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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

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## DIALOGUE

BY DOROTHY KRUGER

What can I offer you, my Lord,  
Who cleared the spring of love?  
The mind alone is mine to give,  
Is gift of mind enough?

*A mind you cannot give, my child,  
That pencilled as with flame  
Has burnt upon each thread of stuff  
My latest given name.*

The heart I give you then, my Lord,  
A ruby vaulted hall  
Wherein no picture hangs but yours,  
Wherein no footsteps fall.

*A drawing-room is now your heart,  
Already I live there,  
My shining makes of it a place  
Wherein none else would dare.*

What is there mine to give, my Lord,  
Whose name perfumes each breath?  
The soul then take, and leave behind  
The heart and mind for death.

*Your soul I am, and death, my child,  
And all things thought begot.  
Outside of Me, God-consciousness,  
Yourself, as you, are not.*

# VEDANTIC IDEAL OF SERVICE

BY THE EDITOR

## I

Unity in variety is the plan of creation. The human mind, since its origin, has been struggling in different ways to find out this Unity—the one absolute Principle underlying the bewildering multiplicity as seen in this phenomenal world. The various systems of Hindu philosophy, when duly analysed, disclose a gradual working up of the human genius towards the realisation of this unity—the inner harmony of life and thought. The Nyaya philosophy of Gautama and the Vaisheshika system of Kanâda, in their epic quest of Truth, reduced the innumerable existences to sixteen and seven elementary substances (*tattvas*) respectively; whereas the great Kapila and Patanjali—the fathers respectively of the Sankhya and the Yoga philosophies—while postulating the plurality of souls, generalised the variety of existents into two ultimate principles—Purusha and Pradhâna. Similarly, in the Purva-mimânsâ of Jaimini and the Uttara-mimânsâ of Bâdarâyana, one would find built monumental philosophical edifices which are at once colossal in their constitution and sublime in their conception. Needless to point out the genius of the Hindus attained to its culmination in the Advaita Vedanta where ‘Stone follows on stone in regular succession—after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it Atman or Brahman’. Thus in these six systems of Hindu metaphysical thought we witness a gradual unfolding of the grand principles whose music beginning far back in the soft notes of Dualism eventually ended in the trumpet blast of

Advaita. This highest generalization, according to the Vedantic School, is the supreme object of quest in life, gaining which nothing else remains to be gained and all knots of the heart are torn asunder, all doubts are set at rest and the effects of works, good or evil, are dissolved once for all. “Verily,” says the scripture, “he who has seen, heard, comprehended and known this (Brahman), by him is this entire universe known” (*Brih. Up. 2. 4. 5*). “That one Supreme Ruler, the Soul of all beings, who makes His one form manifold, He who is the eternal among the non-eternal, intelligence of the intelligent, who, though one, fulfils the desires of many,—those wise men who perceive Him as existing in their own Self, to them belongs eternal peace and to none else” (*Katha Up. 12-13*).

## II

The Vedanta has provided ample latitude for each individual to make an approach to this Supreme Truth in accordance with his own mental make-up and intellectual predilection. The aspirant can therefore follow any of the four cardinal methods, viz., *jñâna*, *karma*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, into which the varied processes have been generalized for the convenience of the different classes of seekers of spiritual knowledge. But it would be a mistake to suppose that these paths are watertight divisions exclusive of each other. For, mere knowledge (*jñâna*), unvivified by the warmth of devotion (*bhakti*), leads to icy coldness of heart; mere emotion, unlit by knowledge, is nothing short of hysteria, and mere action (*karma*), unguided by self-control (*yoga*) and

uninspired by love, is meaningless ritual or feverish unrest. In fact, all these factors enter into the integral experience of a perfect life. So does Swami Vivekananda also say, "It is not that you can find men who have no other faculty than that of work, nor that you can find men who are no more than devoted worshippers only, nor that there are men who have no more than mere knowledge; these divisions are made according to the type or tendency that may be seen to prevail in a man." As the emphasis on these different tendencies shifts in different individuals, they are found in this world to approach the problem of life from different sides. It is only the natural bent or aptitude that determines the particular line of *sādhanā* for every particular aspirant. As a matter of fact, all religions and all methods, if sincerely followed, eventually lead one to the same goal, —the realisation of absolute freedom, physical, mental and spiritual. Everything that we see around us from the atom to the man, from the insentient lifeless particle of matter to the highest existence on earth is marching towards the attainment of that freedom which is the highest principle of Unity, otherwise called, in Vedantic terminology, the Supreme Soul of the universe.

