

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

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## REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

Calcutta,  
May 8, 1899.

How beautiful those lines are, “Thy place in life is seeking after Thee. Therefore be thou at rest from seeking after it.” After all, that is the whole truth. The things after which one may and must seek are so very different.

I have seen Swami today. He told me how, as a child of thirteen, he came across a copy of Thomas á Kempis which contained in the preface an account of the Author's monastery and its organization. And *that* was the abiding fascination of the book to him. Never thinking that he would have to work out something of the sort one day. “I love Thomas á Kempis, you know, and know it almost off by heart. If only they had told what Jesus ate and drank, where he lived and slept, and how he passed the day, instead of all rushing to put down what he said ! Those long lectures ! Why, all that can be said in religion can be counted on a few fingers. That does not matter, it is the man that results that grows out of it. You take a lump of mist in your hand, and gradually, gradually, it develops into a man. Salvation is nothing in itself, it is only a *motive*. All those things are nothing, except as motives. It is the man they form, that is everything !” And now I remember he began this by saying, “It was not the words of Sri Ramakrishna but the life he lived that was wanted, and that is yet to be written. After all this world is a series of pictures, and man-making is the great interest running through. We were all watching the making of men, and that alone.

Sri Ramakrishna was always weeding out and rejecting the old, he always chose the young for his disciples."

*Coasting Ceylon,  
June 28, 1899.*

It was quite exciting at Madras. Crowds of people had an appeal to the Governor to let Swami land. But plague considerations prevailed, and we were kept on board, to my great relief, for the sea-voyage is doing him a world of good, and one day of crowds and lectures would be enough to cause him utter exhaustion. It was sufficiently tiring to have to look down and be polite to the constant succession of boat-loads who came to the ship's side with presents and addresses all day. . . . .

. . . Swami had just been here for an hour, and somehow the talk drifted on to the question of Love. Amongst other things he talked about the devotion of the English wife and the Bengali wife, of the suffering they would go through without a word. Then of the little gleam of sunshine and poetry, to which all human love must wade through oceans of tears. Then the tears of sorrow alone bring spiritual vision, never tears of joy. That dependence is fraught with misery, in independence alone is happiness. That almost all human love, save sometimes a mother's, is full of dependence. It is for oneself, not for the happiness of the one loved, that it is sought. That the love on which he could most surely count, if he became a drunkard tomorrow, was not that of his disciples, they would kick him out in horror, but that of a few (not all) of his Gurubhâis. To them he would be still the same. "And mind this, Margot," he said, "It is when half-a-dozen people learn to love like this that a new religion begins. Not till then. I always remember the woman who went to the sepulchre early in the morning, and as she stood there she heard a voice and she thought it was the gardener, and then Jesus touched her, and she turned round, and all she said was 'My Lord and my God!'. That was all, 'My Lord and my God'. The person had gone. Love begins by being brutal, the faith, the body. Then it becomes intellectual, and last of all it reaches the spiritual. Only at the last, 'My Lord and my God'. Give me half-a-dozen disciples like that, and I will conquer the world."

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## SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[IN HIS OWN WORDS]

Formerly Sri Ramakrishna regarded the stone image of Kâli as possessed of consciousness; now the image disappeared and he saw the Living Mother Herself, smiling and blessing him :

"I actually felt Her breath on my hand. At night when the room was

lighted, I never saw Her divine form cast any shadow on the walls, even though I looked closely. From my own room I could hear Her going to the upper storey of the temple with the delight of a girl, Her anklets jingling. To see if I were not mistaken, I would



follow and find Her standing with flowing hair on the balcony of the first floor, looking either at Calcutta or out over the Ganges."

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"At the time of worship I tried to think according to the directions of the Sâstras that the sinner in me was burnt, and that I was pure and perfect. Who knew that in everyone there actually lies hidden a personification of evil that can be destroyed? I began to feel a burning sensation in my body from the beginning of my Sâdhanâ period. What might this be? —I thought. Medicines were administered, but all proved futile. One day I was practising in the Panchavati grove, when a red-eyed man of black colour came out of this body, reeling as if drunk and began to walk about in front of me. Shortly after there emerged from my body another human figure of a placid mien, wearing the ochre robe and holding a trident in his hand. He attacked the former and killed him. A few days after that vision, I was relieved of the burning sensation which had tormented me for six months."

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"By constant meditation on the glorious character of Hanumân I totally forgot my own identity. My daily life and style of food came to resemble those of Hanumân. I did not feign them, they came naturally to me. I tied my cloth round the waist, letting a portion of it hang down in the form of a tail, and jumped from place to place instead of walking. I lived on fruits and roots only, and these I preferred to eat without peeling. I passed most of the time on trees, calling out in a solemn voice, 'Raghuvir!' My eyes looked restless like those of a

monkey, and most wonderful of all, my coccyx enlarged by about an inch. It gradually resumed its former size after that phase of the mind had passed on the completion of that course of discipline. In short, everything about me was more like a monkey than a human being."

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"One day I was seated in the place now known as Panchavati in quite a normal state of mind—not at all entranced when all of a sudden a luminous female figure of exquisite grace appeared before me. The place was illumined with her lustre. I perceived not her alone, but also the trees, the Ganges and everything. I observed that it was a human figure, being without such divine characteristics as three eyes and so on. But such a sublime countenance, expressive of love, sorrow, compassion and fortitude, is not commonly met with even in goddesses. Slowly she advanced from the north towards me, looking graciously on me all the while. I was amazed and was wondering who she might be, when a monkey with a cry suddenly jumped and sat by her. Then the idea flashed within me that this must be Sitâ, whose whole life had been centred in Râma and who had misery only as her lot! In an excess of emotion I was about to fall at her feet crying, 'Mother,' when she entered into my body, with the significant remark that the smile on her lips bequeathed unto me! I fell unconscious on the ground, overpowered with emotion. This was the first vision I had with eyes wide open, without meditation on anything. Is it because my first vision of Sitâ was of her grief-stricken aspect, that my subsequent life contained so much suffering? Who knows!"

# MAN BETWEEN GOD AND THE WORLD

BY THE EDITOR

Man seeks while God hides. Does it imply that man has to seek for a God who will hide Himself for ever? If so, what is the use of man's search after God? Why should man seek for a God who is beyond his reach? Men who sincerely seek after God pass through one ordeal after another. The more they seek, the more God seems to hide Himself. Their sufferings increase and sorrows multiply. Does then God mock at them dashing the Tantalus cup of joy?

Those who want God try to find Him out. To them, God is not a mystery but the fact of all facts. This is why they are never tired of seeking after Him. How can the all-pervading God hide Himself? It is man who hides himself from God and not God from man. If we keep our eyes shut, how can we see the light of day? Between man and God stands the world which attracts him and he is blind to God.

Two forces are always working in the life of every man. It is a struggle between matter and spirit. One tries to get the upper hand of the other. Both act and react on each other in the life of man. The demand of the world is one and that of the spirit is another. Man tries to unfold his life under circumstances so alien to each other. In this fierce tug-of-war, it is uncertain which one will get the better of the other and *how*. Every life is a constant battle the result of which is uncertain.

When Muhammad was pursued by the Qoreish, he and Abu Bekr took shelter in a cave some miles off from Mecca. The Prophet and his companion could hear the noise of the pursuers who were

in large numbers. Abu Bekr became restless, and said, "Well, sir, we are only two, but the number of the enemies is great. How shall we save ourselves?" The Prophet replied, "We are not two but three with God who will save us both." Muhammad depended on God at a very critical period in his life. God stood by him in a miraculous way. It was a victory, both material and spiritual combined. The life of Muhammad was saved from the hands of the Qoreish. He won it for Islam and its followers. The victory had a message for the world.

Jesus was betrayed by one of his own disciples and it ultimately led to his crucifixion. He used to pray: "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." God answered his prayer and Jesus won a spiritual victory through a most tragic death. Here was a complete triumph of the spirit over matter. People remarked scornfully when he was put on the cross: "He saved others, himself he cannot save." Jesus was then silent amid the chorus of infamy. When he died, the centurion who was in command of the Roman soldiers exclaimed, "This man was in truth righteous—this man was a Son of God." The multitude who were furious with excitement realised what they had done only when it was too late.

We find the victory of Jesus quite unlike that of Muhammad yet the results are not much different. Inscrutable are the ways of God. It is beyond human understanding how God accomplishes His purpose in this world. We commit mistakes when we go to judge His ways by our own standards or limited knowl-



edge. What lies therefore in man is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Jesus said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" So he asked men to believe that the heavenly Father knows what things they need even before they ask Him.

Krishna also teaches in the *Gita* that this life is a righteous warfare and that one has to attain Freedom by discharging one's own duty in life. "But if thou refusest to engage in this righteous warfare, then, forfeiting thine own Dharma and honour, thou shalt incur sin. . . . Dying thou gainest heaven; conquering thou enjoyest the earth. Therefore, O son of Kunti, arise, resolved to fight. Having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and defeat, the same, engage thou then in battle. So shalt thou incur no sin." This is the boldest message that Krishna has given to man to establish the kingdom of God on earth. To gather strength of soul in such a battle, a man has to constantly remember God and offer the fruits of his actions to Him. Says Krishna: "Therefore, at all times, constantly remember Me and fight"; "With mind and intellect absorbed in Me, thou shalt doubtless come to Me."

## II

There is no judging by appearances. Yet as a rule we judge of things at first sight. We take misery for true happiness. Consequently we suffer. If we look back into our past, we shall find that most of our miseries are of our own choosing; such is our nature. Buddha in his first sermon says:

"Ye suffer from yourself. None else  
compels.  
None other holds you that ye live and  
die,

And whirl upon the wheel, and hug  
and kiss  
Its spokes of agony,  
Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness."

We run after all sorts of misery and are unwilling to be freed from them. Daily we run after pleasure and before we reach it, it is gone. Yet we do not give up the chase after this chimera and thus go from birth to death and death to birth without obtaining our cherished thing, till at last we are tired of this wild-goose chase. Then we see the vanity of all worldly enjoyments and we feel we ought not to be slaves to Nature. A desire for freedom comes and though vanquished we rise again to give fresh battle. "In the teeth of this defeat," says Jeanne De Vietinghoff, "the spiritual man breaks his bonds and forces a passage towards a larger future, a fuller destiny. The birth of the spirit, which constrains us to emerge from the torpor of matter and enter the arena where souls do battle, is one of the greatest trials we can be called upon to endure. Our primitive nature contents itself with tangible benefits, but no sooner has the spirit unveiled the world of invisible blessings than our desires begin to soar; yet the higher they mount, the more difficult they are to appease. The disproportion existing between our increasing aspirations and our limited resources demands perpetual sacrifice from us and finally destroys in us the lower self: egoism." This awakening of the soul does not come equally to all men. It differs in the degree of its intensity. The majority of mankind, however, become easy victims to matter and they make compromises with the world. But those who survive the trial take to the life of the spirit and struggle till at last they enter into the kingdom of God.

When Jesus is asked by the Pharisees about the time when the kingdom



of God would come, he answers, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation : neither shall they say, Lo here ! or, lo there ! for, behold the kingdom of God is within you." The Vedic seers also declare that the kingdom of God lies in the heart of man. Krishna says to Arjuna, "O Arjuna, God dwells in the hearts of all beings." The way to the kingdom of God is described by the Rishis to be like the edge of a sharp razor hard to tread. Jesus also says : "For straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The Rishis hold that he who does not desist from evil conduct, who is not tranquil, whose mind is not pacified, cannot attain the Self even by knowledge. Jesus says in the same strain : "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The Rishis proclaim that the Self cannot be attained by the weak. Jesus says, "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." The Rishis teach us, "The Self can never be reached by speech, nor even by mind, nor by eyes. How can It be realized otherwise than from those who say It exists?" Jesus declares in the same way, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me." The need of help from a perfected soul for a seeker after Truth can hardly be over-estimated. Sri Ramakrishna used to say : "The gas light illumines different parts of the city with varying intensity. But the life of the light, namely, gas, comes from one common reservoir. So the true religious teachers of all climes and ages are like so many lamps through which is emitted the life of the spirit, flowing constantly from one source—the Lord Almighty." Books, however good and holy, can never play the rôle of a teacher who alone can

kindle the fire in a soul and lead it on in its pilgrimage to God. Again, men, however good and noble, can never be good guides unless they have attained perfection themselves.

Even if a man hears the word of God from a perfected soul, he is not safe at all in the slippery path of the world. Jesus interprets to his disciples the parable of the sower and the seed : "The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear the word, and understand it not; then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among the thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Constant vigilance is indispensable for any progress in spiritual life. Every aspirant has to face more or less temporary set-backs which are unavoidable in the very nature of things. Earnestness and faith in the word of God can alone make one optimistic in spite of failures. Krishna holds out the last word of hope to mankind : "Relinquishing all actions, righteous or unrighteous, take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not." Jesus speaks in the same strain, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Complete surrender, however, is not very easy. That requires a thorough cleansing of one's heart and there should be no trace of self-seeking



in it. So long as God does not become the centre of our thoughts and activities, there is no escape from worldly bondage. The nearer we approach God, the farther we recede from the world, till at last we attain Him. Then we see the world no longer but God who pervades everything.

### III

We have not, however, to shirk the duties and responsibilities of life simply because we are in quest of God. Rather it is more incumbent on us to look first to our duties. There is no way to escape the demands of the world. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "It is said that when a Tāntrika tries to invoke the Deity through the medium of the spirit of the dead, he sits on a fresh human corpse and keeps near him food and wine. During the course of the invocation, if at any time the corpse is vivified temporarily, the intrepid invoker must pour the wine and thrust the food into its gaping mouth, to appease the elemental that has, for the time being, taken possession of it. If this be not done, the elemental will not only interrupt the invocation but cause danger to his life. So dwelling on the bosom of the carcass of the world, if you desire to attain beatitude, then first provide yourself with all things necessary to pacify the clamour of worldly demands on you; otherwise your devotions will be broken and interrupted, by the cares and anxieties of life." Those who neglect their duties and take a short cut find themselves in difficulties in the long run.

The world is a moral gymnasium wherein we have all to take exercise and become stronger spiritually by performing our duties in life. Even those great souls whom we worship were no exceptions to this rule, they too had their duties to fulfil. The

world has been rightly compared to a stage and life, a drama in which each one of us plays his own part. Henry P. Van Dusen describes it nicely as follows: "He (God) is the author of the play. And, because this is a living drama with its plot ever changing and developing as characters shift and the story advances, at each moment, He alone knows the course which the play as a whole and each character would best follow. He proposes to the players their parts. But He leaves them free to play them poorly or well. It may be that those who too seriously threaten the freedom of the others and the outcome of the play are forcibly removed. For the most part, they are allowed much latitude. And there is much desparately cheap and unworthy acting. It may be that from time to time He speaks a word of direct warning or challenge or correction to those who are heedless—a voice sounding to them like the bay of the Hound of Heaven at their heels. It is certain that to those who have ears to hear He is *ever* speaking, advising, suggesting, heartening, commending. They may call on Him for guidance, for encouragement, for inspiration, and they will not be disappointed. It is His play. He alone knows fully all that it might be. He alone feels fully the failures and mistakes, the agony of careless execution."

Krishna teaches us that a man devoted to his own duty can attain the highest perfection. "From whom is the evolution of all beings," says he, "by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him with his own duty a man attains perfection." So, a man can advance towards God from any position in society. In the eyes of man one may look an inferior being, but he may rank very high in the eyes of God. We often judge men by the standards of

our society and thereby make serious mistakes. The world will be far more benefited by a handful of dutiful men than by the so-called leaders of society who simply dictate to others unmindful of their own duties. In these days, the lure for wealth is great, so people are guided more by their greed than by a genuine sense of duty. As a conse-

quence, the present-day society is more or less influenced by men of evil genius. We find shrewd and cunning people looming large before the masses. Silent and dutiful men naturally appear to be dull and foolish and are even pitied by the multitude. But these people are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of God.

