yoga. It is not possible for us to practise fully these virtues all at once. But we should make a sincere beginning and strive our best and march towards the ideal step by step. And to the extent we become pure in thought, word and deed, we become fit for the practice of the “inner” Yoga of concentration and meditation that leads to the realization of the Self. Truly speaking, without these pre-requisites neither postures nor breathing exercises will be of any avail. One may sit down long just like a statue and hold the breath like a football bladder, for hours together, and yet will be far away from the real Yoga that leads one to the superconscious state, to the highest peace and blessedness.

The teacher of the Upanishad also wants the necessary and indispensable moral and mental qualification: “Neither those who have not refrained from wickedness, nor those who have not restrained their senses, nor the unmeditative, nor those with unpacified mind, can attain to the Self—even by knowledge.” It is not possible for a person who is immoral, who has not controlled his senses, to get knowledge,

but even if by a miracle he gets it, he cannot know the Truth.

There exists even among scholars, who should know better, a great misunderstanding about the place of moral culture and discipline in spiritual life. I have known learned people complaining, “Well, the Upanishads do not speak much of moral discipline, so why should it be essential?” One does not know whether to laugh or to cry when such a remark is made! Let me tell you clearly and frankly that this is a very wrong notion, particularly entertained by those who do not know the tradition and actual practice, and form their knowledge only from books.

As I have already said, fortunately for India and probably also for the world, the joint streams of theory and practice have been still flowing to some extent, and it is this that makes the advent of Holy Men like Ramakrishna possible in our modern times.

To those who know, it is a matter of common knowledge that the Upanishads, representing the highest meditations and knowledge, were primarily meant not for beginners, but for advanced souls who passed through the preliminary moral and spiritual disciplines, of which the Dharma Sutras and Dharma Sâstras and other treatises speak in details and probably, as many suppose, even too much. “Self-restraint, self-sacrifice, and merciful benevolence” is the theme of the Upanishads and the means to spiritual illumination. And the seer speaks in no uncertain terms when he says: “He who is devoid of proper understanding, who is thoughtless, and is always impure, never attains the goal. But he who is intelligent and ever pure and with the mind controlled reaches the Highest Goal from which there is no return.”

The reason why I am stressing these pre-requisites and real moral culture is

that I propose to speak to you of Hindu religious symbols not from the theoretical standpoint, but with reference to spiritual practice and evolution. Our spiritual disciplines must further our growth and evolution. And these must imply an inner transformation—a movement towards the Truth—so that, although we may begin our life with simple disciplines, we may take up as we advance the higher forms of practices taking us nearer and nearer to the Truth.

MAN'S SEARCH AFTER THE DIVINE— A NECESSITY

But why should we care for the Truth or for God, if divine realization is such a troublesome process? The answer is that there are many who cannot help it. The hungry man needs food and he cannot do without it. This has been so throughout the history of mankind. As Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita: "Four types of persons worship God—the distressed, the seeker after enjoyment, the seeker for knowledge and the wise." The man of spiritual illumination to whom God is the only reality spontaneously worships Him and speaks of His Glory out of the fullness of his love and devotion. He looks up to God out of his innate goodness. But for others who seek Divine Protection for being saved from the miseries of life, or want Divine aid for the fulfilment of desires, or yearn for Him for the satisfaction of the hunger of their souls, for filling the void in their hearts which nothing in the world can remove—God is a constitutional necessity. And specially with reference to such persons it has been said, "Were there no God, it would have been advisable to invent one." And probably man's necessity is also God's opportunity. For, He—the Soul of our soul, the Life of our life, the Spirit dwelling in us all, is ever anxious to reveal Himself to us.

But how often does He knock at the door of our heart, and out of ignorance and perversity do we send Him away and continue to live a life of bondage, misery and sorrow! And when we want Him, He seems to be mightily pleased to come in touch with us. And having established contact with us, the Divine Alchemist transmutes all the baser metals of our desires and passions into the pure gold of devotion and divine love!

DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD

But what is the nature of the Divine Being, men seek? The conceptions vary with the growth and knowledge of the seeker. Observes Sri Ramakrishna: "The ignorant man thinks God is somewhere beyond the skies. The advanced soul realizes Him in his own heart. The perfected sage sees Him both inside and outside." And the Master says further: "God is formless and God is with form too. And He is that which transcends both form and formlessness. God with form and without form are not two different beings. He who is with form is also without form. To the devotee God manifests Himself in various forms. Just think of a shoreless ocean—an infinite expanse of water—no land visible in any direction—only here and there are visible blocks of ice formed by intense cold. Similarly, under the cooling influence, so to say, of the deep devotion of His worshipper, the Infinite reduces Himself to the Finite and appears before him as a Being with form. Again, as on the appearance of the sun, the ice melts away, so on the appearance of knowledge, God with form melts away in the formless."

This was the experience of a comparatively modern man who lived and preached towards the middle and close of the last century, who without the aid of book-learning realized God in His

manifold aspects and spoke of Him to many a world-weary soul turning to him for light and guidance.

In our study of the Hindu Scriptures we come across various conceptions of the Godhead. Some devotees speak of Him as possessing both Divine forms and attributes. They want to establish personal relationship with Him. Others speak of Him as being endowed with infinite power and knowledge and other qualities, and think that though formless He assumes various forms. While they take note of the personal, they stress particularly the Impersonal, of which the former is a manifestation. Sometimes we find the devotees combining all the conceptions more or less. But usually they worship the Divine through particular forms or manifestations which serve as props for supporting their faith and devotion.

During the early stages of their spiritual life, most devotees cannot help associating human forms and sentiments with the Divine, and thinking of Him as outside of themselves. Sometimes we find that, as the result of self-purification brought about by sincere devotion the devotee gets a vision within himself of the same Divine Being he has been worshipping as an outside object. Then he realizes Him as the Indwelling Soul, as the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Life of life. Next he finds Him in all things and beings—the One Deity “who is in the fire, who is in the water, who pervades the whole universe,” who has become man and woman, youth and maiden, and is born in manifold forms. God, to him, is the Principle immanent in all beings and things. He is not merely the God of Gods, but is also the true Self of all, the Life Universal. Proceeding further the seer realizes Him as the Transcendental Entity who is “beyond speech and thought,” who is “invisible, devoid

of all connotations, unthinkable, indefinable, essentially of the nature of Divine Consciousness alone, peaceful, of Supreme Bliss—the One without a second.”

SYMBOLS POINTING TO THE TRUTH ARE INDISPENSABLE

Throughout the History of the Hindu Religion, symbols and forms, and Personal Conceptions of the Divinity have played a great part in the path of worship. And this has been so more or less in all religions and in all countries.

Our vision is limited, and all that we see is coloured by its limitations. We say we see light, but what we see is not light as it is, but only a reflection, and that also only within a certain range. Our understanding is also circumscribed. We try to know a thing, but find its real nature hidden from us. And what we know, we know with the coloured glasses of our mind, through the medium of what Sankarâchârya calls Kâla, Desa and Nimitta—the time, space and causation of modern philosophical phraseology. In short, we are bound to the domain of the finite, of symbols, which point to the Truth, but are not able to express It truly and fully.

Again, there are symbols and symbols—the real ones and the false ones. The mirage has got the appearance of water, but it is a delusive phenomenon which has nothing to do with water. If we take it to be a symbol of water, it will prove to be a false one. While the wave may be recognized as a true symbol of the ocean because it rises out of it, is in touch with it, and also gets merged in it. Like the ocean, it is made of the same substance, water.