As already indicated, selfless devotion to work (Karma-yoga) which is recognised as one of the principal methods of approach to Truth, has been given as much importance in Vedantic literature as the other processes. The Bhagavad-Gita, the quintessence of Vedanta, says in an unequivocal language, "The plane which is reached by the *jñānins* is also reached by the *karma-yogins*. He who sees that the way of knowledge and the way of action are one, he sees indeed" (V. 5). Every individual bears within him the flame of Divinity; but an aspirant is not blessed with the vision

of the infinitude of his being until he has passed through a process of self-purification by performing without attachment the allotted duties of his life. It is the actions motivated by desire for the enjoyment of fruits that forge fetters for the immaculate soul. Actions done without Yoga, actions not grounded in the ultimate principle of consciousness and done only in obedience to the impulses and desires of the moment, lead us astray and sever us from our fundamental essence and hence cause our bondage in the forms of births and deaths. But the scripture tells us that actions, when performed intelligently and without attachment, not only do not bind us but positively help us in attaining liberation. Sri Krishna, while instructing his disciple, Arjuna, in the real nature of the soul and the philosophy of action, emphatically declared, "He who does actions forsaking attachment, resigning them to Brahman, is untouched by sin, like unto a lotus-leaf by water" (V. 10). "Thy right is to work only, but never to the fruits thereof. Be thou not the producer of fruits of thy actions; neither let thy attachment be towards inaction. Being steadfast in Yoga, O Dhananjaya, perform actions, abandoning attachment,—remaining unconcerned as regards success and failure. This evenness of mind is known as Yoga" (II. 47-48). "Endued with this evenness of mind, one frees oneself in this life, alike from vice and virtue. Devote thyself, therefore, to this Yoga. Yoga is the very dexterity of work" (II. 50). Thus Karma-yoga has been defined as *skill in action*, inasmuch as when it is done without any motive for the results and with an equilibrium of mind, it not only robs work of its power to bind but also transforms it into an efficient means of self-liberation. "No body can rest for even an instant without performing

actions, for all are made to act helplessly indeed, by the forces of the three *gunas* born of *Prakriti*." "Therefore," says Sri Krishna, "do thou always perform actions which are obligatory, without attachment; by performing actions without attachment one attains to the Highest" (III. 5, 19). In reality this *karma* is more than mere preparation, since with the progressive transparency of the mind effected through this discipline, the Truth begins to shine in, though it may not be in the intellectual way. As the clarity of spiritual being is implicitly or explicitly the clarity of knowledge, the unfoldment of one's deepest spiritual being through work cannot therefore be different from the dawn of knowledge (*jñāna*), the acquisition of which is regarded as the highest end of human existence.

### III

Every being, says the scripture, is an individualised centre of one eternal consciousness that pervades the entire cosmos from the highest to the lowest. In other words, he is a microcosmic embodiment of the Universal Spirit. Cosmically viewed, every great element in the physical universe is, as it were, serving the one Divine Will. For, it is said in the Upanishad, "From His terror the fire burns; from His fear also shines the sun; and from His terror Indra, Vayu and Death the fifth proceed to their respective functions" (*Katha Up.* 2. 6. 3). Similar is the case with microcosm: "He (the Lord), as the Antaryāmin, sends the Prāna upward and throws the Apāna downward. All the gods (senses) worship the adorable One (the Atman) seated in the middle" (*Katha Up.* 2. 5. 3). In other words, all the senses, including the mind, gather experiences from the outside