## THE WORSHIPPER AND THE WORSHIPPED

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

No worshipper worships matter. The Satchidânanda form of the Divine is the one object of worship of all devotees. The enjoyment of heaven and such other objects, only those who are full of desires pray for. "Having enjoyed the vast Swarga-world they enter the mortal world, on the exhaustion of their merit. Thus, abiding by the injunctions of the Vedas, desiring desires, they constantly come and go." (Gita 9.21). This is for those who are devoted to rituals. The attainment of heaven, etc., is not the goal of the true worshippers (Upâsakas). To them the question is about the Atman, which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss—which is of the nature of intelligence. The worshippers according to their Samskâras (inherent tendencies) look upon this one Atman or Brahman as different objects of worship. Some see Him as the whole and themselves as parts of Him. Some again see Him as non-different from themselves. Some others again see Him as the Great Lord different from themselves. But even they do not think of themselves as inert matter, but as spirit. Therefore we find the question of inertness with respect to the worshipper never arises at all. The worshipper and worshipped both are

spirit, but only according to differences in the Samskâras of the worshipper their relation also differs. Once Sri Râma seeing Hanumân amongst the sages that had assembled before him, in order to satisfy all his devotees, asked him, "Well, how do you look upon me?" Hanumân, the best of the Jnânis, seeing some great purpose behind this question, replied, "When I think of myself as the body, then I am Thy servant, when I think of myself as the Jivâtman (the individual soul), I am Thy part, and when I think of myself as the Atman, I am Thyself—this is my conclusive opinion." Thus Hanumân happened to express the attitude of all the devotees. This is the essence of Vedânta. None has been disappointed in this. On the other hand each has been given his proper place. None need despair. In whatever stage they may be, all of them worship the one Lord and establish relationship with Him. "I am centred in the hearts of all; memory and perception, as well as their loss come from Me. I am verily that which has to be known by all the Vedas, I indeed am the Author of the Vedânta, and the Knower of the Vedas am I." (Gita 15.15). That one intelligent principle,



the Supreme Purusha pervades everything, like the warp and woof. He is the one to be known in all the Vedas, the Creator of Vedânta, as well as the Knower of the Vedas. If this is known you have attained the goal of Vedânta. If this is not known, even if you should make a solution of the Vedas and take it, you will not know the Truth of Vedânta. I have understood it only in this sense. The Master's words, "I and my Mother, we two exist,"—even this is to be understood in this way; he does not talk of matter and spirit. He has talked only of spirit. "The worshipped as well as the worshipper, both are spirit. The attitude of a child towards its mother. The child knows none else but its mother—steadfast devotion." He is everything. "Or what avails thee to know all this diversity, O Arjuna? (Know thou this, that) I exist, supporting this whole world by a portion of Myself" (Gita 10.42). He pervades the whole world with but a fourth part of His and the rest three-fourths is beyond everything, ever free. Even the Vedas sing His glory thus: "All the creatures are but a fourth part of Him, the rest three-fourths is in heaven and free" (Reg. Veda 10.1.90.3).

This much about Brahman. As regards the individual soul if it has the body idea, then He is the Lord and it is the servant. If it has the Jiva consciousness, then He is the whole and it is the part and when it gets the knowledge that it is the Atman, then there is no idea of differentiation. Then it identifies itself with the Paramâtman and says, "I am Thyself." That is the goal of the individual soul. This is Vedânta Knowledge accepted on all hands. He is everything—the knower, knowledge and known, all these are but He. Atman, the individual soul and Nature—all these are He. There is nothing else than He. He who says

there is something else besides Him, is still under delusion. He talks in sleep—he does not realise what he is talking. Due to superimposition and contrary knowledge, the Brahman in which there is not the least tinge of this duality appears as this manifold universe. It is only in this wise that scriptures say, "From this Atman, ether is born, etc." (Taitt. Up. 2.1), but not in reality. "There is neither destruction nor creation, neither the bound nor the worshipper, neither the aspirant nor the liberated, from the absolute standpoint" (Mand. Kar. 2.32). This is the conclusion. Study, Japa, meditation, concentration, Samâdhi—these, no one says, are the highest goal. "Knowing Him alone they transcend death. There is no other way to freedom" (Svet. Up. 3.8). This is the teaching of Vedânta. The Lord also says in the Gita, "All these worlds, O Arjuna, including the realm of Brahmâ, are subject to return; but after attaining Me, O son of Kunti, there is no rebirth." (Gita 8.19); "I am the Self, O Gudakesha existent in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings" (Ibid. 10.20); "The Goal, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the Dissolution, the Substratum, the Store-house, the Seed immutable." (Ibid. 9.18). There is no need to say further that to the Jiva He is everything. As already said, it is not a thing for mere reasoning. It has to be realized. Having come to taste mangoes, it is better to taste them. What is the use of other vain talk. Those whom the Lord selects as Teachers, they alone have to think of others—as to whether a particular faith would do good or harm to people. For us it is enough if we can but taste the mangoes.



# RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA

BY PROF. MAHENDRA NATH SIRCAR, M.A., PH.D.

(Continued from the last issue)

## VIVEKANANDA—THE DYNAMIC COUNTERPART

Ramakrishna realized the Truth and handed it over to Vivekananda to give a practical shape to it so that humanity can realize the great truth of Vedânta through life—make it a living faith in family, social and national life.

Ramakrishna left the inspiration which was made into a living faith by his disciples. Vivekananda had the advantage of getting his inspiration not from the dead pages of philosophy, but from a master who was living the Truth. Originally an intellectual agnostic with a heart endowed with true seeking and love, Vivekananda saw the living image of Wisdom and Love in Ramakrishna. Vivekananda got his illumination direct from his master who stirred up spiritual dynamism in the disciples and made them realize the truth of the Divine in the self and the self in the Divine.

Vivekananda saw the road to true individuality and freedom. He was not irresponsive to religious love and religious emotionalism, though personally he found in inspiration and volition, the finest fulfilment of life. Vivekananda in his writings has acknowledged the values of Jnâna, Karma, Bhakti, and Yoga as so many paths to spiritual fulfilment, and as such he has not rubbed them aside but has recognized their place in a spiritual life. "Jnâna, Karma, Bhakti, and Yoga—these are the four paths which lead to salvation. One must follow the path for which one is best suited." Again he felt that the different commentators on the Vedânta really fulfilled a need and a necessity considering the progressive aspects of spiritual life. He did not at once brush

them aside, but accepted them as meeting the needs of the unfolding self. The philosophical positions of Dvaita, Visishtâdvaita or Advaita were to him not absolute logical systems, but stages in spiritual expression and growth. "In these three systems we find the gradual working up of the human mind towards higher and higher ideals, till everything is merged in that wonderful unity which is reached in the Advaita system. Therefore these three are not contradictory, they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other, and one, as it were, is the stepping stone to the other, until the goal, the Advaita, 'Thou art That' is reached." Logic has fixed these experiences into systems and thereby has invited conflicts into them. But if life can be released from the thralldom of logic, it exhibits these kinds of experiences culminating in the experience of beatific freedom.

Vivekananda approached religion and philosophy through an analysis of life and psychic experiences and he welcomed that as the highest which gave the *finest* idea of freedom. In the unique perception of the Self in the quietus of Its being beyond time and space he found such a realization before which the finest of spiritual visions paled into insignificance. The finest God realization through love and devotion may give the cherished blessings of the heart—the finest luminous experiences of the soul, but this still keeps us within the bounds of experience, however glorious.

Vivekananda evaluated all spiritual experiences, as vouchsafed unto him



through the grace of his master, and finally came to realize the sublimity, the truth, and the majesty of the Self as superior to all experiences and as the most potent of all facts. Atman is the Truth of truths. Vivekananda did not lay much emphasis upon the metaphysics of the Vedânta nor upon the speculative thinking which can only give us systems but not that spirit and insight which can make us stand the face of silence. His teachings have, therefore, an appeal for life. He was a prophet of life, and philosophy to him had a value in life as it helped the finest living and the greatest realization. Even the higher functions of the soul in Yoga and devotion were to him bondages, for he had no charm for a Personal God. In the conflicts and misadjustments of life, he was not able to see the rational justification for a Personal God. He was all for freedom. The idea of a soft and kind God with the gifts of grace and redemption had no charm for him. He was anxious to work out his own salvation through struggle, knowledge and wisdom.

Gods, angels, and helpers had no fascination for him, for he felt that the bondage was self-created, and should be broken by self-possession. He maintained the heroic attitude in all concerns of life—even in spiritual life. His acceptance of Ramakrishna as master was characterized by a free spirit and at times revolts were freely made. The surrender on the one side and the acceptance on the other were both free. Ramakrishna was not an ordinary teacher. He could understand Vivekananda's strong questioning and agnostic spirit and instead of vouchsafing unto him the path of devotion and love, he, in response to Vivekananda's psychic nature and constitution, accepted all his challenges and gave him experi-

mental verification of God, not in His immanental unity but in His transcendental freedom.

Between Ramakrishna and Vivekananda there was no distance of the master and the disciple. The two were united in the spirit of Vedânta. Vivekananda's soul had the intense yearning for freedom from the partialities of life, its conflicts, and clash of interests; he was seeking the touch with something which could for ever dispel the ignorance and all intellectual and practical conflicts arising therefrom. His heart was eager for a direct realization of the Reality, the vision of which could dispel the sense of separateness that lies at the root of all troubles in life. He was panting for that.

Vivekananda saw the Atman within and without, his self in all, all in him—a vision that could originate selflessness in love and service. Vivekananda was the spirit of selflessness incarnated in flesh. He could feel that true knowledge originated from it. It was not an ideal for him. It was his being. He could see that a selfless living was better than mere speculative philosophy and he accentuated it. This self-giving and self-opening were to him the ways to wisdom. Vedântism in his mind becomes the gospel of life and not mere philosophy. Sankara Vedânta passes into scholasticism in the writings of the Sankarites. The intellectual understanding of Mâyâ with its nice logical disquisition kept the Vedântic scholars engaged. The more serious amongst them in their retirement used to reflect on the axiom of identity. But Vivekananda realized the fruitlessness of this philosophical scholasticism. He wanted his brother disciples to realize the illusions of life through selfless service to the down-trodden and suffering humanity.



Vivekananda was keenly alive to the dance of death and he used to enjoy it. The dance of death exhibits an experience which almost all fight shy of except those filled with the realization of the Atman. For in it there is a sublimity just as in creation there is a beauty. Sublime it is, because it manifests the immeasurable bounds of the Divine, Its terrific power, Its inscrutableness and incalculability. Ordinary men forget, rather do not want to see, this aspect of God-head. But he, who really welcomes this aspect of the divine nature, becomes a real hero, for he goes beyond all dread of death and destruction, and



sees in it the Mother's call to withdraw the whole within Herself. The child of the Mother welcomes it; but the child of flesh is horrified at it.

Vivekananda saw in the Divine Mother the divine energy and thrill, and he felt that divine love is a phase of the divine expression inferior to the divine will. Will creates, will destroys, love preserves. Love comes to play its part after the creative will, and when will again re-asserts itself to show its aspect of negation, it transcends and overcomes love. To be human is necessarily to see the loving God, but to be superhuman, is required the touch of the terrific will which can create and destroy with composure of being. Vivekananda felt this very strongly and said that he alone becomes immortal, who can really with a smile welcome death, suffering and miseries.

Vivekananda saw an inner affinity of his being with Sri Krishna as Arjuna's charioteer on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. He had the finest admiration for Buddha, for his wisdom and love; but Buddha lacked in force and power. Vivekananda saw in Sri Krishna the embodiment of the supra-mental wisdom, love and power. True to the realistic instinct of a Hindu, he could feel that power should not be shut out from us, for the organization of life's forces is impossible without it, and in the regulation of the cosmic affairs, will and power are the finest assets. Buddha in negating the conception of power and installing life in love forgets that love is a delicate plant that cannot foster on the soil of earth without the constant protection of power. The *finer* side of our nature can exhibit itself and make proper manifestation only when there is the will and the power behind to protect it. The finest organization of humanity may be inspired by love but love is helpless unless

it is backed by will. Love may not always bring proper results, for it is very delicate and cannot grow unless the conditions are favourable.

Power is the needed element which can give practical shape to the forces of love. "Even forgiveness if weak and passive is not good : to fight is better. *Forgive* when you can bring legions of angels to an easy victory.... The world is a battle-field, fight your way out." Vivekananda's realistic instinct could not forget that where Tamas (inertness) dominated, life could hardly make an appeal, for Tamas was the shadow of death. Power becomes there a necessity to wake up the finer feelings and to cause better adjustments. In the economy of divine nature, power has its proper place. The Divinity is not all love. It is also stern will and threatening power. The forces help each other in the complexity of life and its adjustments.

In Krishna the Swami found terrific will which threatened empires based on unrighteousness. Krishna inculcates the gospel of life based on power, mellowed and re-inforced by knowledge and wisdom. In Pârthasârathi the Swami found the ideal and the fulfilment of India in the making. Krishna, a Kshatriya, was brought up among cowherds and milkmaids; he had his best love for them. The divine child, in his free movements not sanctioned by customs and authorities, used to captivate all hearts by the sweet melodies of his flute—a lover and a player with the hearts of men and women! The young damsels used to be outwitted by the melodies of his flute, the old mother by his boyish pranks, the associates by the flashes of his eyes. The veterans in culture and wisdom were silenced by the depth of his wisdom, the adepts in diplomacy were carried by his foresight, adaptability and divine powers. Such was the character that



attracted Vivekananda's heart and demanded complete obedience from him. Vivekananda found in Sri Krishna and his gospel, the hope for India's future.

In Sri Krishna he could find the blessed union of the *finest* forces of Brahminism with the wide catholicity of Buddhism, the *finer* adjustment of the realistic forces of life with the ever free and spontaneous movement of life. Life and society have two sides, a structural side and a dynamical side. The structural side has its values inasmuch as it is a great *conserving force* of the creative ideals of the race; but unless life can draw freely from its dynamism, it cannot remain elastic. This elasticity in Buddha could make social life elastic and absorb finer values and ideals in its catholic outlook.

Vivekananda saw that Sri Krishna was such a great power that he could attract the greatest homage from the votaries of culture and at the same time embrace the fallen and the down-trodden. Humanity to Krishna was the shadow of divinity and he could with his divine vision embrace at once the repositories of culture as well as the naked children of Nature. Sri Krishna was the lover of life; the untutored life has its beauties, just as the tutored life has its dignity; and both must have a place in life, because both serve a purpose. Sri Krishna could see this, and therefore did not shrink from recognizing their values in the organization of life. Vivekananda took this inspiration from the life of Krishna and did his best to carry love and light to the down-trodden and the neglected.

Coming to his master, Vivekananda found in Ramakrishna the happy combination of the brilliant intellect of Sankara and the infinite heart of Chaitanya. Ramakrishna saw the same spirit working, the same God in every sect. He saw God in every human

being and his heart would weep for the poor, the weak, the down-trodden—for everyone in this world. At the same time his brilliant intellect could conceive of such noble thoughts as could harmonise all conflicting sects of the world and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart, into existence. Vivekananda was inspired by this universal spirit in religion and this sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden. He spent the last drop of his blood for the weak and the trodden, and emphasized service to them. To serve them was to serve Nârâyana. He felt for the teeming masses of India and this idea is materialized today in the hundreds of humanitarian and educational works established all over India. His church does not observe caste-rigidities but at the same time it does not invite social convulsion by liberal social propaganda. Vivekananda's feeling was to bring in social reformation by the propagation of liberal and humanistic culture than by positive frontal attacks. He was anxious to reach the touch of love and life to everybody, but was equally anxious to see the spirit of self-reformation coming from within. True reformation was reformation by self-education. He concentrated his forces there. His church, however, invites people of all castes. The fitness is of character, and not of birth.

Vivekananda organized a church on the lofty principles of Vedânta which he found embodied in the life and teachings of his master. His conception of a monastery was that it must be a centre of education in religion and philosophy, practical and speculative, so that ultimately it could send forth to the world an army of soldiers of peace, refinement, knowledge and love. His monastery is an order of service, an order of culture and an order of realization. In this all-



embracing aspect it has an affinity with the Buddhistic and the Christian monasteries. The monasteries of Sankara have concentrated themselves on Vedântic scholasticism ignoring the humanistic inspirations. The monasteries of Chaitanya are centres of culture in love and devotion. Vivekananda has made his monastery a centre of knowledge and service. Knowledge inspires service. Vivekananda felt the evil effect of an enforced or a self-imposed isolation for long, for the real test of true culture is not possible in complete social isolation. Isolation may have a value in the beginning, but a too-long isolation has the baneful effect of a spiritual slumber. A spiritual fellowship is much better than a spiritual isolation. Life cannot grow in isolation, it is true of life in all its concerns. His church, therefore, retains all the phases and the expressions of life, because the master felt that with the fullness of life, the fineness of vision and realization comes.