Further, there are, as we shall see, lower and higher symbols. The alphabet or the image is a symbol of the sound or name, the sound or name a

symbol of thought, and even thought becomes a symbol of the Reality which it tries to express, but can do so only inadequately.

In Hinduism the domain of symbols and worship of Divine Personalities is a vast one, and therefore I shall limit myself only to some of the symbols and Divine Personalities used in worship and meditation, and give you just a glimpse of what may be called the use of symbols and Holy Forms in spiritual life, beginning with the Vedic times and coming down to our present days.

SYMBOLS IN ANCIENT AND LATER HINDUISM

The simple-hearted Vedic Rishis worshipped Indra—the Thunderer and the Giver of rains, Mitra—the God who regulated the course of the sun, Varuna—the God who dwelt in the bright blue sky and released the penitent from sin, Agni—the God of fire—spoken of sometimes as Father, and also as Brother, Kinsman and Friend. Savitâ—the Solar Deity who stimulated life and activity in the world was invoked for guiding the understanding of the devotee. It was a very striking fact that at the very dawn of man's spiritual consciousness some of the Vedic seers, while most of them prayed mainly for their material welfare and happiness, could recognize the presence of an Indwelling Spirit at the back of each and every natural phenomenon. And behind their apparently polytheistic conceptions there lay a deeply engrained monotheism that was clearly expressed, as each god was invoked and worshipped as omnipotent, omniscient, and even omnipresent. Truly speaking, many of the seers, specially the advanced ones, felt that they were worshipping the one and the same Divine Being under different manifestations and names. This is made clear in the well-known hymn that

declares—"To what is one, sages give many a name. They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna and Agni." And this wonderful current of applied monotheism has been flowing uninterruptedly even down to the present day.

There has taken place a great revolution in the Hindu Religion, specially with reference to the symbols and names associated with worship and prayers. Names like Vishnu and Rudra that were once of minor importance came to be prominent in later times, while those of Indra and Mitra and others have been practically forgotten and replaced by other names. Besides, the worship of Vishnu and Siva and the Divine Mother in some form or other, and the worship of Incarnations and prophets like Rama and Krishna, have become popular everywhere. But in the midst of all these phenomenal changes the Hindu devotee's conception of the Highest Deity, his highest spiritual hopes and aspirations, his desire to seek Divine aid and guidance, and his yearning for spiritual communion have remained unchanged. With the march of time it has been recognized even more than before that the Impersonal Principle is the background of all holy symbols and Divine Personalities representing it in some form or other. There are religious bigots who speak of the superiority of their particular gods, Incarnations or prophets, but true seers having the synthetic vision regard them all as different expressions of the Impersonal and the Supreme which, like the ocean, may give rise to innumerable waves, but remains infinite and unfathomable as ever. Indeed, men of the highest spiritual illumination have realized that whatever may be the symbol or personality one may begin with, the highest goal of spiritual life lies in the ultimate experience of the Impersonal—the One

without a second, in which the worshipper, nay God, souls and the universe, get merged and become one and infinite.

SYMBOLS AND DIVINE PERSONALITIES IN MODERN TIMES

In Vedanta we have got monistic meditations that negate the non-self and assert the Self.

"I am neither the mind nor the intellect, neither memory nor ego. I am not the senses of hearing or touch, smell or sight. I am not the body, neither ether, nor earth nor fire nor air. I am Absolute Knowledge and Bliss. I am the All-pervading Self. I am the All-pervading Self."

"I am the Self, changeless and formless, all-pervading and omnipresent. I am beyond the touch of sense-attachment. I am beyond all bondage and relative knowledge. I am the All-pervading Self. I am the All-pervading Self."

Such meditations, if practised by one who has made himself perfectly free from desires and attachments through strenuous disciplines, may be said to be the direct path leading to the realization of the Absolute.

This is in a line with the approach to the Reality followed by some of the boldest of the Upanishadic seers who thus meditated on the Immutable—"It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long, without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind, without interior or exterior." "This Immutable is never seen, but is the Witness; It is never thought, but is the Thinker; It is never known, but is the Knower."

Besides these conceptions of the Absolute, Transcendent Reality—the One without a second—there are the ideas of the Immanent Divine Principle manifesting itself through finite forms and yet remaining Infinite and Formless

—the One in the many—which appeal even now, as it did in older times, to many aspirants who prefer to worship the Impersonal, as they feel no interest in the Personal aspects of the Divine.

Like the seers of the Upanishads they meditate—"He is below, He is above, He is at the back, He is in front, He is in the north, He is in the south, He indeed is everywhere and in everything." "He is subtler than the subtlest, vaster than the vastest, the Self seated in the heart of all beings." He exists in and through the earth, air, sun, moon and stars; He dwells in all beings; He inhabits the eye, ear, mind and intellect; He controls everything and every being from within; He is the Internal Ruler, the Immortal Self of the worshipper.

But even this form of impersonal meditation is too difficult for most devotees.

As Sri Krishna has put it in the Bhagavad Gita, "Greater is the difficulty of those whose minds are set on the Absolute. For, the heights of the Absolute are very hard for the embodied being to reach." But often it happens that the symbol or the personal aspect of the Divine does not appeal to the philosophic sense of the devotee, while the Impersonal appears to be an abstraction and is beyond his reach. Hence the worship and meditation of the Impersonal through the personal aspects and symbols has been most popular in higher Hinduism in almost all forms of spiritual practice.

The true devotee sometimes looks upon the Divine form he worships as an embodiment of the Divine attributes that reveal the Supreme Principle in some way or other. In his worship of the same God the undeveloped devotee thinks in a crude way, takes everything more or less in a material sense, while the more evolved soul thinks in terms of the higher aspects. He means by the

symbol or form a divine idea, and this idea again becomes a symbol of the Reality that is at the back of all, is the goal of all. This is the course of progress a devotee follows if he persists in the worship of the "chosen ideal" or the Deity or the aspect of the Divine that appeals to him most.

Siva is one of the gods of popular Hinduism. The gross-minded worshipper may take Him to be the God of Destruction dwelling in the lonely mountains or on the cremation ground. But to the evolved devotee he is the embodiment of renunciation and the destroyer of evil. He is, besides, the personification of contemplation and Divine Consciousness. Thus does the advanced worshipper sing His glory—

"O Lord, Thou art the Universal Being without a second. Thou art everything. Thou art the One Truth, and verily there is nothing but Thee. O Thou Destroyer of Misery, therefore, in Thee—the Great God—do I take refuge."

The materially-minded worshipper of Vishnu sees in Him the God of protection and preservation who, out of His infinite mercy, incarnates Himself for the good of His devotees. But the devotee of the highest type sees in Him the embodiment of the Divine Principle permeating the entire universe, in whom is being enacted the world-play with its creation, preservation and dissolution. And he prays—

"Lord, Thou abidest in all; Thou art all; Thou assumest all forms. Thou art the origin of all. Thou art the Soul of all. Salutations to Thee!"