world and present them to the indwelling Spirit and thus become active for the Atman. Sri Krishna also accentuated this very phenomenon in the Gita for the enlightenment of his disciple when he said, "The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all, by His Mâyâ, to revolve, as if mounted on a machine. Take refuge in Him with all thy heart, O Bhārata; by His grace shalt thou attain supreme peace and the eternal Abode" (XVIII. 62-63). The secret of Karma-yoga therefore lies in directing the outgoing senses inwards so that the whole being of man may be rhythmically attuned to the supreme will of the inner Spirit, and respond as well to the cosmic forces. When works are done in a spirit of worship of the Divine, the personality of man becomes completely transfigured, and the works themselves serve in the end to open the hidden spring of spiritual energy and instal the finite on the throne of the Infinite. Therefore did Sri Krishna enjoin, "Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me" (IX. 27). This indeed is the real spirit that must actuate every true *karma-yogin* in his pursuit of the ideal; for it is this mental attitude that would neutralize the effects of *karma* done now or in the past, and produce a gigantic will that would make every individual a centre of infinite goodness, and a positive blessing unto humanity.

The vocation of each individual, it should be remembered, is determined by the tendencies predominant in him. The functions of a person having in him a preponderance of *sāttvika* qualities will hardly fit in with the temperament of a man of *tāmasika* or *rājasika* nature. The scripture has therefore distinctly

enjoined, "One should not relinquish the duty to which he is born, even though it is attended with evil" (Gita, XVIII. 48). For, it is not by avoidance of work but only by a conscientious discharge of one's own appointed duty without attachment to the fruits thereof, that one is able to rise to the supreme state of actionlessness. Everyone should therefore pursue his *own* ideal and try to accomplish it, instead of taking up other men's ideals which he can never hope to accomplish. In fact every man is great in his own place and must evolve in his own particular way. The apple-tree should not be judged by the standard of the oak, nor the oak by that of the apple. The different individual characters and classes of men and women are natural variations in creation. Our duty is to encourage everyone in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth. A Brahmin or a Kshatriya, a Vaishya or a Sudra,—everyone must stand loyal to the vocation of his own life. What is needed is not a mere mechanical performance of duty but an orientation of outlook,—the development of the proper mental attitude with which to attend to the works peculiar to one's own station of life. "Devoted each to his own duty," says Sri Krishna in the Gita, "man attains the highest illumination . . . He from whom all beings proceed and by whom all this is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty does man attain perfection . . . He whose intellect is unattached everywhere, who has subdued his heart, whose desires have fled, he attains, by renunciation, to the supreme perfection, consisting of freedom from action" (XVIII. 45, 46, 49). All limitation is due to attachment and desire, inasmuch

as these restrict the unlimited flow of the stream of consciousness by forcing it to be directed along a special limited channel and thus stopping its flow in other directions. So long as wants remain, *imperfection* exists, and that is why desireless actions are indispensable for removing the veil that covers the soul. The *karma-yogin* therefore believes that by performing actions in a regulated and methodical fashion, it is possible to reach the highest stage of actionlessness in the same way as one can do by other methods of *sâdhanâ*.

#### IV

This in short is the Vedantic ideal of service which, in the modern age, found a living expression in the life of Swami Vivekananda who received it as a sacred legacy from his great Master, the Prophet of Dakshineswar. It is interesting to note how Sri Ramakrishna whose whole life was nothing but one all-absorbing stillness of communion with the Supreme Being, also pointed out to his disciples the spirit with which service is to be rendered unto humanity. While expounding the gist of Sri Gauranga's cult, he once remarked, "This religion enjoins upon its followers the practice of three things, viz., relish for the name of God, compassion for all living creatures and service to the Vaishnavas,—the devotees of the Lord." Hardly had he uttered the words, 'Compassion to all creatures', when he fell into Samâdhi. After a while he came back to a semi-conscious state of mind and said to himself, "Compassion for creatures! Compassion for creatures! Thou fool! An insignificant worm crawling on earth, thou to show compassion to others! Who art thou to show compassion? No, it cannot be. It is *not* compassion for others, but rather service to man, recognising him to be the