Ramakrishna's ideal was spiritual synthesis, and so the church of Vivekananda extends its embrace to all men of all forms of religious denomination. Nay, it accepts the potentiality of all forms of spiritual approach and religious worship. Hence even today an elasticity can be found amongst the members of the Rama-

krishna Mission. The best form of Tânticism, the finest form of Vaishnavism, and beneficent humanism prevail within the church. Ramakrishna is worshipped as the symbol of spiritual synthesis and the disciples are inspired by the ideal. They accept Buddha, Christ, Sankara and Ramanuja, and all the gods and goddesses and harmonize them after the universal and catholic spirit of Vedânta.

The uniqueness of Vivekananda's church is that it has accepted the worship of the Divine Mother in Sarada Devi, Ramakrishna's wife. She is the mother of the fold. The old monasteries of Sankara accepted the worship of gods and goddesses. Vivekananda introduced the divinity of Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi and instituted them as the inspiring, invisible, divine forces symbolized in human forms. The hundreds of the sons of Ramakrishna walk today with the spirit of catholicity anxious to serve humanity as the Divine. The divinity of man is their outlook—they teach it, they practise it, they live and die for it. They carry the practical Vedântism as reflected in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda to all corners of the world.

Ramakrishna was the spirit of wisdom in ineffable love and Vivekananda was the spirit of action in sovereign calm!

(Concluded)

## THE MIND OF THE JAPANESE STUDENT

BY PROF. E. E. SPEIGHT

When I was lecturing in the Imperial University of Japan, in the position previously occupied by Lafcadio Hearn, Tokyo was honoured by a visit from the Prince of Wales.

The authorities of the University asked me what I considered would be

the most interesting things to show His Royal Highness. I suggested two special exhibits—one of volcanic and seismic relics and illustrations, another of deep-sea fish. They adopted my suggestion, and the result was unique. For there my friend Prof. Omori, in





We caught a great *tai*<sup>1</sup> and two other fish, and then we returned to the shore and rested on the sands, smoking.

A big cat came and picked up the *tai* from the ship. She would have eaten it all, but she knew the fisherman and left him the head.

S. TAKAI

#### THE BUTTERFLY

The verdure has changed into deep green, and the breeze brings the perfume of pine woods. A little white butterfly is flying to and fro, thinking whether she will lodge on the soft green grassy bed or on the fragile, smelling flower.

Suddenly a summer shower comes, and the butterfly is very puzzled and perches on the stone image of Buddha which stands by the wayside.

C. TAKAHASHI

#### A DREAM

One summer night when I was sleeping alone there came a dream so strange.

I stood on the deck of a great ship with my uncle. He told me many things about a seaman's life, and at last he told me that he would go far away and would not come back again. When I asked to go in company with him, he smiled upon me and suddenly disappeared from the deck.

I waked that moment, and it was only a dream. But that very night my brother received a telegram from the N.Y.K. that my uncle's ship had gone down.

Since that time my uncle never came again, and often I recalled his last smiling face.

H. TAKAGI

#### THE WOUNDED SNAKE

It was a hot summer afternoon.

<sup>1</sup> A roundish fish called the *bream* in English,

A snake was lying in the path. I stopped and looked at it.

I noticed on the ground about it dark dots of blood. The wheel ruts of a country coach ran deep aslant the body. The snake was trying to grovel, but it was helpless. Again it tried, but in vain. Reluctantly it raised its head and looked around. Its eyes were half shut. The opened mouth was bleeding. The forked tongue was smeared with mud. The sun cast unmerciful rays upon it.

It glared at the frowning, burning sun complainingly. It wriggled, and moved no longer... with its russet eyes still to the sun.

T. OCHI

#### ON THE BATTLEFIELD

It was a calm and rather melancholy day such as we seldom have in this sunny cheerful spring time. I made an excursion to Katayamazu, an old battlefield, to mourn for my dead hero.

I made my way along an old path from Komatsu. On reaching there I found that nothing I had known could be compared with the calmness of that picturesque spot. Moreover it is a place endeared to us by stories and poetical associations. I recollected the story, and saw in imagination the battle of former days as I strolled on humming the poem.

The flowers on the ground were coloured as it were with blood-stains of the dead; the breeze blowing through the pine-trees sounded like a battle-cry, and the rustling of the bushes was like trumpet sounds. In a while I found myself by the Kubiaraï Pond (the head-washing pond) which is the pride and theme of poets and historians. Somehow such places make one realize anew all that happened there. My mind was engrossed, unconsciously, with the image of the tender, the gallant, but aged general Sanemori.

"Perhaps it may be Sanemori's head, but I cannot help suspecting it, for the hair is too black to prove that it is old Sanemori's. As Higuchi was his old comrade, he will be familiar with his face. Let him inspect." Thus Lord Yoshinaka spoke to his men. Just then the bell of a distant temple was faintly heard through the silence; its sound, chiming in with my melancholy fancies, seemed to me like an exhortation to remember more of the story. I continued to call to mind the poem.

Then Higuchi came and glanced at it; his tears fell in streams and he cried, "Alas! this head is that of dear Sanemori . . . there is no mistake."

He kept his eyes on the pale, bloody head. "Then why is the hair so black? If it were Sanemori's it would be grey for he is seventy years old," said Lord Yoshinaka.

"Yes, it would be," Higuchi answered with tears, "I think he blackened his hair to avoid the disdain he might receive as a grey dotard from his enemy. Let me wash it."

He washed it at this pond. At once that black hair became grey.

Oh! many years have gone, about six hundred; we shall not see again in actuality such a record of battle as this, beautiful as a picture or a poem.

In this mood of poetic susceptibility, I visited Sanemori's tomb. I stepped cautiously and softly about, fearful of disturbing the hallowed silence of the grave. It stands in a copse.

I leaned against the tombstone a good while, and my tears ran before I knew it.

In the midst of this musing I was suddenly roused by the sound of a Buddhist temple-bell near at hand. I left the spot reluctantly. On the way back I could hear now and then the distant voice of a priest intoning the evening service.

When I turned my head back the tomb had already been covered by the evening mist.

#### THE PEDLAR

Pwee! Pwee! Pwee!  
 The pedlar's pipe is narrow.  
 "Where do you come from?"  
 The children swarm around him.  
 The pedlar does not answer,  
 But looks at the children dear.  
 Only his pipe sounds  
 "Pwee! Pwee! Pwee!"  
 In the broad day in summer  
 The pedlar comes and goes.  
 The children ask him:  
 "Where are you going?"  
 He answers: "Pwee! Pwee! Pwee!"  
 S. BANDO

## A GLIMPSE INTO HINDU RELIGIOUS SYMBOLOGY

BY SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

(Concluded from the last issue)

### USE OF SYMBOLS—LOWER AND HIGHER

God is one, but His aspects are many. As we find it impossible for us to worship Him in all His fullness and glory, we take up some aspect or other. But even in order to approach Him through

any of His personal aspects, as Siva or Vishnu or the Divine Power—we need the help of different symbols—material, verbal or mental—which may be taken up either singly or jointly. The Eternal Being is the ideal of our



worship, but in order to worship Him, to come nearer to Him, we "join the mind with devotion to that which is not the Universal Being, taking it to be the Universal Being." The symbol is not the Reality. It is only a means for remembering the Lord through association of ideas. Some helps are indispensable for almost all people in some form or other.

"Worship of the image" or the use of the image symbolizing the Ideal, is the first step; then come repetition of the Holy Name and singing of Divine Glory. The next step is mental worship or meditation, and the final step is to feel and realize—"I am He!"

The neophyte takes the help of material symbols in the form of the image or Chakras or geometrical figures representing the Ideal. As he advances, he may dispense with material worship, make use of the sound-symbol to call up the Divine Idea. Proceeding further, he may do away with both the material and sound symbols, and proceed with purely mental worship on the plane of thought, silently and quietly. And even this he gives up when at the very thought of the Divine—the Universal Principle dwelling in him and in all beings and things—he is able to lose his little self like a salt-doll in the Infinite Ocean of Existence in which all ideas of the worshipper and the worshipped disappear completely. Thus the seeker after Truth comes to take up higher and higher forms of spiritual practice in his march towards the highest illumination that is his ultimate goal.

#### SYMBOLS AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF GOD

Constituted as most of us are at present, we have to take the help of images and imaginations of the right sort. In our actual life we dwell more in the land of dreams than in the world of reality.

And so long as we cannot rise to the transcendental plane of Pure Consciousness, we have to dwell in the domain of thought which is not always of a healthy kind. When we cannot help making use of images and imagination, let us have those that are pure and elevating instead of those that are vile and degrading. Therefore does Swami Vivekananda say :

"Be bold, and face

The Truth. Be one with It.

Let visions cease.

Or, if you cannot, dream then truer dreams

Which are Eternal Love and Service free."

The beginner, very much conscious of his embodied existence, looks upon God as separate from him, and worships Him as Master, Father, Mother, Friend or Beloved. As the result of dreaming truer dreams which implies purer thoughts and holier activities, he evolves inwardly, and comes to have a new attitude towards himself and the Divine—the object of his adoration. He comes to feel within himself an all-pervading Divine Presence of which his own soul is a fragment or a part. He may even look upon himself as atomic and God as infinite. As he advances further in the course of his spiritual evolution, he realizes that it is the One Infinite Divine Principle that appears as the many—Divine Personalities, souls and universe—and finally, during the highest flights of his soul he feels he is one with the Real and the Absolute.

"O Lord," says a great devotee, addressing his God, Rama, "when I think that I am inseparable from the body, I regard myself as Thy servant and Thyself as my Divine Master. When I consider myself an individual soul separate from the body, I think I am a part of Thee and Thou art the



Whole. When I look upon myself as the Pure Spirit beyond body and thought, I am no other than Thyself—the Eternal and the Infinite.”

I should like to explain these ideas with the help of an analogy. God is like the infinite ocean. And we, ordinary beings, who are preoccupied with the body-idea are like bubbles. And Divine Personalities, great prophets and seers are like waves, big or small.

The bubble finds it an impossible task to think of the infinite ocean. In order to rise above its limited outlook, it first attaches itself to a mighty wave that is conscious of its unity with the ocean. Through its worship of the wave-form and meditation on the inner content of wave-consciousness, it comes to possess a broader notion about itself and gets a glimpse into the wave's relation to the ocean. It realizes then that the same ocean exists at its own back also and at the back of all bubbles and waves without any exception. It further comes to know that it is the ocean that manifests itself as the waves and bubbles. And when the wave—and bubble-forms subside—it is all one ocean, nay, it is all one water that is the substance of all oceans without any exception. And very aptly does Sankarâchârya say in one of his wonderful prayers :

“Lord, it is the waves that get merged in the ocean, and not the ocean in the waves. So, when all limitations are removed from me, it is I who become merged in Thee, and not Thou in me.”

#### THE NECESSITY OF DIFFERENT SYMBOLS

Swami Brahmananda—one of the greatest of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna—observes in his “Spiritual Teachings” :

“There is so much difference between one man and another in their inclina-

tions and their temperaments that no one method can be assigned to all for their spiritual advancement. Different temperaments require different forms of spiritual practice and different ways of worship. To meet these varying demands, the scriptures have prescribed four principal means :—

(1) The best kind of worship is Samâdhi or the direct worship—the actual vision of the Omnipresent Reality.

(2) The second in importance is meditation, where two things exist—“Himself” (God) and “myself” (the devotee). Repetition of the Lord's name and glory and prayer and the like have no place here. When the meditation deepens, one perceives the Holy Form of one's “Chosen Deity.”

(3) The next step is repetition of the Lord's name and glory and prayer, in which one sings the glory of the Lord, praying, chanting, or repeating the hallowed name of one's chosen Ideal, simultaneously meditating upon the blessed form behind the Holy Name.

(4) The last is external worship. This consists in worshipping the Supreme Being in images. These different forms of worship, and different gods and goddesses, incarnations and prophets—all these are but creations of the human mind. They mark different degrees of progress of the mind, its evolutionary stages on its onward march to God.

A man desires to perform spiritual practice. Now, what should he do? Can he begin from any point? No! He must start exactly from where his mind stands, and proceed stage after stage till the Goal is reached.

Take the case of an ordinary man; if you ask him to meditate upon the Supreme Being who is without name or form, or if you ask him to practise Samâdhi—or union with the Supreme—



all at once, he will not comprehend it, nor will he be well-disposed towards the task. The result will be that he will give up spiritual practice altogether. On the other hand, if he worships the Supreme in an image, he will think that he has done something. For some time at least, his mind will be free from distractions, into which every moment it is liable to fall. He will be unperturbed and will rejoice in his worship. By and by he will outgrow that stage."

#### IDOLATRY, TRUE AND FALSE

I won't be surprised if I hear some critics remarking sneeringly—"Oh, Vedânta speaks of idolatry too!" Well, Vedânta, in its all-comprehensive aspect, has got to find a place for the use of idols and symbols in worship, so long as most of us remain in a state of childhood in spiritual matters. And this is true of other religions too.

I really wonder why many of us are afraid of using images or other symbols, when we ourselves are idolatrous to a degree and follow the cult of body-worship—the idol of flesh and bone—making its enjoyment the be-all and end-all of our life. The Vedânta holds that those who are in the idolatrous stage must outgrow it by taking up better idols in the form of incarnations and prophets, or symbolic representations of other Divine manifestations. If these forms of worship do not appeal to you, I am going to suggest yet another practical form of symbolic worship.

We have got too much of body-consciousness in us. Let us regard the body as a temple of God—of the Divine Principle—the Soul of our soul. "This body of ours is a temple of the Divine"—so says one of the Minor Upanishads. The Katha-Upanishad—one of the most important of the Upanishads—expresses this idea by means of a charming simile.

"Know the Self within you to be the master of the chariot, and the body to be the chariot. Consider the intellect to be the charioteer, and the mind the reins. The senses are the horses, and the sense-objects are the roads.

"To one who is always of unrestrained mind and devoid of right understanding, his senses become uncontrollable like the wicked horses of the chariot. But one who is always of restrained mind and has right understanding—his senses are controlled like the good horses of a charioteer.

"The man who has intelligence for his charioteer, and his mind as the well-controlled rein, attains the end of the journey—the Supreme State of the All-pervading Being."

Instead of worshipping God in the image of clay or stones, we may worship Him in the image of the human body, regarding it as a temple or a chariot or a house of the Divine, which dwells and shines in the hearts of us all. Through the worship of the All-pervading in the microcosm we come to realize Him also in the macrocosm, of which the former stands as a miniature symbol, and finally, we are blessed with the vision of the Infinite that is not limited by its manifestations and transcends all relativity and limitations.

This is one of the most practical forms of worship through symbol, which we have found very helpful in our own lives and in the lives of many. Those of you who would like to try it, would, I believe, find it equally useful.

But here I must strike a note of caution, lest one make a blunder and come to grief.

If God is brought down to the level of the image, if, instead of the Divine Principle, the form or the personality becomes more important, then the worship loses all its spiritual value. On the other hand, if the image is looked

upon as only a symbol or manifestation of the Divine, and the Divine is worshipped, having the image only as a symbol or suggestion, it becomes worship of the right type that lifts the worshipper to the heights of the Divine. This form of worship, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, "is absolutely necessary for all mankind, until they have all got behind the primary or preparatory state of mind with regard to worship."

During our spiritual childhood let us by all means make use of symbols and idols in the kindergarten of spiritual life. We need not be ashamed of our childhood and of the holy symbols that we use, so long as we really want to grow. Let us follow the training and the culture that will enable us to outgrow our child-mentality and make it impossible for us to remain for ever "old babies" with grown-up bodies but undeveloped minds.

#### WORSHIP THE DIVINE BY RISING TO THE PLANE OF THE DIVINE

I have told you much about the topic I have taken up, but yet much remains to be told. I must mention at least one more important point, without which our worship and meditation will not be of much avail.

There is a most useful instruction as to spiritual practice. "Worship the Divine by rising to the plane of the Divine." And again a great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna has said—"An anchored boat does not move onward even if you spend all your energy in rowing it." So, it is necessary that, in order to profit by our worship and prayer, we must have the right mood and attitude, without which spiritual progress is not possible at all. But how to create the right mood?

We are familiar with the term Kundalini, although few of us clearly

know what it means. Every one of us need not worry about the details, but we are all concerned more or less with the centres of Kundalini as representing planes of consciousness, closely connected with our moods.

Our spinal cord with its different centres may be likened to a staircase with different stages connected with the different stories of the building. The centres are like points of contact between ourselves and the planes of thought.

Let me quote a few lines from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna that throw much light on the subject.