The worship of the Divine Energy or Mother-Power is prevalent in some form or other in most parts of India. SHE has many forms and symbols. Sometimes SHE is symbolized as the Goddess of Death, playing the dance of destruction. In the form of Kâli, SHE is re-

presented as the Power of creation, protection and destruction, and also as the Power in which all things rest after dissolution. SHE stands on the still, prostrate form of Siva, the representation of the Absolute. This is symbolical of the entire cosmic process having the transcendental Reality as its basis. Again, SHE in one form is the relative, and in another form Siva—the Absolute. And Reality is beyond both life and death, and as such the devotee should cling neither to life, nor be afraid of death. He should rise above both the pleasant and the terrible to the transcendental plane from where he can say, "The shade of death and Immortality—both these, O Mother, are Thy grace." And addressing Her the devotee says, "Thou hast neither name nor lineage; neither birth nor death; neither pain nor pleasure; neither friend nor enemy; neither bondage nor freedom. Thou art the One without a second, known as the Being Supreme."

Râma is one of the Incarnations of Vishnu, and is the embodiment of the devotion to Truth and Duty, for the sake of which He is prepared to make any sacrifice, however great. The ordinary worshipper stresses His lovely form and noble attributes. But the illumined devotee sees Him immanent in all, and prays, "Thou art the embodiment of the highest virtues. Thou art the Indweller, the Supreme Being. Thou art the greatest Refuge and Saviour of mankind. Thou art the stainless, changeless, indestructible, pure and eternal Wisdom and Truth."

The Krishna-ideal in its various forms is very common; but is also most misunderstood by many. Crude-minded critics take His sport in a vulgar sense. But devotees, like Ramakrishna, who never knew what immorality was and were the embodiment of purity and holi-

ness, saw in Him the highest ideal of Love Divine, which can be realized only by those who have become free from all traces of sensuality and crudeness. Realizing His "Universal Form," manifest in every individual, the devotee

makes obeisance to Him saying, "Salutations to Thee before and to Thee behind. Salutations to Thee on every side. O Lord, Thou art everything. Infinite in power and infinite in prowess, Thou pervadest all; Thou art all."

(To be continued)

THE CONCEPT OM

BY PROF. C. C. CHATTERJI, M.A.

I

OM is the beginning of all things. There was no time when it was not; nor will there be any time when it will cease to be; for OM is co-existent with God. The Upanishads say that the one word OM is Brahman, ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म। They "sing to one clear harp in diverse tones" that OM is the microcosmic representation of the Universe and its varied aspects. The *Māndukyopaniṣad* has in its first verse :

"The word OM is all this world : now begins its interpretation. Present, Past and Future—all that is OM : if there is anything beyond Time, even that also is OM." In other words, a clear perception of the concept OM will unveil the mystery that envelopes this phenomenal world and the world of spiritual consciousness.

Not only the Rishis of India, but the philosophers of all ages and climes postulated a similar first cause in their expositions of theological and metaphysical matters. Analogous to the conception of OM is the Greek conception of LOGOS—a word which in its attributes resembles OM. Heraclitus, Zeno, Philo and other Greek philosophers of that school hold that LOGOS exists from all times; it is the dynamic principle underlying the processes of cosmic evolution; it is the divine intelli-

gence regulating the systems of the Universe; it is God.

This LOGOS idea finds expression in the New Testament also; but as LOGOS has no equivalent in any other language, it appears there as "Word." In the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, St. John, who obviously possessed a knowledge of the LOGOS doctrine, writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." So like the Hindus and the Greeks, the Christians too begin the beginning with a word as the cause of creation, and believe in its identity with Christ, which is, therefore, "the way, the truth and the life." The mind of man, it seems, out on a voyage in quest of truth, floating adrift in currents of doubts and surmises, for who knows how long, at last found its sheet-anchor in the WORD, LOGOS, and OM, which in essence are one, being one with God.

II

But the conception of OM staggers the imagination, so wide is it in its comprehensiveness, so deep in its significance, so rich in its beneficence. It is composed of four parts, and even each part, say the Upanishads, is 'pregnant with celestial fire.' In a simple essay like this only a feeble attempt could be made to understand

it a little, and that of one aspect of it. To study it in all its ramifications and to sound its depth, one has to go to the Upanishads. We shall, therefore, confine our attention to one feature of its character, so far as it stands for the different stages in which mind and matter exist.

OM is made up of four components—the three letters, अ, उ, म्, and Nâda-Bindu. “Nâda,” explains Arthur Avalon in his *Serpent Power*, “is the first produced movement in the ideating cosmic consciousness leading up to the Sound-Brahman (Sabda-brahman), whence all ideas, the language in which they are expressed (Sabda), and the objects (Artha) which they denote, are derived.” Bindu literally means a point, a dot; but into its technical meaning we need not go.

Now, all matter may be said to exist in four conditions. The first one is the *gross*, where matter exists in its crude form; the second is the *fine* state, which brings to light the structure of matter; the third is a *finer* state, which gives an insight into the nature of matter; and the fourth is that which reveals matter in its ultimate reality. As an illustration we may take into consideration what is known in the scientific world as Dalton’s Atomic Theory. When Dalton explained (not for the first time though) that matter was composed of indivisible particles called atoms, he brought our knowledge of things only to the second stage. Recent investigations into the constitution of matter, declaring that even the atoms are made up of a large number of infinitely minute particles called electrons, have advanced our knowledge further to the third stage. The electrons in the final analysis being charges of electricity, the nature of electricity has yet to be ascertained before Reality could be discovered. But it was known to the

ancient Rishis. They did not, of course, carry on scientific researches, but in moments of transcendent illumination they saw visions of the Reality, the Primordial Substance, into which all matter could be resolved. They were not only poets of things that were, but prophets of things that were to be. And to place their experiences within the reach of men, thirsting for divine wisdom, they offered them the apocalyptic OM, of which the four letters are intended to represent the four states of matter.

Likewise the four stages, through which the Mind of man has to pass in its ascent from the lower to the higher regions of spirituality, are telescoped in the four letters of OM. The first letter indicates the first stage of wide wakefulness (जाग्रत) of the senses, when the mind is absorbed in the sensuous enjoyment of objects of sight, touch, taste, smell and sound. The second letter stands for the next stage of a dream-like (सुषुप्ति) condition of the mind. It is not a lower, but a higher condition than the first one; for in it the outward-directed senses are turned inward, and the mind finds its joy in the objects of an inner world and in the ideas and desires aroused by sense-perceptions in the waking stage. The third plane, represented by the third letter, is that of deep sleep (सुषुप्ति) where the sense-organs cease to function and desires lose their existence. There the consciousness of the mind is neither objective nor subjective; and it lives in a world of ineffable joy, which is, to use a biological term, abiogenetic, for it is independent of any object. The fourth letter NADA-BINDU, corresponds to highest Godhood state (तुरीय) which the mind can attain. In this plane the mind rises above even the blissful third state, realizes the supreme consciousness of, “I am,” and along with it,

"I am He,"—and then the wave melts into the Ocean.

III

This last stage in the spiritual development of man marks his final return to the Source, whence started the creative movement; and the four-fold character of OM not only supplies the theoretical basis for understanding this reverse process, but renders practical help to the soul in its lone march through the path of its journey. But of this help few of us are inclined to avail ourselves. We are mad after worldly pursuits, forgetful of our divine nature, forgetful of the immense possibilities which may be worked out in us; for man, to use the words of Shakespeare, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty; in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!" But slaving it under the domination of the material senses, man has lost his spiritual heritage. He has bartered his soul for a mess of pottage—waking, he indulges in the gross pleasures of the senses; dreaming, he finds enjoyment in chewing the cud of the wakeful hours; sleeping, he is in a state of dull torpor of the physical and mental faculties brought on by the senses. In consequence, his spirit is constantly ruffled by joys and sorrows; his mind is torn with conflicting passions; his life swings like a pendulum between birth and death for evermore. And yet it need not be so. The sound of OM can call away the mind which, as the Upanishads put it, roves in the pleasure-gardens of the senses. The light of OM can illumine the mind dark with the shades of ignorance. Man can raise himself to the highest pitch of his being where his divinity unfolds. Let him

glean but a few moments from the hours of his daily participation in the rough and tumble of this world and consecrate them to the contemplation of OM, and peace and blessedness will enrich his life. Swami Vivekananda during his stay at Thousand Island Park in America, once gave a talk on this point to his disciples. We may read in his *Inspired Talks*,—"Isvara is the Atman as seen or grasped by the mind. His highest name is OM; so repeat it, meditate on it and think of all its wonderful nature and attributes. Repeating the OM continually is the only true worship. It is not a word, it is God Himself."

Coupling these words of the Swamiji with the following ones of Sri Krishna, we may build up a regular system of worship. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we have :

"Sitting on the seat (described in the previous verse), he, who has brought the functions of the mind and senses under control, should concentrate his mind, and practise Yoga for the purification of the soul. The body, the head and the neck should be held straight and motionless; and the sight directed towards the tip of the nose, and not towards this or that side." So far as the posture is concerned, the important point to be noticed is that one has to sit upright with the spinal cord perpendicular to the ground where one has the seat. But with regard to the method of repeating OM, nothing has yet been given in detail. We may profit by the enlightened words of the mystic poet and saint, Kabir. He writes in one of his couplets: "I proclaim it with the beat of drums that the breath is going empty (of the sound of OM), which is worth the price of the three worlds—Heaven, earth and the under-world." What Kabir wants to emphasize warrants serious considera-

tion. We all know that breathing signifies and sustains life; but few of us care to know how we breathe. Kabir says, firstly, that the process of breathing which goes on unconsciously, should be turned into a conscious action; and secondly, every time a man inhales and exhales, he should steadily repeat OM with the mind in it. OM is to be the breath of life.

This in brief is the *modus operandi*—simple yet profound—of a system of Yoga. But whatever theoretical knowledge we may gather, Yoga being a practical science, a teacher, a Guru with knowledge and experience, is necessary to initiate the neophyte into the mysteries of this spiritual practice. It is the Guru who can read his disciple, give him instructions fit to mould him into shape, and point out the course he has to adopt. All this is a very slow process; but the tree bears fruit in time. Under the guidance of the Guru, the aspirant gradually rises from the gross state of अ , goes to the subtle state of उ , advances to the yet subtler state of ऋ , and finally merges into Nâda-Bindu. The seed sown by the

Guru takes root in the Ajnâ Chakra—a plexus situated in the forehead. The heliotropic sprouts shoot up towards the refulgent sun of Sahasrâra, the thousand petalled lotus; and the geotropic roots move down towards the firm seat of Sakti imbedded in the human system. Then the curtain drops on 'the sick-bed drama of self-consciousness,' and Blake's prayer is realized in all its glory—"O Saviour, Annihilate the Selfhood in me; be Thou all my life." But before this ultimate goal is reached, the initiate enjoys the thrills of novel experiences. In hours of quiet contemplation, when he is in tune with OM, he becomes conscious of a sound vibrating in the body—that ceaseless sound which is immanent in all creation. By and by it becomes audible in the right ear, and abides with him in all seasons.

Then comes Sri Krishna. On the banks of the Pingalâ—Jamuna, he plays upon his flute. The charm of his music lures away the mind—Râdhikâ, into other worlds where it is lost in the light of his Love.

The rest is silence.

THE REALITIES OF MODERN EDUCATION

BY DR. A. R. PODUVAL, B.A., M.D.

Nobody would have believed till very recently that education, theoretically meant for the betterment of man's condition, would have produced a problem contrary to its original purposes. The educated unemployed seem to be in a much worse condition than the uneducated, most of whom succeed in finding out an employment. It would seem that education was just the final act of accretion that dislocated man from his normal hopeful outlook on life.

This has no reference to the problem of 'world unemployment' which has quite different causes. The unemployment problem of the 'educated' seems to be peculiar to India, and would probably go on increasing until people begin to perceive, that institutional training need not necessarily and inevitably lead to Government employment.

The largest percentage of jobs in which an opening is possible is not a specialized branch of any profession, but

is made up of clerkships, teachers, and the lesser minions in office. It is rather curious that both the employers, and those who wish to get employed, consider, the ordinary course of School or College training, good enough for the jobs in question. When 75 per cent. of the official service can fit itself to the accomplishments of these 'educated' individuals, one is led to suspect that there is something wrong with the jobs, or the sort of education which gives the passport for the jobs.

At any rate, it has become more or less obvious now, that no Government can afford to employ all the multitudes of students turned out every year from Schools and Colleges. This fact is pressing on the attention of the people more and more today, though they still always hold out a ray of hope, filtering through the despondence of frustration. Even in strictly professional service, the ranks are filled to overflowing. We are told that new recruits into the professions are no more wanted, whether it be Law, Medicine, Engineering, or Agriculture.

On the whole, there is a plethora of production in this world, whether in the form of living and moving commodity or other kinds of manufactured products. The result is poverty and depression. From the original ideas which were pushed forward with the new civilization, one would have thought that things were steadily moving on to a satisfactory end. And now we find all those ideas questioned, all those schemes baulked, and all the energy with which civilization started, disrupted and scattered as if it had exploded from its own internal pressure.

The Government job sequel at the finish of a purely academical training has so obsessed all sorts of people, that in our own society, the hereditary trades and tastes of several artisans and handi-

craftsmen have become atrophied. If we take the case of a goldsmith, or a carpenter, or a mason, or a potter, or any such class of artisans, we find that the glamour of a Government job has blinded them also, and instead of teaching their sons improved methods of their original craft, they make hectic efforts to procure for them such jobs as a clerkship, a police-constable, or even a petty peon in office. Within a generation or two, the craft of the artisan would become extinct. There are no Government jobs for the succeeding generations of these handicraftsmen; and having by this time, practically divorced themselves from their hereditary trades, they are let out to float in the world, among the mass of floatage of the unemployed.

The absurdity of the whole thing becomes all the more evident when we begin to recollect that the world cannot get on entirely or even partly with an official population of clerks, police constables and peons. It is entirely dependent on other people for its food, for shelter, and for the minor comforts of life. We want the agriculturists to provide us with grain; carpenters and masons to build houses; and other handicraftsmen to make clothes and utensils. And if all these people, instead of employing themselves in trades, so essential for life, become clerks and peons, they shall have only the jobs, and nothing to feed on or wear or live under. It would seem a great blunder to allow the sons of these hereditary craftsmen to enter into Government jobs, which entirely dissociate them from the calling to which they are most fitted by hereditary tastes and tendencies. We are already beginning to feel the results of such diverting of activities. The excellence of work of the artisan class, as a whole, has considerably deteriorated; an indigenous

industry shows every sign of dwindling into decadence.