"There are seven planes where the mind dwells. When the mind broods over the worldly ways, sex and wealth, it dwells in the three lowest centres of the spinal column. In that state it loses its higher visions and remains engrossed in sensual enjoyments and pleasures.

"The fourth plane is the heart. When the mind rises to this plane, then comes the first awakening to the soul. Man sees a kind of Divine light everywhere. At this stage the mind never stoops low to run after the pleasures of the senses.

"The region of the throat is the fifth plane of the mind. When it rises there, all ignorance or nescience disappears. Then one does not like to hear or speak of anything but God.

"The sixth is the forehead. When the mind reaches this plane, one witnesses Divine Manifestations all day and night. Even then there remains a slight consciousness of "I". Having seen the unique manifestation man becomes, as it were, mad with joy and rushes to be one with the All-pervading Divine, but cannot do so. It is like the light of a lamp inside a glass case. One feels as if one can touch the light, but no, the glass intervenes and prevents it.



"The head is the seventh plane, attaining which man attains Samâdhi and realizes the Absolute."

This path of spiritual practice in which the mind is made to rise from one centre to another up to the highest plane of spiritual consciousness is a most difficult one. But every aspirant who wants to follow the path of meditation should try to raise the "focus of the will" or the centre of consciousness at least to the centre in the region near the heart. By this is meant a plane of consciousness of which the heart is a point or centre. This may be likened also to an "inner space." Some find it easier to make the "heart," and some the "forehead" the centre of their consciousness.

Visualization or calling up the mental image of the object of worship and meditation is one of the essential practices at the beginning of our spiritual life. Should this be done inside or outside? We should attempt it in the "inner space." What we at first thought of as outside of ourselves, we should now imagine as inside of ourselves as it were, and that in some one or other of the higher centres. And the image is to be visualized as living and luminous.

Those who are not drawn towards any particular symbol or image, may meditate in some higher centre or plane of consciousness on the Divine Light that permeates not only one's own being, but the whole universe of men and things.

While to the aspirant who cannot do without a form, meditation on the luminous form will ultimately lead to the meditation on the Formless Luminosity—the Light of the Soul that illumines all things.

Really speaking, all these meditations come under the mental drill which is essential for our spiritual growth.

Now, for all of us, this much is essential. We should shift the "focus of our will" or the centre of our consciousness to the higher planes, should scrupulously follow the path of duty and ethical culture and also lead a life of worship, prayer and meditation. Let us bear in mind that we would be able really to worship the Divine only when we rise to the plane of the Divine. Then alone our worship through symbols and other helps will lead us to the realization of the Truth, to the highest peace and blessedness.

#### WORSHIP THROUGH SYMBOLS—ITS UTILITY TO THE WESTERNER

Here a question may be asked—Will these Indian symbols be of any use to the Western peoples with their Western mentality?

To this I reply—There is no such thing as a single Indian type or a single European type. In the course of my study of the psychology of the truly spiritually-minded amongst modern men and women in India and in Europe I have found what I believe to be a fact that, leaving aside the details, there is no clear-cut division into Eastern and Western psychological types amongst them. There are many types, and the types I came across in India, I find also in the West. Everywhere I have met many an aspirant after Truth amongst the intellectuals, who show a great dissatisfaction with the current theological beliefs. The vast majority of the so-called religious do not think and do not find any great conflict with the ideas prevalent in the institutional religions. But amongst the thoughtful people in India and particularly in the West I find a great revolt against the great stress laid on the worship of the Personality and the anthropomorphic and anthropopathic presentation of God. In India we had all along the advantage



of hearing of the Impersonal that lies at the back of the Personal God, and one can always find a rational and philosophical explanation of one's faith and religion, of course, if one wants to. This may be the cause why the revolt is less marked in India, but it is there.

To many modern men and women the idea of God has become associated with a bearded grand old man—an autocratic emperor exercising His Divine fiat in any way He pleases. And with such a conception they want to have nothing to do. But many of them who hanker after spiritual life, find it an impossible task to think of the Infinite Being, the One Reality behind the universe—however much they may like to do so. They always stand in need of some symbology that lies within their grasp and yet satisfies their rational and philosophic sense. In the West those who want, may approach the Universal through the Christ, Madonna and even through some holy Saint. A person to whom these do not appeal may take up the Buddha or some such form, or some one from among the non-anthropomorphic symbols I am going to mention presently.

#### SOME NON-ANTHROPOMORPHIC SYMBOLS

In all forms of Yoga and spiritual striving, the individual soul wants to be in union with the Universal. And with a view to attaining this end, the seeker, as I have already said, has got to undergo along with the strict disciplines of duties and morals, some forms of spiritual practice by way of visualization and easy meditation and contemplation. These prepare him for the higher forms of meditation that take him nearer and nearer to the Truth.

Besides the symbolic representations and meditations I have already mentioned, there are many others of which

I have little time to speak to you today. I shall just mention a few of them.

(1) The Upanishad speaks of a beautiful allegory. Two birds of beautiful plumage are sitting on the same tree, one on the top and the other down below. The lower bird, standing for the bound individual soul, is eating the fruits of the tree, sweet and bitter, while the other, representing the Universal Self sits as the silent witness of all this without itself taking any fruits at all. It is always established in its own glory and is satisfied and blissful. The lower bird thinks itself to be bound and weak, and, naturally, feels miserable. But when it looks up to the higher and sees its greatness and glory, it gets rid of its misery and feels happy. Finally, as it hops up and approaches the higher bird, it realizes that it is a reflection of the higher—the All-pervading, the Effulgent Lord of all—and gets merged into it and attains perfect unity with it.

(2) The beginner in meditation who does not care for anthropomorphic conceptions of God, sometimes thinks of Him as the Infinite Ocean in which he swims unobstructed like a fish, and realizes in course of time His vast infinite nature.

(3) He may again liken himself to a pot immersed in the ocean of God. On all sides there lies the same infinite waters of Life, and he comes to know of Its infinite glory by meditating on It.

(4) The aspirant may consider himself to be an empty pot immersed in the ocean of ether that permeates everything. He wants to give up the false ego—the pot that separates him from the Infinite—and thus establish his union with it.

(5) The devotee sometimes looks upon God as the Infinite Space in which like a bird, he wants to fly without any obstruction, and realize His infinite nature and glory.



(6) He may even consider himself as a ray of light reflected on a particle of sand standing for the body with which, owing to ignorance, he identifies himself. In truth the ray is inseparable from the Infinite Light that shines everywhere. By meditating on the Infinite, the aspirant becomes one with the Infinite.

I have mentioned a number of symbolic representations speaking of the union of the soul with the Over-Soul. If any of you would find some help from these suggestions, I would consider my labours more than repaid.

What is the use of all these?—these are mere imaginations—some of you may still pertinently ask.

To this the reply is that morbid imagination is to be counteracted by healthy imagination, and healthy imaginations take us nearer to the Truth. This is a fact recognized by many a thinker and poet, both in the East and the West.

“As feathers to the arrow’s flight  
A surer course impart,  
So Truth when winged with  
Fancy’s light  
May surer reach the heart.”

But there are fancies and fancies, imaginations and imaginations. By thinking constantly of the castle in the air, one does not find a real castle. By running after the mirage, one can never get the water to quench one’s thirst. By taking the mother-of-pearl for silver, one can never get the real silver. These are false imaginations that have no objective counterpart and take us away from the Truth.

As distinct from these, there are imaginations that are based on reality and take us to reality. The self-conscious bubble by meditating on the ocean realizes its true relation with the ocean and becomes one with it. The

living ray of light reflected on a particle of sand, by dwelling on the nature of the Infinite Light, becomes one with it. By thinking of the Infinite Ether, and by rising above its body-consciousness, the ether in the pot realizes its unity with the All-pervading Ether. The tiger that thinks itself to be a sheep, by constantly thinking that it is a tiger, becomes the tiger.

Similarly, the finite individual soul has got to realize its union with the Universal Principle by removing its false notion by means of correct notions or imaginations. It is, as Sri Ramakrishna puts it, like the removal of a thorn that has got into our flesh by means of another thorn that is picked up from the tree. And when the first thorn has been taken out, both the thorns can be thrown away.

#### THE PATH AND THE GOAL

The course of our progress is this:—

With the help of the form we have to reach the Formless, with the aid of the holy names and attributes we have to attain that which is beyond all names and attributes. For stimulating our souls, we may even visit holy places where the Divine presence may be felt more than at others. But our goal is to attain to that which is beyond all bounds and limitations.

We are like children and need props and supports. Let us have them by all means. But let us outgrow our spiritual childhood, and attain to the full glory of our being, so that we may pray with the devotee, saying:

“O Lord, in my meditations I have attributed forms to Thee Who art formless. O Thou Teacher of the world, by singing of Thy glory I have, as it were, contradicted the truth that Thou art beyond description. By going on pilgrimage I have, as it were, denied

Thy omnipresence. O Lord of the      From the unreal lead us to the Real;  
 Universe, pray, forgive these threefold      From darkness lead us to Light;  
 fault committed by me."      From death lead us to Eternal Life !

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## THE DIVINE HELMSMAN

BY KSHITINDRA NATH TAGORE

The day is done and all toil o'er;  
     The sun has sunk to rest  
     On ocean's boistrous breast  
 'Midst rising storm and thunder-roar.

Lo ! how does yonder pilgrim-boat  
     Sail o'er the heaving wave !  
     The Divine Helmsman brave  
 Knows how to keep His barque afloat.

Pilgrims bold fear not froth and foam—  
     Trust they in Helmsman's skill  
     And bend to His their will;—  
 He'll steer them safe in storm and gloom.

How rides the vessel on the tide  
     And holds its steadfast course  
     Against the windy force  
 While Heaven does in darkness hide !

Lo ! shoreward, like an arrow sped  
     Along the comby foam,  
     With pilgrims bound for home,  
 The lonely boat with full sail spread !

Now gleams the shore upon the sight—  
     The pilgrims for each soul  
     Pay to the Helmsman toll—  
 Each to his means, ere they alight.

More than gold, gems or silver sheen  
     Is to the Helmsman dear  
     A grateful shell or tear,  
 Or else a contrite heart, I ween.



# PEACE UNTO THE WHOLE WORLD

BY PROF. NICHOLAS DE ROERICH

*"Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another."*

*Mark IX, 50.*

Would it not appear that to pray "for Peace of the Whole World" is the greatest Utopia? This seems evident. But the heart and the real being continues to reiterate these sacred words, as a possible reality. If one listens to the voice of superficial obviousness, then even all the Commandments will seem a Utopia, impossible to carry out in life. Where is "thou shalt not kill"? Where is "thou shalt not steal"? Where is "thou shalt not commit adultery"? Where is the fulfilment and carrying out of all simple and clear commandments of Life? Perhaps some wiseacres will say: "Why reiterate these commands, if anyhow they are not carried out!"

Everyone of us has often heard various complaints and warnings against Utopia. From childhood and youth one has heard the "experienced advices" not to be carried away by "empty idealism," but to keep closer to "practical life." Some young hearts did not agree with this "practical life," to which the wiseacres tried to persuade them. Some youths heard the voice of their hearts whispering that the path to idealism, against which the elder ones were warning, is the most vital and pre-ordained. On this ground of idealism and "conventional wisdom" many family tragedies took place. Who knows what was the cause of many suicides—of these most foolish solutions of life's problems. For the wiseacres did not warn the youth in time of the terrible delusion, which even led to suicide. And when these gradually doomed young men asked the elders

whether during the alleged "practical" life, the Commandments will be carried out, the elder ones, sometimes with a cynical gesture, sacrilegiously murmured: "Everything will be forgiven." And between this "everything will be forgiven" and the Commandments of Life there arose some insoluble contradiction. The wiseacres were ready to promise everything, if only to prevent the youth from idealism. And when the youth submerged into conventional mechanical life, then even the Scribes and Pharisees threw up their hands. But the question arises: Who took the youth to boxing matches, to races and to obscene films? And did not the "wise councillors" themselves constantly repeat with a sigh "without cheating one cannot sell" and did they not themselves zealously thus create these decaying conditions of life? It was once said: "Today a small compromise, tomorrow another small compromise, and the following day—a great scoundrel."

Precisely in this way, in smallest compromises against radiant idealism, has the imagination and consciousness been polluted. The dark consciousness began to whisper of the inapplicability of the Commandments to life. And precisely this viper of doubt began to assure, in the darkness of the night, that the Peace of the whole world is a mere Utopia.

But this prayer was already, ages ago, laid down not as an abstractness, but just as an imperative call for a possible reality! The Great Minds knew that

the Peace of the whole world is not only possible, but also that Peace is that great salutary magnet, to which sooner or later the ships of all travellers will be attracted. In different languages, at various ends of the world, this sacred prayer is and shall be reiterated. Inscrutable are the ways and it is not for man to prejudge, how, where and when idealism will become a reality. Verily, the ways cannot be foretold. But the final goal remains one! And to this goal will lead all manifestations of that idealism, which is so often persecuted by wiseacres. There will also come the day, when so-called idealism will be understood not only as something most practical, but even as the sole path for the solution of all other problems of life. The same idealism will also create a striving to honest unlimited knowledge, as one of the most salutary harbours. Idealism will disperse superstition and prejudices which so fatally deaden the vital strivings of mankind. If someone would collect an encyclopedia of superstitions and prejudices, this would disclose the strange truth that many of the vipers up to now live even amidst

that humanity which considers itself enlightened.

But above all confusions the Angels sing of Peace and Goodwill. No guns, no explosives can silence these choirs of heaven. And despite all the earthly pseudo-wisdom, idealism as the Teaching of Good will still remain the quickest reaching and most renovating principle in life. It has been said: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" Precisely evil-heartedness will whisper that every goodwill is impractical and untimely. But let us know firmly, that even the Peace unto the whole world is not an abstraction, but depends only on the desire and goodwill of humanity. Thus every admonition to safeguard the Highest and the Best is exactly most timely and alleviates the shortest path.

May the beneficial symbols, may the Banner of Goodwill be unfurled over everything, by which the human spirit exists.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace, goodwill toward men!"

## THE SIKH RELIGION

BY PROF. TEJA SINGH, M.A.

The aim of life, according to the Sikh Gurus, is not to get salvation or a heavenly abode called Paradise, but to develop the best in us which is God.

"If a man loves to see God, what cares he for Salvation or Paradise!" (Guru Nanak's *Asa*).

"Everybody hankers after Salvation, Paradise or Elysium, setting their hopes on them every day of their lives. But those who live to see God do not ask for Salva-

tion: The sight itself satisfies their minds completely" (Guru Ram Das in *Kalyan*).

How to see God and to love Him? The question is taken up by Guru Nanak in his *Japji*:

"What shall we offer to Him that we may behold His council-chamber?

What shall we utter with our lips, which may move Him to give us His love?—

In the ambrosial hours of the morn meditate on the grace of the True Name;



For, your good actions may procure for you a better birth, but emancipation is from Grace alone."

"We should worship the Name, believe in the Name, which is ever and ever the same and true" (*Sri Rag* of Guru Nanak).

The practice of the Name is emphasized again and again in the Sikh Scriptures, and requires a little explanation.

#### THE NATURE OF GOD OR THE NAME

God is described both as Nirgun, or absolute, and Sagun, or personal. Before there was any creation God lived absolutely in Himself, but when He thought of making Himself manifest in creation He became related. In the former case, 'when God was Himself self-created, there was none else; He took counsel and advice with Himself; what He did, came to pass. Then there was no heaven or hell or the three-regioned world. There was only the Formless One Himself; creation was not then' (*Gujri-ki-Var* of Guru Amar Das). There was then no sin, no virtue, no Veda or any other religious book, no caste, no sex (Guru Nanak's *Maru Solhe*, xv, and Guru Arjan's *Sukhmani*, xxi). When God became Sagun or manifest, He became what is called the *Name*, and in order to realize Himself He made Nature wherein He has His seat and 'is diffused everywhere and in all directions in the form of Love' (Guru Govind Singh's *Jap*, 80).

In presenting this double phase of the Supreme Being, the Gurus have avoided the pitfalls into which some people have fallen. With them God is not an abstract idea or a moral force, but a personal Being capable of being loved and honoured, and yet He is conceived of as a Being whose presence is diffused all over His creation. He is the common Father of all, fashioning

worlds and supporting them from inside, but He does not take birth. He has no incarnations. He Himself stands for the creative agencies, like *Mâyâ*, the Word and Brahman; He Himself is Truth, Beauty and the eternal yearning of the heart after Goodness (*Japji*). In a word, the Gurus have combined the Aryan idea of immanence with the Semetic idea of transcendence, without taking away anything from the unity and the personal character of God.