Another aspect of the same problem was presented to me the other day by an old agriculturist, whom I have known for several years. In all provinces, the life of a medium agriculturist is beyond all privations. One could say that it is marked by a certain amount of abundance of food, fruits, vegetables and dairy products. The old man had, by hard work, in his own fields, contrived to support his wife and children and keep them in a very good condition. It was obvious from his appearance and his talk that he was a shrewd practical man, who had done hard manual labour, and knew a good deal about soil, seeds and sowing, about cattle, and all those implements and accessories relating to agriculture. But as everybody in the neighbourhood was sending their children to school, he also was induced to put his eldest son and daughter into the local educational institution. The school kept the children busy for some years afterwards, starting with the "Three R's and no nonsense," as educationists are so fond of saying. In fact, the "Three R's and no nonsense" kept them so busy, that there was hardly any time, to mind the real old business of agriculture, which had hitherto kept the family flourishing. As they rose into higher and higher classes, and the expenses of education began to increase, the old man found, that their education had to be met at the sacrifice of the little amenities of life, which the family had hitherto enjoyed. When the boy went from school to college, and the girl became restive under the economical restraint of further education, it was soon found that educational speculation was seriously telling upon the resources of the family, "And now,"

said the old man, as he stood in the field, spade in hand, and pointing towards the house, "There are in that building, two of my children, soft-handed and educated. There is no job for either of them. They are not wanted in any Department. The boy has adopted the usual 'Style' of educated folk, and does not know the difference between a bullock and a buffalo. The girl is a bit costlier in her costumes, and has not learnt the use of a broomstick. In a year or two, I shall be too old to do any work. We are too poor to engage workmen on any scale. And my educated children have learnt to take a distinct dislike to such manual labour, as agriculture demands."

Now, here is a problem for educationists to solve, and it is a serious problem. This is only one instance among hundreds of cases, in which education appears to have produced unhappy results in self-sustaining families. But theoretically, education ought to enhance the possibilities of trades and industries, and the "Three R's" ought not to result in a final "R" spelt out as "Regret." But in practice, that is what it amounts to. It may be objected by the educationists, that they have nothing to do with the agricultural activities of any family, one way or the other; that the "Three R's," and the sequel are meant to furnish the brain with that, which would give to a man the appearance of "Educated." It must be a curious custom in education, that dissociates its activities from the vital issues of life. The apparent simplicity and honesty of this theory would naturally lead us to suppose, that books would tend straight to a knowledge of bullocks and buffaloes, science to seeds and sowing, and history, I suppose, to harvesting. The builder, the bricklayer, the carpenter, the stone-mason, the potter, the cabinet-maker and the

tailor—all of them have a similar story to tell.

Education, further, is a very expensive affair; and even supposing there is any salvation in it, in the present form in which it is given, the chances of this salvation are as dubious as the spiritual salvation in the Bible: "Many are called, but few are chosen." When the educationist points out to a few individuals who have risen to high positions, they are unconsciously or studiously avoiding to mention the cases of the larger percentage who are not able to earn an amount equal to the interest on the sum spent for education. An educational idea, that the students must be taught simplicity in living; that the simple and plain life is in itself an education, has not yet appeared. When I was a student, I lived on two meals a day, and thrived. Tea and coffee came later in the menu, after I had completed the Matriculation. In those days, it was a luxury of exotic origin whose value as food was very much doubted. We had our own indigenous games, often improvised, and the total cost of paraphernalia was ridiculously small. And yet we kept splendid health. We had to do gardening at home, on holidays—digging, planting, manuring and watering, so much so that nearly all the fresh vege-

tables we needed were grown at home. Today we find that an expensive intellectual education is supplemented by an expensive physical education in the form of Sports, all of them foreign, and all requiring foreign-made costly materials. A tennis bat may not be too expensive an implement for a couple of pounds in Europe; but the same thing translated into Indian money, is an enormous amount. I have often wondered whether tossing a ball this side and that of a net is just the panacea for physical culture for all students, rich and poor alike, and, whether for the poor who form the majority, some other less costly and more purposeful exercise, say, gardening, will not prove equally wholesome.

From what I have said, it is obvious that education as administered to youngsters at present, is not exactly the sort of stuff that would tend to organize growth and efficiency, or even to ameliorate the sufferings in our community. On the other hand, paradoxical as it may seem, it has created the atmosphere, that inevitably leads to chagrin and disappointment. It is not of any use, educationists telling us that they mean it in the best of common interests; in medical language, we will say that it is an error in diagnosis, in prognosis and in treatment.

Goodness gracious! What a fuss and fury about graduating, and after a few days all cooled down! . . . At last they cannot keep the wolf from the door! What does it matter whether this higher education remains or goes? It would be better if the people got a little technical education so that they may find work and earn their bread instead of dawdling about and crying for service.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

CHAPTER I

SECTION I

Topic 1: The inquiry into Brahman and its pre-requisites

अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा ॥ १ ॥

अथ Now अतः therefore ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा the inquiry (into the real nature) of Brahman.

1. Now (after the attainment of the requisite spiritual qualities) therefore (as the results obtained by sacrifices etc., are ephemeral, whereas the result of the knowledge of Brahman is eternal), the inquiry (into the real nature) of Brahman (which is best with doubts owing to the conflicting views of various schools of philosophy, should be taken up).

At the very beginning the utility of such an inquiry is questioned.

Objection: Such an inquiry is not worth the trouble. An intelligent man generally does not enter into an inquiry about an object which is already known, or the knowledge of which does not serve any useful purpose. He is always guided by utility. Now Brahman is such an object. As Brahman pure and unconditioned, there is no doubt or indefiniteness about It, for we have such definitions as, "Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, Bliss" (Taitt. Up. 2-1-1). As identical with the Self (Atman)—which the Vedânta holds—also, there is no doubt about Brahman; for the Self is nothing but the object of the notion of 'I', the empirical self which is well-known to exist as something different from the body, senses, etc. Moreover, no one doubts his own existence. There is therefore no indefiniteness about Brahman, which would induce one to make an inquiry into It. The objection that this empirical self is a result of superimposition (Adhyâsa) of the non-Self on the Self and *vice versa*, and is therefore not the true Self, cannot be accepted, for such a superimposition between two absolutely contradictory objects is not possible.

Again, the knowledge of this Self or Brahman which, as shown above, everyone possesses, cannot destroy the world phenomena and help one to attain Liberation, for they have been existing together side by side all along from time immemorial. And as there is no other knowledge of the Self besides 'Ego-consciousness', which can be called the true knowledge of the Self, there is no chance of the world phenomena ever ceasing to exist. In other words, the world is a reality, and not something illusory. So the knowledge of Brahman serves no useful purpose such as the attainment of Liberation from relative existence (Samsâra). For these reasons an inquiry into Brahman is not desirable.

Answer: An inquiry into Brahman is desirable, because there is some indefiniteness with respect to It, for we find various conflicting views concerning

Its nature. Different schools of philosophy hold different views. Superimposition would have been an impossibility, and there would have been no indefiniteness about Brahman, if the empirical self had been the real Self. But it is not. The scriptures (Srutis) say that the Self is free from all limiting adjuncts and is infinite, all-blissful, all-knowledge, One without a second, and so on. This the scriptures repeatedly inculcate, and as such it cannot be interpreted in any secondary or figurative sense. But the empirical self is felt as occupying definite space, as when we say, 'I am in the room,' as involved in manifold miseries, as ignorant, etc. How can this kind of notion be regarded as the true knowledge of the Self? To regard the Self, which is beyond limitation, etc., as being limited, etc., is itself an illusion, and hence superimposition is a self-evident fact. The result of the true knowledge of the Self leads to Liberation and so serves a very, very fruitful purpose. Therefore an inquiry about Brahman through an examination of the Vedânta texts dealing with It is worth while and should be undertaken.

The word *now* in the Sutra is not used to introduce a new subject that is going to be taken up, in which sense it is generally used in other places, as for example, in the beginning of the Yoga Sutas or the Purva Mimâmsâ Sutas. Neither is it used in any other sense, except that of immediate consecution, that is, it implies an antecedent, which existing, the inquiry about Brahman would be possible, and without which it would be impossible. This antecedent is neither the study of the Vedas, for it is a common requisite for the Purva-Mimâmsâ as well as the Vedânta, nor the knowledge and performance of rituals prescribed by the Karmakânda, for these in no way help one who aspires after knowledge, but certain spiritual requisites. The spiritual requisites referred to are : (1) discrimination between things permanent and transient, (2) renunciation of the enjoyment of fruits of action in this world and in the next, (3) the six treasures, as they are called, *viz.*, not allowing the mind to externalize and checking the external instruments of the sense organs (Sama and Dama), ideal forbearance (Titikshâ), not thinking of things of the senses (Uparati), faith (Sraddhâ), and constant practice to fix the mind in God (Samâdhâna); and (4) the intense desire to be free (Mumukshutvam).

Topic 2: Definition of Brahman

जन्माद्यस्य यतः ॥ २ ॥

जन्मादि Origin etc., (*i.e.* sustenance and dissolution) यस्य of this (world) यतः from which.

2. (Brahman is that omniscient, omnipotent cause) from which proceed the origin, etc., (*i.e.* sustenance and dissolution) of this (world).

In the previous Sutra it has been established that an inquiry into Brahman should be made as it helps Liberation. Knowledge of Brahman leads to Liberation. Now in order that we may attain this knowledge of Brahman, It must have some characteristics by which It can be known, otherwise it is not possible to have such knowledge. The opponent holds that Brahman has no such characteristics by which It can be defined, and in the absence of a

definition there can be no knowledge of Brahman, and consequently no Freedom.

This Sutra refutes that objection and gives a definition of Brahman : “That which is the cause of the world is Brahman”—where the imagined “cause of the world” is indicative of Brahman. This is called the *Tatastha Lakshana*, or that characteristic of a thing which is distinct from its nature and yet serves to make it known. In the definition given by this Sutra, the origin, sustenance and dissolution are characteristics of the world and as such are in no way related to Brahman, which is eternal and changeless; yet these indicate Brahman, which is imagined to be the cause of the world, just as an imagined snake indicates the rope when we say, “that which is the snake is the rope.”

The scriptures give another definition of Brahman which describes Its true nature : “Truth, Knowledge, Infinity is Brahman.” This is called the *Svarupa Lakshana*, that which defines Brahman in Its true essence. These words, though they have different meanings in ordinary parlance, yet refer to the one indivisible Brahman, even as the words, father, son, brother, husband, etc., refer to one and the same person according to his relation with different individuals.

It must not however be thought that the First Cause of the universe is arrived at by this Sutra through mere reasoning, inference and other means of right knowledge usually valid in this sense-world. Brahman cannot be so established independently of the scriptures (*Sruti*). Though from the effect, the world, we can infer that it must have a cause, we cannot establish with certainty what exactly is the nature of that cause. We cannot say that Brahman alone is the cause and nothing else, as Brahman is not an object of the senses. The relation of cause and effect can be established where both the objects are perceived. Inference, etc., may give only strong suggestions of Brahman’s being the First Cause of the world. A thing established by mere inference, however well thought out, is explained otherwise by greater intellects. Reasoning also is endless according to the intellectual capacity of people and therefore cannot go far in the ascertainment of Truth. So the scriptures ought to be the basis of all reasoning. It is experience that carries weight, and the scriptures are authoritative because they are the records of the experience of master minds that have come face to face with Reality (*Aptavākhyā*). That is why the scriptures are infallible. Hence in ascertaining the First Cause the scriptures alone are authority.

The prime object of this Sutra, therefore, is not to establish Brahman through inference but to discuss scriptural passages which declare that Brahman is the First Cause—texts like : “That from which these beings are born, by which they live after birth and into which they enter at death—try to know That. That is Brahman” (*Taitt. Up. 3-1*). The Sutra collects *Vedānta* texts for the full comprehension of Brahman. Once the scriptures have declared Brahman to be the First Cause, reasoning, etc., may be taken advantage of in so far as they do not contradict the scriptures, but rather supplement them, in ascertaining the sense of the *Vedānta* texts. Such reasoning must be corroborative of the truth inculcated. This kind of reasoning includes the hearing of the texts (*Sravaṇa*), thinking about their meaning (*Manana*) and meditation on them (*Nididhyāsana*). This leads to intuition. By intuition is meant that mental modification (*Vritti*) of the mind (*Chitta*) which destroys

our ignorance about Brahman. When the ignorance is destroyed by this mental modification in the form of Brahman (Brahmâkârâ Vritti), Brahman, which is self-luminous, reveals Itself. In ordinary perception when we cognize an object the mind (Chitta) takes the form of the external object, which destroys the ignorance about it, and consciousness reflected in this modification of the mind manifests the object. In the case of Brahman, however, the mental modification destroys the ignorance, but Brahman, which is consciousness pure and simple, manifests Itself, being self-luminous. That is why the scriptures describe Brahman as 'Not this,' 'Not this,' thus removing the ignorance about it. Nowhere is Brahman described positively as 'It is this,' 'It is this'.

There is thus a difference between an inquiry into Brahman and an inquiry into religious duty (Dharma Jijnâsâ). In the latter case, the scriptures alone are authority. The Purva Mimâmsâ says that if you do such and such a thing, you will get such and such results. It is something yet to come and does not exist at the time. So no other proof is available regarding the truth of these statements except faith in them. But the Vedânta speaks about Brahman, which is an already existing entity, and not dependent on human endeavour. Therefore besides faith in the scriptural texts there are other means available to corroborate its statements. That is why there is room for reasoning, etc., in the Vedânta.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Spiritual Experiences of Sri Ramakrishna are culled from various authentic biographies. . . . Swami Premananda was an intimate disciple of Sri Ramakrishna of whom he said 'his very marrow is pure'. The present article *Preparations for Higher Life* is the substance of one of his talks. . . . Prof. Mahendranath Sircar is our old contributor. *Ramakrishna-Vivekananda* is one of the lectures he delivered in Rome under the auspices of the Society for the Middle and Far East which invited him last year to deliver a series of lectures on Indian Philosophy and Modern Hinduism. . . . Mr. Brij Lal Sharma is a new contributor. In his present article *Is the World an Illusion?* he deals with the good old question in a new light. . . . In *Spinoza on the Culture of the*

Understanding Prof. Sheo Narayan Lal Shrivastava discusses how according to the Jewish philosopher the way to Freedom lies in the control of emotions by reason. . . . *A Glimpse into Hindu Religious Symbolology* is the substance of a lecture delivered at Ascona, Switzerland, by Swami Yatiswarananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Mission, who is now in Germany as a preacher of Vedanta. The Swami was for some years the head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, before he sailed for the West. . . . Prof. C. C. Chatterji is the senior professor of English, St. Andrew's College, Gorakhpur. In *The Concept Om* he discusses the various ideas involved in this symbol Om. Dr. A. R. Poduval points out the defects of modern education in *The Realities of Modern Education*.