"O! give me, give me some intelligence of my Beloved.

I am bewildered at the different accounts I have of Him.

O happy wives, my companions, say something of Him.

Some say that He is altogether outside the world;

Others that He is altogether contained in it. His colour is not seen; His features cannot be made out;

O happy wives, tell me truly—

'He lives in everything; He dwells in every heart;

Yet He is not blended with anything; He is separate.' " \*

"Why dost thou go to the forest in search of God?

He lives in all, is yet ever distinct: He abides with thee too.

As fragrance dwells in a flower, or reflection in a mirror,

So does God dwell inside everything; seek Him therefore in the heart." †

People who come with preconceived notions to study Sikhism often blunder in offering its interpretation. Those who are conversant with the eastern thought fix upon those passages which refer to the thoughts of immanence and conclude that Sikhism is nothing but an echo of Hinduism, while those who are imbued with the Mohammedan or Christian thought take hold of transcendental passages and identify Sikhism with Islam or Christianity. Others who know both will see here no system,

\* *Jaitisri* of Guru Arjan.

† *Dhanasri* of Guru Teg Bahadur.

nothing particular, nothing but confusion.

If, however, we were to study Sikhism as a new organic growth evolved from the existing systems of thought to meet the needs of a newly evolving humanity, we would find no difficulty in recognizing Sikhism as a distinct system of thought.

Take, for instance, Guru Nanak's *Asa-di-Var*, which in its preliminary stanzas lays down the fundamentals of Sikh belief about God. It is a trenchant clear-cut monotheism. God is called 'the in-dweller of Nature,' and is described as filling all things 'by an art that is artless' (xii. 1—2). He is not an impotent mechanic fashioning pre-existing matter into the universe. He does not exclude matter, but includes and transcends it. The universe too is not an illusion. Being rooted in God who is real, it is reality; not a reality final and abiding, but a reality on account of God's presence in it (ii. 1). His Will is above nature as well as working within it, and in spite of its immanence it acts not as an arbitrary force but as a personal presence working 'most intelligently' (iii-2). The first thing about God is that He is indivisibly One, above every other being, however highly conceived, such as Vishnu, Brahmâ, or Siva (i), or as Rama and Krishna (iv. 2). The second thing is that He is the highest moral being (ii. 2), who has inscribed all men with His Name or moral presence (ii). He is not a God belonging to any particular people, Muslim or Hindu, but is 'the dispenser of life universal' (vi). The ways to realize Him are not many, but only one (xii. 3), and that way is not knowledge, formalism (xiv. 2, xv. 1—4), or what are received as meritorious actions which establish a claim to reward (viii. 2), but love (xiii. 2) and faith (xiv. 2), the aim being to

obtain the grace of God (iv. 2, v. 2, viii. 2, xiii. 1). The only way of worshipping Him is to sing His praises (vi. 1, vii., ix., xii. 2, xix 2, xxii. 3) and to meditate on His name \*(ii, viii. 1, ix. 2, xvi. i).

#### UPLIFT OF MAN BASED ON CHARACTER

This life of praise is not to be of idle mysticism, but of active service done in the midst of worldly relations. "There can be no worship without good actions."† These actions, however, are not to be formal deeds of so-called merit, but should be inspired by an intense desire to please God and to serve fellow-men.

"Without pleasing God all actions are worthless.

Repetition of mantras, austerities, set ways of living, or deeds of merit leave us destitute even before our journey ends. You won't get even half a copper for your fasts and special programmes of life.

These things, O brother, won't do there: for, the requirements of that way are quite different.

You won't get a place there for all your bathing and wandering in different places.

These means are useless: they cannot satisfy the conditions of that world.

Are you a reciter of all the four Vedas? There is no room for you there.

With all your correct reading, if you don't understand one thing that matters, you only bother yourself:

I say, Nanak, if you *exert* yourself in action, you will be saved.

Serve your God and remember Him, leaving all your pride of self."‡

\* 'Name' is a term, like *logos* in Greek, bearing various meanings. Sometimes it is used for God Himself, as in *Sukhmani*, xvi. 5: "The Name sustains the animal life; the Name supports the parts and the whole of the universe." It is described as being 'immortal,' 'immaculate,' 'in-dweller of all creation,' and is to be sung, uttered, thought upon, served and worshipped. In most cases it means the revelation of God as found in the sacred Word.

† *Japji*.

‡ *Gauri Mala* of Guru Arjan.



The Gurus laid the foundation of man's uplift, not on such short-cuts as Mantras, miracles or mysteries, but on man's own humanity, his own character; as it is character alone—the character already formed—which helps us in moral crises. Life is like a cavalry march. The officer of a cavalry on march has to decide very quickly when to turn his men to the right or left. He cannot wait until his men are actually on the brink of a *nulla* or *khud*. He must decide long before that. In the same way, when face to face with an evil, we have to decide quickly. Temptations allow us no time to think. They always come suddenly. When offered a bribe or an insult, we have to decide at once what course of action we are going to take. We cannot *then* consult a religious book or a moral guide. We must decide on the impulse. And this can be done only if virtue has so entered into our disposition that we are habitually drawn towards it, and evil has got no attraction for us. Without securing virtue sufficiently in character, even some of the so-called great men have been known to fall an easy prey to temptation. It was for this reason that for the formation of character the Gurus did not think it sufficient to lay down rules of conduct in a book: they also thought it necessary to take in hand a whole people for a continuous course of schooling in wisdom and experience, spread over many generations, before they could be sure that the people thus trained had acquired a character of their own. This is the reason why in Sikhism there have been ten founders, instead of only one.

Before the Sikh Gurus, the leaders of thought had fixed certain grades of salvation, according to the different capacities of men, whom they divided into high and low castes. The develop-

ment of character resulting from this was one-sided. Certain people, belonging to the favoured classes, got developed in them a few good qualities to a very high degree, while others left to themselves got degenerate. It was as if a gardener, neglecting to look after all the different kinds of plants entrusted to him were to bestow all his care on a few chosen ones, which were in bloom, so that he might be able to supply a few flowers every day for his master's table. The Gurus did not want to have such a lop-sided growth. They wanted to give opportunities of highest development to all the classes of people.

"There are lowest men among the low castes.

Nanak, I shall go with them. What have I got to do with the great?

God's eye of mercy falls on those who take care of the lowly."\*

"It is mere nonsense to observe caste and feel proud over grand names."†

Some work had already been done in this line. The Bhagats or reformers in the Middle Ages had tried to abolish the distinction between the high class Hindus and the so-called untouchables by taking into their fold such men as barbers, weavers, shoemakers, etc. But the snake of untouchability still remained unscotched; because the privilege of equality was not extended to men as men, but to those individuals only who had washed off their untouchability with the love of God. Kabir, a weaver, and Ravidas, a shoemaker, were honoured by kings and high-caste men, but the same privilege was not extended to other weavers and shoemakers who are still held as untouchables. Ravidas took pride in the fact that the love of God had so

\* *Sri Rag* of Guru Nanak. See also Guru Arjan's *Jaisri-ki-Var*, vii., and Guru Amar Das's *Bhairo*.

† Ravidas in *Rag Malar*.

lifted him out of his caste that even "the superior sort of Brâhmîns came to bow before him," while the other members of his caste, who were working as shoemakers in the suburbs of Benares, were not so honoured.\*

The Sikh Gurus made this improvement on the previous idea that they declared the whole humanity to be one, and that a man was to be honoured, not because he belonged to this or that caste or creed, but because he was a man, an emanation from God, whom God had given the same senses and the same soul as to other men :—

"Recognize all human nature as one."

"All men are the same, although they appear different under different influences.

The bright and the dark, the ugly and the beautiful, the Hindus and the Muslims, have developed themselves according to the fashions of different countries.

All have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body and the same build—a compound of the same four elements."\*

Such a teaching could not tolerate any idea of caste or untouchability. Man rose in the estimation of man. Even those who had been considering themselves as the dregs of society, and whose whole generations had lived as grovelling slaves of the so-called higher classes, came to be fired with a new hope and courage to lift themselves as the equals of the best of humanity.

Women too received their due. "How can they be called inferior," says Guru Nanak, "when they give birth to kings and prophets?"† Women as well as men share in the grace of God and are equally responsible for their actions to Him.† Guru Hargovind called woman 'the conscience of man.' Sati was condemned by the Sikh Gurus long before any notice was taken of it by Akbar.‡

\* *Akal Ustat* of Guru Govind Singh

† *Asa-di-Var*, xix.

‡ See Guru Amar Das's *Var Suhi*, vi.

The spirit of man was raised with a belief that he was not a helpless creature in the hands of a Being of an arbitrary will, but was a responsible being endowed with a will of his own, with which he could do much to mould his destiny. Man does not start his life with a blank character. He has already existed before he is born. He inherits his own past as well as that of his family and race. All this goes to the making of his being and has a share in the moulding of his nature. But this is not all. He is given a will with which he can modify the inherited and acquired tendencies of his past and determine his coming conduct. If this were not so, he would not be responsible for his actions. This will, again, is not left helpless or isolated; but if through the Guru's Word it be attuned to the Supreme Will, it acquires a force with which he can transcend all his past and acquire a new character.

This question of human will as related to the Divine Will is an intricate one and requires a little elucidation.

According to Sikhism, the ultimate source of all that is in us is God alone. Without Him there is no strength in us. Nobody, not even the evil man, can say that he can do anything independent of God. Everything moves within the Providential domain.

"Thou art a river in which all beings move : There is none but Thee around them. All living things are playing within Thee."\*

The fish may run against the current of the river or along with it, just as it likes, but it cannot escape the river itself. Similarly man may run counter to what is received as good or moral, but he can never escape from the pale of God's Will.†

\* Guru Ram Das in *Asa*.

† *Japji*, ii.



Then who is responsible for his actions? Man himself. We learn from the first Shlok of *Asa-di-Var's* 7th *pauri* that man is given free will, which leads him to do good or evil actions, to think good or evil thoughts, and to go in consequence to heaven or hell.

"Governed by his free will he laughs or weeps;  
Of his free will he begrimes or washes himself;  
Of his free will he degrades himself from the order of human beings;  
Of his free will he befools himself or becomes wise."

In the next Shlok we read :

"Self-assertion gives man his individuality and leads him to action;  
It also ties him down to the world and sends him on a round of births and deaths.  
Wherefrom comes this assertion of self?  
How shall it leave us?  
It comes to man from the Will of God and determines his conduct according to his antecedents.  
It is a great disease; but its remedy also lies within itself.  
When God sends grace to man, he begins to obey the call of the *Guru*.  
Nanak says: Hear ye all, this is the way to cure the disease."

The source of evil is not Satan or Ahriman, or any other external agency. It is our own sense of Ego placed by God in us. It may prove a boon or a curse to us, according as we subject ourselves to God's Will or not. It is the overweening sense of self that grows as a barrier between God and man and keeps him wandering from sin to sin—

"The bride and the bridegroom live together, with a partition of Ego between them."\*

The infinite is within us, 'engraved in our being,' like a cypher which is gradually unfolding its meaning as we listen to the voice of the Teacher. It is like the light of the sun ever present,

but shut out of our sight by the cloud of ignorance and selfishness. We sin as long as this light remains unmanifested and we believe in our self as everything to us.

Regeneration comes when, at the call of Grace, we begin to subject our tiny self to the highest Self, that is God, and our own will is gradually attuned to His Supreme Will, until we feel and move just as He wishes us to feel and move.

Really the problem of good and evil is the problem of Union and Disunion† with God. All things are strung on God's Will, and man among them. As long as man is conscious of this, he lives and moves in union with Him. But gradually led away by the overweening sense of self he cuts himself from that unity and begins to wander in moral isolation. It is, however, so designed in the case of man that whenever he wishes he can come back to the bosom of his Father and God and resume his position there. Guru Nanak says in *Maru* :

"By the force of Union we meet God and enjoy Him even with this body;  
And by the force of Disunion we break away from Him;  
But, Nanak, it is possible to be united again."

When we come into this world, we begin our life with a certain capital. We inherit our body from our parents, and there are divine things in us, as 'the spirit and the progressive tendencies,' which serve as the forces of Union and keep us united with God. But there are also evil tendencies in us inherited from our past lives which serve as the forces of Disunion and draw us away from Him towards moral death. Guru Nanak says in *Maru* :

\* Guru Ram Das in *Malar*.

† *Japji*, xxix.

"Man earns his body from the union of his mother and father ;  
And the Creator inscribes his being with the gifts of the spirit and the progressive tendencies.  
But led away by Delusion he forgets himself."

This teaching about the freedom of will and 'the progressive tendencies' raises the spirit of man and gives him a new hope and courage. But that is not enough to enable him to resist evil and to persist in positive virtue. The temptation of evil is so strong and the human powers for resisting it—in spite of the inherent progressive tendencies,—are so weak that it is practically impossible for him to fulfil that standard of virtue which is expected of him. It was this consciousness of human weakness which made Farid say :

"The Bride is so weak in herself, the Master so stern in His commands."

That is, man is endowed with such weak faculties that he stumbles at each step, and yet it is expected of him that—

"He should always speak the truth, and never tell lies."\*

"He should beware even of an unconscious sin."†

\* Farid.

† Guru Teg Bahadur.

"He should not step on the bed of another's wife even in dream."‡

These commands cannot be fulfilled simply with the strength of knowledge and inherited tendencies. They will not go far even in resisting evil. The higher ideal of leading a life of positive virtue and sacrifice is absolutely impossible with such a weak equipment. Then what is to be done?

The prophets of the world have given many solutions of this problem. Some get round the difficulty by supposing that there is no evil. It is only a whim or false scare produced by our ignorance. They believe in the efficacy of Knowledge. Others believe in the efficacy of Austerities; still others in Alms given in profusion to overwhelm the enormity of sin. There are, again, a higher sort of teachers who inculcate the love of some great man as a saviour. What was the solution offered by the Sikh Gurus?

They saw that, although it was difficult for a man to resist evil and to do good with his own powers, yet if he were primed with another personality possessing dynamic powers, he could acquire a transcendental capacity for the purpose. This personality was to be the Guru's.

‡ Guru Gobind Singh.

(To be continued)

## HOW A DISSIPATED SOUL BECAME A DEVOTEE OF GOD

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA

Bilwamangal was a young man of Bengal, born of rich parents. As he enjoyed good health and was possessed of an abundance of energy, he made the best of life, according to his own conception of that term. He enjoyed life

thoroughly in a worldly way. And being quite wealthy, he could satisfy most of his desires. He was good-looking, of a cheerful disposition and liberal with his money. So it is not strange that he had many friends.



Neither need it surprise us that he kept as his mistress, one of the most beautiful dancing girls of the place. The girl's name was Chintâmani,—a beautiful name, for it means, the gem possessing which, one desires nothing else. So this name is also applied to God, for He indeed is the most desirable treasure. Possessing Him, man is freed from all other desires.

Now, Bilwamangal was passionately in love with this girl. And she also was fond of him though her love was very shallow. One day a quarrel arose between them. Bilwamangal had promised to meet Chintâmani at a certain hour, but when the time came, he did not appear. Chintâmani waited and waited, but in vain.

Then, much vexed and in order to teach him a lesson, she locked her door and decided not to open it, should Bilwamangal make his appearance.

And so it happened, that, when Bilwamangal came at last, he found the door locked. He apologized and explained that the delay had been unavoidable. But Chintâmani, still vexed, did not unlock the door, nor did she deign to speak to him.

Now, Bilwamangal in his turn became annoyed with Chintâmani's unreasonable conduct and left the house, vowing never to go to her again. But on his way home, he is attracted by the song of a street-beggar. It was a love-song: "Heart is drawn by heart; man, *there* lies thy greatest happiness." Bilwamangal hearing the song, forgets his anger. He wants to go back to Chintâmani but how can he go? Her door will remain locked! So he tells the beggar to go near Chintâmani's window and sing the love-song, so that she can hear it. The beggar goes and sings, and Chintâmani attracted by the song listens attentively. The beggar returns and tells Bilwamangal that Chintâmani had

listened and that she seemed much pleased. Bilwamangal rewards the beggar and decides to go to Chintâmani and make up their quarrel. But first he had to go home, as he had to perform some rites in memory of his departed father.

His home was on the other side of a wide river. So he crossed it in one of the little boats which take passengers across. But when evening came and he wanted to cross again to go to Chintâmani, a terrible storm had begun to rage and no boatman dared to cross the river.