OUR COVER PAGE

The Himalayas, the Father of mountains, the home of ancient Rishis and the abode of philosophy ever reverberate with the one message—renunciation. They stand for renunciation which is the essence of all religions. All quarrel between religion and religion will have to vanish and mankind will have to understand that there is but one eternal religion—the perception of the Divine within. The rest is mere talk. That is the message of the Himalayas and of the *Prabuddha Bharata*.

The sketch of the snow-clad Himalayas on the cover page is from the brush of Mr. Manindra Bhushan Gupta, an artist whose pictures are very much appreciated as expressing the tradition of Indian Art. The artist has achieved wonderful effect with minimum effort by a few touches of his brush and in spite of the defects that were inevitable in putting it in print the work is still perfect in its technic.

The solitary Bhikku under the tree stands in silent amazement and bends down his head to the awe-inspiring Himalayas which are closely associated with the best memories of the race—with everything good and great in Indian culture. The mist is clearing and the Bhikku welcomes the dawn which is once more bringing to the nations of the world the message of the Himalayas—vanity of vanities, everything is vanity except the worship of the Lord and Lord alone.

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

Sir Radhakrishnan, in his speech as the chairman of the Reception Committee at the last Indian Philosophical Congress, pointed out the plague-spot of the modern civilization, when he said, "There is no central purpose in

life which will give us poise and dignity." This he has very beautifully brought out by quoting a short story of Oscar Wilde, which reads thus :

"Christ came to a white plain from a purple city and as he passed through the first street, he heard voices overhead and saw a young man lying drunk on a window sill and said, 'Why do you waste your soul in drunkenness?' He said, 'Lord, I was a leper and you healed me. What else can I do?' A little further through the town he saw a young man following a harlot and said, 'Why do you dissolve your soul in debauchery?' And the young man answered, 'Lord, I was blind and you healed me; what else can I do?' At last in the middle of the city he saw an old man crouching, weeping, upon the ground; and when he asked why he wept, the old man answered, 'Lord, I was dead and you raised me into life, what else can I do but weep?'"

This is exactly the case with us. We do things as a matter of course and do not know why we do them specially when there is something better to do. Carried away by impulses we move our limbs and brains, which take us to scientific discoveries and to the enjoyment of fruits thereof. But impulses do not take any particular course. Fickle as they are, they take men sometimes to good and noble things and sometimes to just their opposites. Sometimes they build with the care of a mother and sometimes they destroy their own creations with a ruthless fanaticism. Herein lies the defect of the modern civilization which is not all bad. There are good points in it and their number is by no means small. But there is no knowing when these strong and unsteady impulses will work the other way about and bring on death and desolation to the world.

This Eur-American civilization, which is modern civilization, does not suffer from want of reason. Rather there is an overdose of it. The nature of reason is that it always works towards

or round a given thing. It must be given some data to start with, some ideal or standard to lead to. Without these it can't profitably work. If a carefully chosen ideal is not set before it, it will seek out some from the subconscious regions of the mind. Reason must direct the impulses towards a higher ideal in life. Else, so-called reason will lead us astray.

THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY DAY

A nation is built in its schools and colleges, and the builders are its universities. Movements—political, social or economical, come and go. They are freaks of nature, not its laws. They have their merits and demerits. But the universities stand on a unique and glorious footing. They do not make any noise. They speak the language of silence, which is most effective. They teach the culture of the land and conserve its forces. These they can and ought to do. The reverence they get from the people is based on this legitimate expectation. How much we wish that our Indian universities rise to this ideal!

It gives us not a little pleasure to see the University of Calcutta celebrating its Day in a fitting manner. To many it is nothing but a spectacular affair, a waste of money and energy. But to us it gives sure indications that

the University is going to lead Bengal. It has awakened to the imperative necessity of leading its youth.

The Vice-Chancellor says, he wants to unite all college students under the banner of the University. Yes, under the loving, protecting wings of the University. And this union will not stop there but will lead to economic, sanitary and educational regeneration of the country. Under the able guidance of the young Vice-chancellor, we have reasons to hope, the alumni will get an all round training. Universities of advanced countries might have a limited sphere of activity, but the scope of our universities can hardly know any limits. They should be nation-wide in their activities; they should include, mould and guide all sorts of activities that make and ennoble a nation. It is but proper that our universities should be given a free hand not only in the higher education of the land but also in its secondary and even primary education. For one ideal, one policy should run through the whole system from the lowest to the highest. They include the best brains of the land and as such they are entitled to evolve and direct its entire educational system. Even otherwise, with the college students alone our universities are in a position to build the nation, if only they care.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

PLANNED ECONOMY FOR INDIA. By Sir M. Visvesvaraya, K.C.I.E., D.Sc., LL.D., M.I.C.E. *Bangalore Press, Mysore Road, Bangalore, 432 pp. Price Rs. 6.*

It is a book which discusses all aspects of India's economic problem. It gives a scheme before the Government and the public as well. The first part of the book deals with the problems of Indian poverty. The second

part proposes a Ten-year Plan and an All-India organization.

The economic situation in India has been closely examined and compared with five or six of the most prosperous countries of the world, and the results are embodied in the earlier chapters in Part I of the book as well as in the Statistical Tables given at the end.

The average income of the Indian and his standard of living are the lowest among nations ruled by a civilized Government. The country suffers from a poverty which has admittedly no parallel in Western countries. Foreign debt is growing. Death rate is the highest. As a result of the low standard of living and malnutrition, the average Indian lives only to about half the age that the people of England and other progressive countries do. The country is growing increasingly rural and over 90 per cent. of the population is illiterate, and these grave deficiencies attract no notice. There are probably more unemployed in India today than in all Europe, but the existence of the unemployment problem is ignored by omitting to keep a count of the unemployed. On whichever side of national development one looks, the conditions are extremely depressing.

The Ten-year Plan provides for very rapid extension of industries, public works, public utilities, increase of production and a substantial check on ruralization. It will also help to extend mass education, bring into the country up-to-date machinery and tools, make their use familiar to the people, spread a knowledge of sound business principles and practices and equip leaders with technical skill and executive ability. Rough estimates of growth anticipated in many of these respects in the ten-year period are given in an all-India schedule of developments. A provincial schedule is also given to illustrate the kind of activities to be initiated and developed in a Province or State. The economic organization will consist of one All-India Economic Council and its Committee, associated with the Development Department of the Central Government and its Committee. Every Provincial Government will have a similar organization consisting of a Development Department and Committee, working in co-operation with a Provincial Economic Council and Committee. There will be a local Economic Council, besides, in every district and city to carry out local improvements, its chief object being to encourage initiative and co-operation as a regular habit in the local population for promoting their common economic advance.

To make this new plan a success, the Indian public will have to improve their capacity for group effort. The local economic councils should be composed of the most competent persons available, and their

internal discipline maintained so effectively that it should be possible to replace any of its members the moment he or she ceases to be active and useful.

"The Plan outlined here," says the author, "has been carefully thought out and prepared after more than one visit to, and years of study of the economic activities in, the progressive countries of the West and Japan."

We recommend the book to our countrymen for its great experience, deep study and practical wisdom.

SELF, THOUGHT AND REALITY.
By A. C. Mukherji, M.A. Reader in Philosophy, Allahabad University. *Published by T. C. Chatterji, B.A., Leader Road, Allahabad. 402 pp. Price Rs. 6-4.*

The book under review, as the author writes in the Preface is "a study in the ultimate principles of knowledge and existence, and is therefore predominantly epistemological in character." Nine brilliant chapters are devoted to discussions on the ultimate epistemological implicates of the relation of thought and reality and in the remaining four chapters a transition is made to the problem of the Self, which, as the author rightly observes, "is undoubtedly the most ultimate of the transcendental conditions of knowledge." The author brings us ultimately to a theory of Self "through a consideration of the morphology of knowledge" (p. 2). It is rightly contended that it is only on a correct analysis of the knowledge situation that a true theory of the Self can be founded. The author frankly disavows any claim to originality nor does he profess any claim to finality. "Finality in a philosophical enquiry," he tells us, "is bound to remain a mere ideal."

The author's observations on such controversial topics as idealism *versus* realism, coherence theory *versus* correspondence theory, etc., are balanced and instructive. All that idealism contends is, in the author's view, that "thought is the medium of the self-expression of Reality ; or, to put it from the other side, Reality is such as must necessarily express itself through the ideal or ideals that are organic to the knower's intellectual equipment which may be called thought or reason." (p. 45). The independent existence of the world is not denied. Knowledge presupposes a thing which antedates and post-dates the event of knowing it. That the world must *always* exist for

some mind finite or Infinite, is an assumption which is subjected by the author to a searching and crushing criticism. The author's defence of the ultimate validity of the categories leaves nothing to be desired.

The concluding chapters devoted to the problem of the Self are very interesting. The author's theory of Self, as summed up in his own words, is that the Self is the "inexpugnable basis of Reality ; it is the ground or the presupposition without which Reality cannot manifest itself." (p. 229). This is the old, old Indian view.

One thing we may note here in passing. The author, so far as it appears to us from the general tenor of his book, strictly confines himself to the rational interpretation and does not seem to lend support to any super-rational or mystical approach. The mystical tenor of Sankara's philosophy, is no doubt mentioned ; but whether it meets the author's own approval is hard to make out. As the author's view of the Self is an indication of a reality which is beyond all logical categories, we have a right to ask him how the logical understanding is finally competent to grasp the ultimate truth of existence.

The book is on the whole highly illuminating and amply repays perusal. It is a welcome addition to the existing idealistic literature and can safely be ranked with the standard works in that line. The printing is clear and the get-up, quite nice.

S. N. L. SHRIVASTAVA, M.A.

SONGS OF MIRABAI. Translated by R. C. Tandan. *Hindi Mandir. Allahabad.* 172 pp. Price Re. 1.

Mirabai's songs are known and sung with ecstasy throughout Hindusthan. But there are numerous variants in almost all of them. And the Belvedere Press of Allahabad had to experience some difficulty in presenting a faultless (so far as it is possible) edition of these songs. The present English translation of the songs is mainly, if not wholly, based on this edition.

Some fifty songs of this saint-songstress have been presented to the English-reading public with a few notes and a short but reliable biography of the saint. The love for the Divinity has been couched in a language which is not easily understandable by those who are not acquainted with the peculiar anthropomorphic conception of Vaishnavism. But those who have some knowledge of it and of some of the brightest jewels of Christian mysticism will have a passionate love for these songs.

Mr. Tandan deserves our thanks for this little but much-valued publication.

THUS SPOKE GURU NANAK. Compiled by Sir Jogendra Singh. *Oxford University Press, Post Box 31, Bombay.* 113 pp. Price Rs. 2.

The book is a collection of the beautiful and inspiring sayings of Guru Nanak presented in simple English in an attractive handy volume. Devout souls were feeling the want of such a handy volume which could bring to all doors the rare gems of high wisdom and true devotion, which transcend all distinctions of caste or creed. Sir Jogendra, in bringing out this timely volume, has done a great service to India, if not to the whole world. The arrangement of the sayings under different heads is commendable. It will not be surprising at all if the book gains a popularity somewhat similar to that of *The Imitation of Christ*.

The writer of the foreword has raised a problem: "How the sayings of Nanak, the gentlest and most peaceable of prophets, should have formed the basis of scripture for a race like the Jats of the Punjab, one of the bravest and most manly peasantries of the East?" According to him the sayings of the Guru supply "much" of the answer. We doubt. The first Guru has appealed to the nobility of the race and the tenth Guru to its fire and zeal. If Nanak forms the basis of the scripture, Guru Govindji is the entire superstructure—the two together have given to the world a race of finest and noblest soldiers.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND THE MISSION CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, BHUBANESWAR

REPORT FOR 1932-33

The main object of the Ramakrishna Math at Bhubaneswar is to give facilities for spiritual practice to the aspirants in a conducive atmosphere. A Chatuspâthi has been recently opened with the object of imparting scriptural knowledge to the inmates, collateral with their daily spiritual practices. In addition to these regular religious classes are held and Bhajans are sung.

There are public activities too. (i) Its Missionary work comprises lectures and discourses with or without the help of lantern slides; and publications in Oriya of "The Words of the Master" by Swami Brahmananda and of "The Râmanâma." This year the Swamis of the Math were invited by the devotees of Balikuda, Bahugram, Cuttack, etc., to deliver lectures.

(ii) Its philanthropic activities are relief works, medical help, occasional feeding of the poor and spreading of education. During the heavy floods of 1933 the Mission worked from six relief centres. Regular doles were given for four months and then test work was undertaken in Malud and Balikuda centres for removing the scarcity of water in those places. The relief work had to be discontinued for want of funds and also because workers were more urgently required in Bihar Earthquake Relief Work.

The Ramkrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary, supervised by the Ramakrishna Math, Bhubaneswar, treated 15,946 in 1932, and 31,380 in 1933. In addition to medical aid, help of various kinds is rendered to the patients, such as, diet, warm clothing and pecuniary assistance according to their needs.

(iii) On the occasions of the anniversary and other celebrations the poor are fed sumptuously. For the dissemination of education among the masses, the Math has opened a free primary school and helps many poor students in prosecuting their studies in the local M. E. School. It has also kept at its disposal a magic lantern

with the object of propagating culture and knowledge through its medium.

Any contribution to any of the philanthropic activities connected with the centre will be thankfully received and acknowledged by:—Swami Nirvanananda, President, Ramakrishna Math, Bhubaneswar P.O., Puri District.

SRI RAMKRISHNA MISSION SEVASAMITI, HABIGANJ

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1932 & 1933

The missionary activities of the Ashrama consisted of the holding of religious classes and discourses, arranging for lectures with magic lantern shows, and birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. There were altogether 53 classes, 21 lectures and 4 celebrations.

The Ashrama conducted three primary schools, all for the Harijans, the average numerical strength of them being 19. Its library (containing 834 vols.) and reading room (furnished with a number of periodicals) were fairly used by the reading public.

Its charitable dispensary treated in two years 3,163 cases, old and new. The activities of the Nursing Brotherhood organized by the Ashrama with a number of enthusiastic youths of the locality were quite promising. The local doctors also took keen interest in the matter. 628 pieces of cloth, shirts, etc., and 7 mds. 27 srs. of rice were distributed to needy families.

But what should deserve the attention of the generous public more than anything else is the establishment and good working of the two leather factories among the shoe-making class of the locality. To back up the industry two Co-operative Credit Societies have been formed, which have proved a great help not only to those who were directly concerned with the industry but to all the villagers alike.

The total income of the Ashrama in the two years under review was Rs. 1,039-1-7 and total expenditure, Rs. 768-8-8. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by: The Assistant Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission Sevasamiti, Habiganj, Sylhet, Bengal.