Bilwamangal goes to the different landing-places for a boat, but in vain. What can be done? He *must* see Chintâmani. Rain and thunder had driven all men under shelter. Farther and farther he wanders along the river bank in search of a boat. But to no avail. Then he hears a voice in the distance. Some one is singing. Who can it be? In such weather! He listens and hears the words of the song: "O Mother, who can understand Thee? I am calling on Thee, but Thine heart does not melt. I shall call Thee Father. Will that move Thee? Art Thou so heartless, not to mind Thine children?"

Bilwamangal goes nearer. Who can it be? Singing in this tempest! He sees a woman. Her hair hangs loose; the rags she wears are soaking wet. Who are you? Are you mad? The woman answers: "My name is Pâgalini, the mad woman. And I am wedded to a mad man. My father is mad, and so is my mother. And I am their mad daughter. My mother's name is Shyâmâ, the dark one, and my father's name is Siva. My father dances and the world trembles. My mother also dances. Hers is the dance of death."

Now we must understand that Pâgalini is not mad in the ordinary sense of



the word. She is really a free-soul, mad after God. And she it is, who will lead Bilwamangal on the right path, as we shall see later on. Her madness is of the nature described by Sankarâchârya, when he speaks of the free soul as "sometimes naked, sometimes like mad, now a scholar, and again like a fool. Thus they appear on the earth, the Paramahamsas." That is the class of souls Pâgalini belongs to.

Bilwamangal does not listen to Pâgalini. He has no ears for her song. He wants his Chintâmani. "Tell me, woman, how can I cross the river, where can I find a boat? My heart burns for Chintâmani. I must see her."

But Pâgalini answers him only with another song. And she sings of her own Chintâmani, her beloved Lord. "Where is my Chintâmani," she sings, "I search for him everywhere. Where is he gone? Having lost the jewel of my heart, I am become mad. See! See! I have come to the cremation-ground, but I find him not. In mountain-caves, in the forest, seeking for him, I spent my days in sorrow. I have smeared my body with ashes, but the burning anguish of my heart is not laid. Where is he? I find him not. He is the moon of my heart. I must see him. What keeps him away? Where, where, is my Chintâmani?"

Bilwamangal startles, as he hears the name of Chintâmani. Why does she call on Chintâmani? Is she really mad?

And then he addresses Pâgalini: "Tell me, good woman, what is Chintâmani to you?" And Pâgalini answers: "He is mine for ever. Sometimes he appears so beautiful, at other times so terrible. Sometimes most loving, and again so stern. Sometimes he appears as Krishna, playing on the flute, and again I see him as Siva with serpents on his body. I have seen him as Sri Râdhâ, the beloved of the Lord Krishna. Now

he is man, then again he comes as a woman. And then he becomes the Formless Spirit."

Bilwamangal listens. "Yes, yes," he says, "such is my Chintâmani. But how shall I go to her? I cannot live without her. O thunder, O lightning, O waves of the river, I fear you not. You cannot hold me back. I must see my Chintâmani." Saying this he jumps into the river.

In the meantime Chintâmani in her home, is talking to her maid-servant about Bilwamangal. "He cannot possibly come," she said. "No one can cross the river in such weather." But scarcely has she uttered the words, when she is startled by a noise, as if a heavy object falls on the ground. She takes a light and goes in the yard to see what has happened. Then, she hears a man groaning. And coming near, she finds Bilwamangal lying on the ground, near the wall of the compound. Assisted by her servant, she takes him in the house. And soon he recovers his consciousness; and tells her of his adventure. How, after crossing the river he came to the house, but found the doors locked. How going around the compound he had climbed up the wall by a rope which he thought Chintâmani had put there for him. Then, jumping down from the wall, being exhausted, he was knocked unconscious by the fall.

Chintâmani does not understand what he is talking about. She had not put any rope there. And curious to see how he had managed to climb that high wall, she goes out, followed by Bilwamangal. Yes, indeed, something is hanging there. What is it? She comes nearer. And to her horror she discovers that it is a cobra, a poisonous snake. Its head was caught in a hole in the wall, and so it could not escape. Chintâmani is dumb-founded. "Tell me, Bilwamangal, did



you scale the wall taking hold of the cobra? Why don't you answer? Why are you looking at me?" But Bilwamangal does not seem to hear. He mutters to himself: "How beautiful, how beautiful you are!"

"But tell me, Bilwamangal, how did you cross the river? You are soaking wet. What is the offensive odour that I smell? What has happened, tell me?" Then Bilwamangal tells her that he jumped into the river, there being no boat to take him across. How after swimming for some time, he became exhausted. How, just when he was about to be swept away by the current, he took hold of a floating log. And how supported by the log, he somehow reached the shore.

"But Bilwamangal, what is that bad odour about you? Don't you smell it?"

"I do not know, Chintâmani. But if you knew what love is, you would know that love makes all things alike, —life or death, rope or snake, bad odour or good odour, it matters not. Oh, you do not love, therefore you cannot understand!"

"But Bilwamangal, why are you looking at me in that vacant way?"

"Chintâmani, don't you understand? I am mad with love. Day and night I think of you. When you smile, the world is steeped in sunshine. When you sigh, I see emptiness everywhere. For you I am spending my fortune. People blame me, but I do not care. Love has made me mad. The snake I mistook for a rope. Am I not mad? You ask, why I stare at you. You do not love, therefore you do not understand me. I worship you. But your heart remains cold."

"Oh, Bilwamangal, you talk nonsense. Come, let us see where the log is that helped you cross the river."

It was dawn. Storm and rain had subsided. And as they walked towards

the river they met a party of minstrels that go around in the early morning, in the villages singing the praise of God. They were singing: "Why do you cling to the dream? Life and pleasures will not last for ever. Time passes, never to return. Desires will never be satisfied. Renounce all idle thoughts and think of God. Nothing, here below, is our own. Understand it and sing the praise of Hari. Call on the Lord, call on the Lord."

Bilwamangal listens. "Ah, it is true. All is Mâyâ. Nothing really belongs to us. She for whom I have risked my life, even she is not mine."

They approach the river. The water sweeps by. The current is strong and swift. "Bilwamangal, how could you cross the river, how could you risk your life like that! Show me the log that carried you across. Oh, here it is! But no! what is it! A rotting corpse! Bilwamangal, have you crossed with that? Certainly you must be mad. A stinking corpse, you took to be a piece of wood? Is that the result of being in love? Strange indeed! You know, once I heard a song. I remember it now. It was about the love of a devotee for his God. Me, you love so much! Me, a fickle dancing girl. If you had loved God like that, what a wonderful devotee you would have been. You crossed the roaring river to see me! It makes me shudder to think of it."

But Bilwamangal does not hear. He is thinking of the song of the minstrels: Nothing is lasting, we cannot call anything our own. The corpse floats on the water and vultures tear off the flesh. Or dogs and jackals devour its rotting flesh. Or the fire consumes it. Such is the end of all life. Such will be the end of Chintâmani, of myself, of all beings. Whom have I loved? For whom did I risk my life? I have been

running after a shadow that today is and tomorrow it is gone. O mockery, O deceit! All is vanity. Whom can I call my own? Whom shall I love? Everything will vanish. I am bewildered. Is there no way out?

In the midst of his despair, Pâgalini approaches from the distance. She sings :

"He leads me by the hand, where'er I go,  
As my companion, wanders to and fro,  
No need to beg that one, who loves me so!  
Right tenderly he wipes my weary brow,  
He looks into my face. His love I know.  
And if I smile, He smiles ; and if I grieve,  
He grieves.

O tender care, that all my want relieves!  
And thus, it is, that He is known.  
Who says there's none to call his own?  
Seek, seek Him out, for true is He,—  
Still His sweet words are soothing me."

"Bilwamangal, do you hear that sweet song?"

"Yes, Chintâmani, I hear it. But who is there that I can call my own? Oh, there must be some one, somewhere. If only I knew where! There must be someone. There must be one who loves me. Who kept me from drowning! Who protected me from the deadly serpent sting! Who tells me that all is vain in this world! It is as if I hear a voice 'I am thine.' Oh, who art thou? Speak still voice. Soothe my burning soul. Where art thou? Thou art near, I feel it. But I cannot see thee! It is dark all around. Who can give me light?"

Bilwamangal walks away, as if in a dream. And Chintâmani is left alone. "Where is he going? Is he going to leave me? Is he going to renounce the world? I have heard of such cases. Bilwamangal, have I lost you? Oh, I did not understand your love. Will he not come again? Oh, I know he will never return. He has left me, in search for another to love. He gave me

everything, and I have turned him away. His love was true. I did not know that such love was possible. Now, it is too late. I could have been his queen. Now, I am a common dancing girl. Bilwamangal will renounce the world. He will give his love to God. They say, God belongs to all. Does He belong to me, too? But how can He love me? I cannot love, I do not know what love is. Yes, once I was different. But now my heart is frozen. Bilwamangal gave all he had to me. In return I stung him like an adder. He knows how to love. God will accept him. But my heart is empty and cold."

Bilwamangal is gone. He wanders about. He does not know where he is going, he does not care. A hermit sees him. And noticing his vacant look and distracted state of mind, speaks to him and invites him to take rest in his hut. He talks to him. And at last Bilwamangal tells him of his sorrow, of his love wasted on a fickle girl. How he had thought that Chintâmani loved him, and how she had disappointed him. How he had hoped that she would one day be his own, that he might bestow on her his intense love. But that now he realized that no human love could satisfy the craving of his heart. "Oh, holy man," so he speaks to the hermit, "tell me, is there one whom we may really call our own? One, whom we shall not lose again?"

The hermit answers: "Brother, do not call me holy. There is but One who is holy, and He is our Father, who loves all His children. Pray to Him and He will console you. Brother, you are fortunate indeed, for you have learned the secret of love. Through suffering, your heart is being purified. Pray to God, and He will show you the way. Your sincere search for love, will lead you to Him who is love itself. Now, you are sad, you despair, you are dis-



appointed, you find yourself alone in an empty world. But your thirst for love will lead you to the right path. Your Beloved will surely come to you. Despair not. Love is true, love is infinite, love leads man to the highest goal. Tell me, brother, have you ever heard of the love of Sri Râdhâ, how she loved Sri Krishna, the Lord of the universe? Love as Râdhâ loved. Try to understand her love. Meditate on that love. And pray to Sri Krishna that he may purify your own love, that it may become as pure and holy as the love of Râdhâ. She loved Sri Krishna. And in all her suffering she glorified only her Lord."

Bilwamangal remains silent. He is immersed in thought. At last he looks up and speaks to the hermit. "Yes, father, I seem to understand a little

now. I did not know it before. But Râdhâ's love—love for God—is the only true love. Oh, how to get that love, the love of Râdhâ for Sri Krishna."

"Brother, with Him all things are possible. Call on him with sincerity and singleness of heart. Call on him day and night. And He will reveal Himself to you. Fear not. Everything will be clear to you. Have faith in God. And the Lord will hear you and He will guide and protect you."

Bilwamangal is now hopeful. He takes leave of the hermit and wanders from place to place, always in search of the Beloved. He seeks no longer for human love. He cries out to God to be his Beloved. He prays for the love that was in Râdhâ, the pure unselfish, divine love of Râdhâ for Sri Krishna.

(To be continued)

## THE BRAHMA-SUTRAS

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

### CHAPTER I

#### SECTION I

*Topic 3: Brahman cognisable only through the scriptures*

शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ॥ ३ ॥

शास्त्र The scripture योनित्वात् being the means of right knowledge.

**3.** The scriptures (alone) being the means of right knowledge (with regard to Brahman, the proposition laid in Sutra 2 becomes corroborated).

This Sutra makes the idea expressed in Sutra 2 clearer. If any doubt has been left regarding the fact that Brahman as the origin, etc. of the world is established by scriptural authority and not by inference, etc. independently of it, this Sutra makes it clear that Srutis alone are proof about Brahman.

*Objection:* Brahman is an already existing thing like a pot, and so It can be known by other means of right knowledge independently of the scriptures.

*Answer:* Brahman has no form, etc., and so cannot be cognized by direct perception. Again in the absence of inseparable characteristics, as smoke is of

fire, It cannot be established by inference or analogy (Upamâna). Therefore It can be known only through the scriptures. The scriptures themselves say, "One who is ignorant of the scriptures cannot know that Brahman." No doubt, as already referred to in the previous Sutra, these means of right knowledge also have a scope, but it is only after Brahman is established by the scriptures—as supplementary to them and not independent of them<sup>1</sup>.

*Topic 4: Brahman the uniform topic of all Vedânta texts*

तत्तु समन्वयात् ॥ ४ ॥

तत् That तु but समन्वयात् because It is the main purport.

4. But that (Brahman is to be known only from the scriptures and not independently by any other means is established) because It is the main purport (of all Vedânta texts).

*Objection by Purva Mimâmsakas:* The Vedânta texts do not refer to Brahman. The Vedas cannot possibly aim at giving information regarding such self-established, already existing objects like Brahman, which can be known through other sources. They generally give information only about objects that cannot be known through other means of right knowledge, and about the means to attain such objects. Again Brahman, which is our own Self, can neither be desired nor shunned and as such cannot be an object of human effort. So a mere statement of fact about an existing object like Brahman, incapable of being desired or shunned and therefore useless, would make the scriptures purposeless.

Vedic passages have a meaning only in so far as they are related to some action. So the Vedânta texts, to have a meaning, must be so construed as to be connected with action (rituals), as supplementing them with some necessary information. The texts dealing with the individual soul in the Vedânta, therefore, refer to the agent; those dealing with Brahman refer to the Deities; and those dealing with creation refer to spiritual practices (Sâdhanâs). In that case, being supplementary to action, the Vedânta texts will have a purpose. But if they are taken to refer to Brahman only, they will be meaningless, inasmuch as they will not be helpful to any action.

*Answer:* The word *but* in the Sutra refutes all these objections. The Vedânta texts refer to Brahman only, for all of them have Brahman for their main topic. The main purport of a treatise is gathered from the following characteristics: (1) Beginning and conclusion, (2) repetition, (3) uniqueness of subject-matter, (4) fruit or result, (5) praise and (6) reasoning. These six help to arrive at the real aim or purport of any work. In chapter six of the

<sup>1</sup> This Sutra can also be interpreted in another way. It has been said in Sutra 2 that Brahman, which is the cause of this manifold universe, must naturally be omniscient. This Sutra corroborates it. In that case it would read: "(The omniscience and omnipotence of Brahman follow from Its) being the source of the scriptures." The scriptures declare that the Lord Himself breathed forth the Vedas. So He who has produced these scriptures containing such stupendous knowledge cannot but be omniscient and omnipotent.



Chhândogya Upanishad, for example, Brahman is the main purport of all the paragraphs; for all these six characteristics point to Brahman. It begins, "This universe, my boy, was but the Real (Sat), in the beginning" (Chh. Up. 6-2-1), and concludes by saying, "In it all that exists has its self. It is true. It is the Self" (Ibid. 6-16-2)—which also refers to the Sat or Brahman. In the frequent repetition of "Thou art That, O Svetaketu," the same Brahman is referred to. The uniqueness of Brahman is quite apparent, as It cannot be realized either by direct perception or inference in the absence of form, etc. and characteristics respectively. Reasoning also has been adopted by the scriptures here by citing the example of clay to elucidate their point. As different objects are made out of clay, so are all things created from this Brahman. The description of the origin of the universe from Brahman, and of its sustenance by and reabsorption in It is by way of praise (Arthavâda). The result or fruit (Phala) is also mentioned, viz. that through the knowledge of Brahman everything else is known. When we realize Brahman the universal Reality, we know all the particulars involved in It. So all these six characteristics go to show that the main topic of the Vedânta texts, as cited above, is Brahman.

Again, these texts cannot be made to refer to the agent, etc., for they are treated in quite a different section from the Karmakânda. Neither are the texts useless, for from the comprehension of these texts results Liberation, without any reference to action on the part of the person, even as a mere statement that it is a rope and not a snake helps to destroy one's illusion. A mere intellectual grasp of the texts, however, will not help the person to attain Liberation; actual realization is what is meant here.

*Objection:* The scriptures have a purpose in so far as they lay down injunctions for man. They either induce him to or prohibit him from some action. The very meaning of the word 'Sâstra' is this. Even the Vedânta texts are related to injunctions and thus have a purpose. For though they have Brahman for their main purport, yet they do not end there, but after describing the nature of Brahman they enjoin on man to realize Brahman through intuition. "The Self is to be realized—to be heard of, thought about, and meditated upon"—in passages like this the scriptures, after enjoining on man to be conversant first with the nature of Brahman, further enjoin thinking and meditation on the meaning of those passages for the attainment of direct experience. Thus they formulate injunctions with regard to the knowledge of Brahman.

*Answer:* "The knower of Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman" (Mund. Up. 3-2-9)—texts like this show that to know Brahman is to become Brahman. But since Brahman is an already existing entity, we cannot say that to know Brahman involves an act, like a ritualistic act, having for its result Brahman. When ignorance is removed Brahman manifests Itself, even as when the illusion of the snake is removed the rope manifests itself. Here the rope is not the creation of any act. The identity of the individual soul and Brahman set forth in texts like, "I am Brahman" (Brih. Up. 1-4-10), is not a fancy or imagination, but an actuality, and therefore differs from meditation and devout worships as prescribed by the scriptures in texts like, "One should meditate on the mind as Brahman," and "The Sun is Brahman" (Chh. Up. 3-18-1;



3-19-1). The knowledge of Brahman, therefore, does not depend on human endeavour, and hence it is impossible to connect Brahman or the knowledge of It with any action. Neither can Brahman be said to be the object of the act of knowing; for there are texts like, "It is different from the known, again It is beyond the Unknown" (Ken. Up. 1-8), and "By what, O Maitreyi, can the knower be known?" (Brih. Up. 2-4-13). In the same way Brahman is denied as an object of devout worship (Upâsana)—"Know that alone to be Brahman, not that which people adore here" (Ken. Up. 1-5). The scriptures, therefore, never describe Brahman as this or that, but only negate manifoldness which is false, in texts like, "There is no manifoldness in It" (Kath. Up. 2-4-11), and "He who sees manifoldness in It goes from death to death" (Kath. Up. 2-4-10).

Moreover, the result of action is either creation, modification, purification or attainment. None of these is applicable to the knowledge of Brahman, which is the same thing as Liberation. If Liberation were created or modified, it would not be permanent, and no school of philosophers is prepared to accept such a contingency. Since Brahman is our inner Self, we cannot attain It by any action, as a village is attained by our act of going. Nor is there any room for a purificatory ceremony in the eternally pure Self.

Knowledge itself, again, cannot be said to be an activity of the mind. An action depends upon human endeavour and is not bound up with the nature of things. It can either be done, or not done or modified by the agent. Knowledge, on the other hand, does not depend upon human notions, but on the thing itself. It is the result of the right means, having for its objects existing things. Knowledge can therefore neither be made, nor not made, nor modified. Although mental, it differs from such meditations as "Man is fire, O Gautama", "Woman is fire", etc. (Chh. Up. 7-1; 8-1).

Thus Brahman or the knowledge of Brahman being in no way connected with action, injunctions have no place with regard to It. Therefore texts like, "The Atman is to be realized," etc., though imperative in character, do not lay down any injunction, but are intended to turn the mind of the aspirant from things external, which keep one bound to this relative existence, and direct it inwards. Further it is not true that the scriptures can have a purpose if only they enjoin or prohibit some action, for even by describing existing things they serve a useful purpose, if thereby they conduce to the well-being of man, and what can do this better than the knowledge of Brahman, which results in Liberation? The comprehension of Brahman includes hearing, reasoning and meditation. Mere hearing does not result in full comprehension or realization of Brahman. Reasoning and meditation are also subservient to that full comprehension. Hence it cannot be said that they are enjoined. If after full comprehension Brahman was found to be related to some injunction, then only it could be said to be supplementary to action.

So Brahman is in no way connected with action. All the Vedânta texts deal with an independent topic, which is Brahman, and these texts are the only proof of this Brahman, as it is not possible to know It through any other source.



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In the January issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata* we published an article *Arise, Awake* by Swami Suddhananda. In it he writes in one place, "The Eternal Existence-Consciousness-Bliss has involved Itself in Its own veil of ignorance." This has brought us the following question from one of our readers :

**Question :** How could Sachchidânanda ever involve Itself in Its own veil of ignorance? How could the veil of ignorance ever be woven out of the threads of our Lord who is Knowledge alone? How could darkness keep out the sun? How could knowledge indulge in ignorance? How could bliss take a leap into the valley of misery? In case Sachchidânanda does get Itself involved in ignorance *why* should It suffer these miseries? What makes It accept the state of relative existence leaving Its Eternal Existence-Knowledge-Bliss state? Is the latter so very untempting that It prefers to accept the former and come under bondage?

**Answer :** Bhagavân Sri Ramakrishna used to say : "The Vedas, the Tantras and the Purânas and all the sacred scriptures of the world have become as if defiled (as food thrown out of the mouth becomes polluted), because they have been constantly repeated by and have come out of human mouths. But Brahman or the Absolute has never been defiled, for no one as yet has been able to express It by human speech." The question raised reminds us of this teaching of the Master. In trying to describe the Indescribable human speech fails to achieve its purpose. The Sruti also says, "There goes neither the eye, nor speech, nor mind; we know It not; nor do we see

how to teach one about It. Different It is from all that is known and is beyond the unknown as well—this we have heard from the ancient seers who explained That to us."

What the Swami meant was that the Eternal Existence-Knowledge-Bliss *appears to be* involved in its own ignorance and not that It is actually involved in ignorance. We say *appears to be* involved because what veils It is ignorance which is not a reality. Vedânta says that this ignorance or Avidyâ is Anirvachaniya, unspeakable. We can neither say it is a reality or that it is not a reality. It is something indescribable. This ignorance or Mâyâ is identical with Brahman. When the Supreme Being is thought of as inactive He is styled God the Absolute and when He is thought of as active—creating, sustaining and destroying—He is styled Sakti. It is Mâyâ Sakti that is responsible for the creation of this diversity where there is only One.

Scriptures teach that Brahman is the First Cause. It is the cause of the origination, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. It is both the efficient and material cause of this world. In the same breath the scriptures also say that Brahman is unchangeable, eternal, without parts, immutable and so on. These statements seem to contradict each other. How can the Brahman which is eternal, immutable, without parts, etc. be the material cause of this world? Scriptures are the only authority in things transcendental and so when they say that the immutable eternal Brahman has become this world we have to accept it as true. Such a contradictory statement can be true only on the basis of Vivarta and not Parinâma, the theory

of apparent and not actual modification of Brahman into the world order.

Ignorance is described in Vedânta as something positive though intangible, which cannot be described either as being or non-being and is antagonistic to Knowledge. It has two powers, *viz.*, the power of concealment and the power of projection. As the sun appears covered by a small patch of cloud to a person whose vision is obscured by the cloud, so also Brahman which to the unenlightened appears to be in bondage due to the veil of Mâyâ is really the Eternal Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. We may think ourselves as bound but in fact we are not. We have only forgotten our nature and this is due to Mâyâ. The Self covered by Mâyâ becomes subject to Samsâra. Again, even as a rope is taken for a snake due to our ignorance of the rope, so also ignorance by its own power creates in the Self covered

by it the world phenomena which is as illusory as the snake. Vedânta accepts the theory of Vivarta which means the transformation of the cause into the effect without the former losing its own characteristics. As the snake is the Vivarta of the rope, so is the world the Vivarta of Brahman.

This is the fundamental point in Sankara's philosophy which can be grasped intellectually to some extent by this snake and rope example. Ultimately, however, it is a thing for Anubhuti or experience, and this realization comes only to those who are earnest and sincere in their struggle.\*

\* For more information we refer our readers to *Is the World an Illusion?* which appeared in the March issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata* and also to the Introduction to the *Brahma-Sutras* that appeared in the January and February issues of the same.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

Swami Turiyananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The present article *The Worshipper and the Worshipped* is an abstract of a letter he wrote in reply to a query from one of his correspondents about the nature of Divine worship. . . . Prof. E. E. Speight belongs to the Osmania University, Hyderabad. In *the Mind of the Japanese Student* he dwells on his experiences while he was a lecturer in the Imperial University of Japan. . . . Prof. Nicholas de Roerich in his *Peace unto the Whole World* shows how imperative the call of Peace is to the present distracted world of ours. . . . Prof. Teja Singh is our old contributor. He gives a detailed account of *The Sikh Religion*. . . . In this issue we have

opened our new section *Questions and Answers* as announced in our Foreword in the last January Number.

### THE SUPERIORITY COMPLEX

There are but a few seekers after truth. Most of us suffer from either superiority or inferiority complex, both of which hamper revelation of truth. The civilized man thinks that he is by nature superior to the primitive man, that it is a mere waste of energy and money to try to educate and enlighten the latter, and that, born with superior qualities, he is meant for the enjoyment of the best things of the world. Mr. R. U. Sayce, in an interesting article in a recent issue of *Scientia*, controverts this complacent view of the civilized man.



His contention is : The civilized man has no inherent superiority over the primitive man. The superiority that is seen is solely due to favourable environments and contact with other, comparatively more civilized peoples. The urge to civilization is but a commonplace thing. Man is goaded to it in his search for food and to protect himself against enemies. The flora and fauna and the soil of the land are the determining factors of civilizations. Man's sole attempt is to establish an equilibrium with these. And when this is once done, he does not move further, unless they change or contact with other peoples is effected. "Important adaptations, however, almost inevitably follow if a hunting people learns to rely largely on a new animal of the chase, if a pastoral group acquires a new kind of domesticated animal, or if an agricultural community adopts a food plant that requires new methods of cultivation. . . . Still more important consequences ensue if a hunting or agricultural community adopts domesticated herds, or if a group of pastoralists begins to practise agriculture. In such cases people may be forced to complicate their activities and to widen their interests and experiences."

Thus grow civilizations blindly under the pressure of necessity, until they reach a very high stage when peoples become conscious of them and develop them along carefully planned lines with definite ideas of causes and their effects. Asia and Europe have developed numerous centres of high civilizations, because the environments were and are favourable—the different groups have come in contact with one another, soils are varied and rich, flora and fauna have all along been favourable. The hunting, fishing, pastoral, agricultural, industrial groups—all came in contact very early, thus giving a very complex

character to these Eur-Asian civilizations. Whereas the Australians had no such chance. "Since the Australians have inhabited an isolated region, which they have shared with an archaic flora and fauna, they appear to have missed the spurs to cultural progress in the way of contacts with other cultures not too different from their own, . . . When they came into touch with Europeans they had been isolated too long. European culture had moved on too far, and the contrasts had become too great for the Australian cultures to bridge the gap by borrowings and adaptations."

Apart from these favourable environments and cultural contacts with comparatively more civilized peoples, there is no inherent greatness or superiority in modern civilized man. The size of skulls and brains and the application of intelligence tests, familiar to Eur-American peoples and totally unfamiliar and uninteresting to these primitive peoples, do not warrant us to pass any judgment of inferiority on the latter. These peoples should be first of all given opportunities to be familiar with and to take interest in these tests, they must exert themselves to come out successful even as civilized men do. Before that we are not justified in their application to the Negroes and Australians. Again the average size of brain is got by taking into account the brains of highly cultured men as well as those of the peasantry. And to apply that average to the case of the Negroes and Australians, no individual of whom has ever enjoyed any opportunity of culture of any kind, is far from being fair and just. That these races can produce, under favourable conditions, great men of outstanding merit is borne out by facts of history.

Hence it is nothing more than a mere deplorable superiority complex which makes us attribute innate lack



of capacity to these primitive peoples. "Self-esteem and day-dreams," says Mr. Sayce, "are not adequate substitutes for scientific fact." To those who are proud of their superior cultures, it is far more glorious to enlighten these creatures of adverse circumstances than to kill them outright. Animals kill and devour, humans bring life and light.

### WHAT ARE WE FOR?

Different answers are given to the question: What are we for? The noblest that is heard, specially in modern times, is: For humanity, for the good of all. To live a life dedicated to the welfare of humanity is indeed a very great achievement. To forget the little self, the centre and source of all ugly things, is difficult; to have in addition the positive element of universal love is very rare indeed. He who can have such a love partakes of divinity and becomes divine. He is the visible, moving God, the eternal ideal, towards which the whole human race is moving through beginningless time. He is the Buddha, the Christ, the Gauranga. Man calls him an Avatâra, God incarnate.

This is the ideal. Good. But how to achieve it? Is it by loving and ever widening the circle of love? Is it possible, is it practicable? Will not the little self, the Satan, intervene and spoil everything? Will it stop demanding the satisfaction of its cravings? If not, how to cultivate the divine love? If the start is rendered impossible, how to gain the goal? So the whole problem of life is the problem of these cravings, the sum total of which is the little self. What to do with these cravings? Three answers present themselves: Kill them; satisfy them to the utmost; gently guide and sublimate them—increasing love all the while. Go on through any of these

paths without looking right or left, and at the end there will remain nothing but love.

The first and the third answer are easily understood. The inner significance of the second is that by excessive indulgence they wear out or set in a strong reaction in the other direction. Nature, both internal and external, is so finely attuned to the highest, that every little, wrong step is promptly punished; or these little infringements go on accumulating and bring about a tragic crash at last. In either case Nature corrects and puts man on the right track. It is no use calling one path better than another, for the simple reason, "What is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander." Violent natures need violent remedies. Judges will differ to pass verdict on either the violent or the mild. We love and adore him who succeeds; and success depends on single-minded devotion to the chosen path and not on the path itself.

So man, if he really wants to be the Christ or the Buddha, has twofold duty to perform: he must go on increasing his love for others, and he must reduce his little self of personal cravings to naught either by weeding out or by sublimation. The first duty has a charm around it. It is pleasant and is lavish in rewards. And because of its affinity with the highest stage it has a halo about it. It leads man to public admiration. Hence he is naturally inclined to developing this side of his nature to the detriment of the other. And cases are by no means few where the development of the other side has been completely ignored. This is fraught with fatal results. It virtually kills the man by making him sickly sentimental, dangerous to himself as well as to society. This sentimentalism, this nervous titillation, at last takes



away even that love, rather the apology for it, for which the man staked all; and the poor being sees emptiness everywhere.

The fact is we mistake romance or a nervous pleasure derived from altruistic acts for real love. We are generally led to do good to others because, unknown to ourselves, we want to enjoy the pleasure derived therefrom. Lacking in self-control, we foolishly allow our little energy to dissipate, and make our life a mass of ruins. Our tendencies are generally out-going; and we run to help others without helping ourselves or without knowing what real help is and how to render that. Charities do not really help people; love and sympathy, as they are generally expressed, do not make them stand on their own legs. It is the severe virile aspect of our nature that really does good to others by inspiring them to cultivate and acquire the same in their own lives. At the back of every success will be seen the play of virility born of self-control. It is very difficult to acquire self-control, indeed the most difficult task; but without it nothing great, nothing abiding, has ever been, or will ever be, achieved. This is the stuff of which real life is built.

Hence this weeding out or sublimating of the little self is of far greater importance than the cultivation of what generally goes by the name of love. It is not a fact that we do not understand this. We do. But then we avoid giving emphasis to this because it is very difficult of attainment and does not lend itself so easily to public fame. But life without it is no life. All our love and sympathy for others may vanish at any moment, if they are not backed up by this virility. But one who has conquered the little self, can take the whole society with him to a much higher level than all the charities

and other expressions of so-called love can possibly do. If we stop our feverish anxiety of doing good to others and wait a little to erase the little self and to enthrone the higher one instead, and thus learn what real good is, we should see a better world in a shorter time. This is the bed-rock on which the edifice of love should be built. With it, love culminates in a Christ or a Buddha; without it, it degrades to worthless sentimentalism.

Life kindles life. If we really want to do good to others, we must ourselves be good first of all. And this is the only way to be good. Love, man has by nature; but these selfish desires must be fought manfully and subdued, to give love a free play. The world needs such lives.

#### WHY RELIGIONS ARE WRONGLY JUDGED

Noble things viewed imperfectly appear uglier than ordinary ones. That is why religion has become the target of so much criticism. There are grave reasons for viewing religion imperfectly. We have an ideal which is nothing short of perfection and we have a craving for that. But when we look to ourselves, or more correctly to a single phase of our being, we see an enormous heap of imperfections. Now religion comprises both these. It is at once the perfect ideal and its antithesis the heap—the struggle of the one to find its fulfilment in the other. It is at once the path and the destination, neither of which has any existence without the other. The ideal being perfection no one can possibly quarrel with that. So the quarrel centres round the other side of it. And as it has to deal with imperfections it is but natural that there would be much confusion and misunderstanding—these, not so much with reference to those who practise as



to those who try to understand them in their own light.

Everyone of us is conscious of a large number of shortcomings in ourselves, some of which are more prominent than others. And every sincere soul begins his struggle with these enemies first; and as he proceeds gaining more and more strength, other enemies come to subdue or to be subdued. Thus from the start to finish, at every stage of the fight, new forces keep on coming. But what sustains the fighter? It is the ideal, his devotion to it, which also grows with equal speed. This growth of the ideal with the progress in the struggle is a fact patent to the fighter and to those who are interested in him, but not to others, who missing this engage in quarrels. Thus we see, with one single individual the ideal varies with his progress—so much so that if we compare his ideal at the start with the one at a much later stage we might find it difficult to recognize it as but a developed stage of the former. How much more varied will be the ideals of all the individuals of humanity in their different stages of progress? In our bigotry we fail to understand this and create confusion where there is none.

Religion, the striving after the Perfect, is indeed the noblest thing; but because we fix our eyes on one or other of the points continuously moving towards infinity forgetting the more important factor of the movement forward, we find religions ugly and debasing and at variance with one another. We must judge means as means and with reference to the end, and not as the end nor apart from it. When we talk of religion in the plural we mean these various means; and when in judging them we apply the

standard of the ideal end, we do violence to them. We cannot expect them to be perfect. They are suited to different individuals, at best, to different groups of people. As they progress, meaningless rites and ceremonies assume meanings, gospels shed new lights. Cut off from the connecting links, most things of religion have no meaning. But that is no fault of theirs; they must be viewed in the proper perspective.

When we go to judge Christianity or Hinduism, we do not really know what we are going to judge; for each of them has so many stages and truth has been spoken of from so many angles of vision for its followers in different stages of progress, that all criticism seems to be rash and unwarranted. We are either to judge them by the ideal stage, in which all of them speak the same language; or to judge the individual followers according to their mental make-up and circumstances and with reference to the ideal. In either case no sincere critic can possibly have anything to complain. Read any criticism of religion and you are sure to find that the critic means a particular point in or a phase of religion and that he views it just from the wrong angle of vision or from all points of view except the right one. Relative beings as we are, we have no absolute standard to judge by, nor any fixed unmoving permanent thing to pass judgment on. We are compelled by our very nature to judge relative things relatively. This being so the wisest thing to do is to forgo our own standard of judgment and to substitute in its stead the standard of the struggling individual, the fighter, whom we run to judge. If we can do this, we are sure to find beauties in every religion.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**BUDDHISM: ITS BIRTH AND DISPERSAL.** BY MRS. RHYS DAVIDS, D.LITT., M.A. *Messrs. Thornton Butterworth, Ltd. 15, Bedford Street, London, W.C. 2. 256 pp. Price 2/6d. net.*

This is the second, revised and enlarged, edition of the book coming out again after twenty-two years. And the readers might well be sure that a punctilious author of the type of Mrs. Rhys Davids had not let it pass through the press without bringing it up to date and incorporating in it what might be called the very bee in her bonnet, viz., the true nature of the mandate of Gotama Sâkyamuni. Years of study and research have revealed to her a great truth which was almost completely buried and lost to humanity. What Sri Ramakrishna intuitively got and Vivekananda guessed from scant data, then available, she has laid bare with facts and logic, which give her hypothesis the dignity of a proved theory. That early Buddhism, the one that was really preached by Buddha and his 'co-workers', was an extension of Vedântism; that it was not nihilistic but believed in the Self, which is the real Man behind his body and changing mental modes; that it was not pessimistic in tone but preached the robust optimism of Upanishadic Ananda or Bliss; that it did not preach negative virtues, which Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda could not tolerate, but urged mankind to exert their best to achieve the permanent Most through a progressive, continuously realized More—are now slowly coming to light through the labour and devotion of a few, small groups of men and women, among whom the place of Mrs. Rhys Davids is unique.

Being and Becoming go hand in hand. To feel pure Being, to grasp It, so to say, "introversion" to a certain degree is necessary; Dhyâna or Jhâna is thus a necessity. But to feel Being in the Becoming and *vice versa*, to have and enjoy this vision and help others in this, is perhaps the real way out of sufferings of all sorts. To transcend sufferings, later Buddhism naïvely cut the Gordian knot by strangling this sufferer. Fortunately for us doctors do not practise that way.

Mrs. Rhys Davids has raised an important doubt regarding Gotama's home-leaving antecedents, which should require serious attention of those who are working in the same field of research. A mysterious twilight of supernaturalism has been cast over many of the acts of saints and prophets, not excepting the Buddha. The sight of disease, dotage and death and of the saint and the consequent revolution in his brain have an unnaturalness about them. To establish this, which for want of sufficient data in hand cannot be dismissed as a myth, it was thought necessary to bring up the Kshatriya scion in that effeminate way which text books on Indian history tell us. Again it is highly probable that he had no idea of breaking away from Brâhmanism and creating a new sect or religion that would antagonize the mother church; he was satisfied with bringing to the doors of the many what had been kept secret by the few Brâhmanas and with showing an easier path of realizing that, viz. through Karma-yoga. The data actually adduced and hints thrown out to future research scholars for elaboration and deeper search seem to be weighty enough to oppose effectually the monkish tradition.

The book is written in a popular way, so different from her usual style in which readers should always be prepared to find something learned and intricate.

**INDIAN IDEALS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION.** By Bhagavan Das, M.A. *Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. 35 pp. Price four annas.*

The author would educate the young generation for a set purpose. His motto is in the language of Principal Kilpatrick of the Columbia University: "Tell me what sort of civilization you want, and I will tell you what sort of education you should give to the new generation." And the author's fundamental values of life are "Truth and Beauty and Goodness, and through these Happiness." According to him, "... states and governments ... are *merest means*. . . . The happiness of the home is their *end*. The family home is the heart of the state; and in that home, the woman is the heart, the



man the head, and the children the limbs.

'And it is the heart and not the brain  
That to the highest doth attain.' "

He is inclined to say that man is intended for bread-winning and "all the competitive battling of life, and woman for 'house-keeping' and 'home-making', reserving "her vital powers for the great toil and travail of maternity, without which the race perishes." The following translation of a *Raghu-vamsa* passage quoted by the author is illustrative of his ideal of Indian womanhood: "The two spouses are, to each other, not only husband and wife, but also friend and friend, brother and sister, father and daughter, son and mother, sovereign and counsellor, teacher and pupil." That is the true kind of education for our women which will lead to this desired end. This little book speaks volumes. We need to ponder over what he says.

**ANCIENT SOLUTIONS OF MODERN PROBLEMS.** By Bhagavan Das, M.A. *Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India.* 70 pp. Price eight annas.

Here in this book readers will find an estimate of the modern civilization side by side with that of the ancient Aryan civilization of the Vedic and Purânic Rishis. When a good man earnestly seeks good of the whole world and finds it being persistently and organizedly opposed and made increasingly worse, he gets exasperated. And when such a person writes or speaks, he does so rather violently but never with a sting. Dr. Das, speaking of the ills of modern civilization, has exactly done the same. But in all fairness to him it must be said that he has not made a single false statement, nor has he exaggerated. He has simply put together facts of the dark side of the civilization, and that too in the language of the products of that culture, and has not given us the bright side, his aim being reform of unworthy things and not praise of worthy ones. But one does not mind the gruesome picture when one sees the intention and good will of the author below the surface. His solutions of the modern problems are bold and thorough, brooking no compromise whatsoever. He wants all India, if it wants peace seriously, to accept Varna-ashrama Dharma—not the one based on birth, but the true type based on qualifications of men concerned—the teachers having the power and authority of deciding what class a man, after undergoing the cultural education in

a Gurukula, should belong to. He is against Varna-sankara, i.e., his Brâhmanas, or men of wisdom, the leaders, will have none of pelf and power and enjoyment but must be content with honour alone; his Kshatriyas or the executive and the protectors will have power but not the other three viz., honour, wealth and enjoyment.

The author seems to be conscious that his ancient ideal has but little chance of being accepted by the world. But then he finds no other solution of the many ills that the world is groaning under. He does not think it altogether a Utopia, for, says he, by education for peace and not for war and by legislation for the same purpose, it is not at all impracticable to bring in that ideal golden age. He is, however, not for a thorough repudiation of the modern culture; he is for a synthesis, the basic culture being the ancient Aryan one. India may do well to hear the old savant, even if she may not follow him.

**WOUNDED HUMANITY.** By Barindra Kumar Ghosh. *To be had of the author, 54A, Amherst St., Calcutta.* 96 pp. Price Re. 1.

The book does not treat of all humanity, as many would expect from the title of the book, but of Indians alone and their destiny. S. Ghosh is now a changed man. It is refreshing to find him say: "Dharma is truer to India than politics, the inner man of purity and self-denying love more real to her than the outer one of subtle political intrigue and violence." He has thrown the important political movements and their leaders into his weighing machine and found them all wanting—in fact he has lost faith in politics and nationalism. To him men are not nationals but human beings. Swadesi, terrorism, communism, fascism—all seem to have lost their charms for him. India stands for Spirit and her material freedom is a means to this grand end. He reduces the Indian (political) problem to one of mass problem and his solution is: "Give the masses real education; relieve them of the mass mind, which is as bad as brute mind." And how would he educate them? He says, "Self-reliant groups of workers settled in the midst of villages as so many co-operative groups of model farmers and factory runners will be our schools. They will support themselves, add to the supplementary earnings of the villages and teach them in their leisure time. These factory-schools and farm-schools



will be knit together in a co-operative bond of fellowship and federated into a university of their own and will go to form a huge army of national workers." He prays to our political leaders to "cease to create a vagabond army of political missionaries out of our earnest and selfless young men."

Buddha and, in fact, all great prophets tried their best to win over extremists to the golden mean. But have they succeeded? It

is easier for man to go from one extreme to another than to follow the middle course. The author, we are afraid, is not an exception to this general rule. His constructive programme is, however, worth attempting. Small farms and factories in villages of the above kind, if started and tenaciously stuck to, will go a great way in *building the nation*, if we really mean anything by the phrase.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY AN APPEAL

Ninety-nine years ago India, the motherland of a galaxy of saints and sages of the first magnitude, in keeping with her ancient tradition, presented to the world one of the fairest flowers of the human race in the person of the poor Brahmin boy of Kamarpukur, the saint of Dakshineswar, known to different quarters of the globe as Sri Ramakrishna. We need scarcely say much about this Prophet of the Harmony of all Religions, who in the estimation of many of the greatest savants of the East and the West was a Superman of unique personality. In the words of one of the greatest thinkers of the modern world, he was the "consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people"—a great symphony "composed of the thousand voices and the thousand faiths of mankind."

With a view to propagating the soul-stirring teachings of this great World-Teacher to the farthest corners of the earth, it has been decided that his birth centenary which falls in the year 1936, should be celebrated in all places in a befitting manner. A comprehensive Scheme for the Centenary celebrations all over India, Burma, Ceylon, Federated Malay States and other places in Asia as also in Europe, Africa and America has been adopted in a public meeting held at the Belur Math on November 25, 1934. It includes, among other things, a proposal to start under the Ramkrishna Mission a nucleus of a Central Fund to help its humanitarian activities in times of flood, famine, pestilence, etc., Mass Education on vocational and industrial lines and the

starting of an Institute of Cultural Fellowship.

To work out the Scheme a strong Working Committee, an Executive Committee and a number of Sub-Committees—have been formed.

The membership of the General Committee of the Centenary, carrying important privileges, is open irrespective of caste, creed or nationality, to all who will sympathise with the objects of the Centenary and pay the minimum fee of Rs. 5/- (Rs. 3/- for students) for India, Burma and Ceylon, and £ 1 or \$ 5 for foreign countries. To materialize the Scheme in full, it has been estimated that about ten lacs of rupees will be required.

We appeal to the generous public of all sections and communities in India and abroad to enlist themselves as members and also to contribute liberally to the funds of the Centenary, so that we may be able to carry out the Scheme in all its details and thus pay our respectful homage to the great World-Teacher, Sri Ramakrishna.

All contributions sent to any of the following addresses will be most thankfully received and acknowledged:

1. The Treasurer, Sri Ramakrishna Centenary, P. O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah.
2. The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.
3. The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
4. The Central Bank of India, Ltd., A/c. Sri Ramakrishna Centenary, 100, Clive Street, Calcutta.
5. The Bengal Central Bank, Ltd., A/c. Sri Ramakrishna Centenary, 86, Clive Street, Calcutta.

(Sd.): Swami Akhandananda, Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Kt., Mr. M. R.



Jayakar, Sir Lalubhai Samaldas, Kt., Swami Vijnanananda, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Sir P. C. Ray, Kt., Justice Sir M. N. Mukherjee, Kt., Sir Badridas Goenka, Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar, Kt. of Chettinad, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Kt., Dewan Bahadur Sir Alladi Krishna-swamy Iyer, Kt., Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Kt., Raja Sir M. N. Ray Chaudhury of Santosh, Mr. U. Set, Rangoon, Mr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, Mr. S. W. Dassnake, Ceylon, Mr. S. L. Patta Wardhan, Mr. K. Natarajan, Mon. Romain Rolland, Rao Bahadur Hazarimul Doodhwala, Sir Hari Shankar Paul, Kt., Raja Velugoti Sarvaganya Kumar Krishna Yachendruvaru of Venkatagiri, Mr. F. J. Ginwala, M.A., LL.B., Solicitor, Dr. Sir Nilratan Sircar, Kt., Justice S. N. Guha, Justice D. N. Mitter, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Swami Suddhananda, and Swami Virajananda.

#### SWAMI SIDDHATMANANDA'S TOUR

Swami Siddhatmananda has been touring in the Andhra province for the last one month. The main purpose of the tour is to popularise our literature among the people, in which mission he has been very successful so far. He has already visited Berhampore, Gopalpur, Chatrapur, Chica-cole, Vizianagram and Vizagapatam, and in almost all of these places he delivered lectures and gave discourses on the ideals of Vedānta and of the Ramkrishna Mission. He also held private conversaciones to explain religious questions to such as approached him at the place of his residence. Some of the subjects of his lectures were "Religious Problems of the Present Day," "Hinduism and Sri Ramakrishna," and "Harmony of Religions." The last one was delivered at Vizagapatam Town Hall with Sir S. Radhakrishnan in the chair. The Swami is expected to extend his tour further south and we are sure his travel will be availed of by many to get enlightened on religious topics and on the ideals and activities of the Ramkrishna Mission.

#### ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, BOMBAY

Sri Ramakrishna Math, Bombay, held an arts and crafts exhibition in connection with Swami Vivekananda's Birthday Celebration this year. Mr. M. R. Jayakar who opened the exhibition on Sunday, February 10, in the course of his speech said: "As a lad

I used to get the *Prabuddha Bharata* from my grandfather who was a Sanskrit scholar and a subscriber to the journal. The *Prabuddha Bharata* has rendered signal service to the country in that it has made abstruse Vedanta philosophy popular and a living faith and has brought home to every educated Indian the glorious mission of our motherland."

Speaking of the Swami Vivekananda and his message to his countrymen he referred to a beautiful incident in his life: "One of my friends was travelling in the same boat with the Swami. One day he was reading an old Sanskrit book and the Swami who was strolling on the deck chanced to peep in and seeing him reading a book, asked him what he was reading. My friend replied, 'It is said that forgiveness is the true ornament of a hero.' The Swami cried out, 'Stop, stop, first be a hero and then practise forgiveness.'" Mr. Jayakar exhorted the youths to follow in the footsteps of the great Swami and to cultivate courage and manliness.

#### SRI RAMKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SARGACHI

Sj. Satis Chandra De, Headmaster, Maharaja K. C. M. High School, Shusang, Mymensingh writes:

I visited this Ashrama in January last for the second time after a lapse of 12 years. It gave me great pleasure to see how the Ashrama work has progressed in various departments during these twelve years. The two storied temple, the School House, the Charitable Dispensary building and a tube-well which supplies excellent water to the Ashrama and its neighbourhood are new additions which have entirely changed the view of the Ashrama. What strikes me most is the interest the Mohammadan population takes in the Ashrama, though a Hindu institution, which shows that the days of real union between these two great sections of the nation are not far distant. The new Dispensary building owes its existence entirely to the charity of a large-hearted Mohammadan gentleman named Haji Mohammad Yusuff of Beldanga, who offered to build this pucca building hearing of the great inconvenience due to want of accommodation felt by the large number of patients who daily throng to this Dispensary. May the everlasting blessings of the Lord be on him.