veritable manifestation of God!" These pregnant utterances of the Master revealed a new truth to Narendra Nath who, in after years, delivered this message unto the world as a fruitful means of self-realization. The words of the Master beautifully reconciled the ideal of Bhakti with the knowledge of the Vedanta: The ideal of Vedanta lived by the recluse outside the pale of society can be practised even from hearth and home, and applied to all our daily schemes of life. Whatever may be the avocation of a man, let him understand and realise that it is God alone who has manifested Himself as the world and created beings. He is both immanent and transcendent. It is He who has become all diverse creatures, objects of our love and worship, and yet He is beyond all these. Such realization of Divinity in humanity leaves no room for jealousy or "pity" for any other being. Service of man, knowing him to be the manifestation of God, purifies the heart and, in no time, such an aspirant realises himself as part and parcel of God,—Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Similar was the instruction given by the Vedic preceptors to their pupils in days of yore: "Let thy mother be to thee like unto a god. Let thy father be to thee like unto a god. Let thy teacher be to thee like unto a god" (*Taitt. Up.* I. 11. 2). Swami Vivekananda extended this lofty ideal still further and proclaimed, "Let the poor and the illiterate, the Chandala and the Pariah, the sick and the helpless, be to thee also like unto gods." This ideal of service teaches that our minds should be trained by constant practice to visualise the Divinity that dwells in every creature, high or low, and no distinction of colour, caste or creed should stand as any the least bar to the offering of service to all in a spirit of

worship unto the Lord. So did the great Swami declare,

"From the highest Brahman to the yonder worm,  
And the very minutest atom,  
Everywhere is the same God, the All-love;  
Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet.  
These are His manifested forms before thee,  
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?  
Who loves all beings, without distinction,  
He indeed is worshipping best his God."

No truer words have been so beautifully uttered. This is indeed the ideal we have got to realize in and through the manifold callings of our individual stations of life. Intensest activity with a spirit of detachment and an evenness of mind is what the ideal of Karma-yoga teaches. It is needless to emphasize that if such an ideal is pursued in strict accordance with the injunctions of the sages and the scriptures, it would, like similar other processes, invariably bestow on the aspirant the highest illumination for which humanity has been struggling from time immemorial. In India, as elsewhere, the need of such a lofty ideal of service was never so keenly felt as it is done today. Much of the present clash of interests and conflict of ideas in human society can be traced to the lack of intelligent understanding of the cosmic purpose which every being is destined to serve on earth through his own avocations of life. All works will be meaningless and a source of endless misery and bondage, if they are not viewed in relation to the eternal forces which make and unmake the universe. If the cosmos is an indivisible whole and every individual living in it is indissolubly linked with

the rest of the world, both physically and spiritually, the work or thought of a single person in any part of the universe cannot but produce its inevitable repercussion on others. In fact the good of one is bound up with the good of the rest of mankind. It would therefore be nothing but a spiritual suicide to think in terms of isolation and attempt to regulate oneself accordingly. Every man is the seat of infinite power and is therefore called upon by the divine law of evolution to break down individual barriers of selfishness and identify himself with the entire creation by widening the bounds of his individuality. It is only when this

artificial boom is broken that the perennial spring of eternal goodness gushes out in foamy freshness from the deepest core of his spiritual being and mingles its sacred waters with the ocean of collective thought for the enhancement of universal peace and harmony in the world. We should therefore endeavour through all our works to attune ourselves to this cosmic life; for this opening of our limited consciousness to the forces of the universal spirit is the only way to transcend the limitations of physical existence and attain to the realization of that Supreme Unity, which is the ultimate destiny of every being on earth.

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## GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

It was Saturday, December 22, 1883. Balaram's father had come. Rakhal and others had been staying there. Deven Ghosh of Shyampukur was also present. Sri Ramakrishna was seated in the south-eastern verandah with the devotees.

*A devotee:* How devotion can be had?

*Sri Ramakrishna* (to Balaram's father and others): Go ahead. The King lives beyond the seventh vestibule. You shall see the King only after you have crossed all the vestibules.

At Chanke at the time of the consecration of Goddess Annapurna, I told Dwarik Babu, "There are big fish in deep waters in the big tank. Throw spiced bait (lure) and the big fish will be drawn by its smell. Now and then they will strike the water. Love and devotion are the lure.

God sports in human form. He descends into man, e.g., Sri Krishna, Ramachandra and Chaitanyadeva.

I told Keshab Sen that He is more

manifest in man. There are small holes in the ridges in the fields, called *ghutis*. Fish and crabs enter them in large numbers. If one goes to look for fish and crabs one has to look for them in those holes. If you want to search for God, search for Him in His Incarnation.

The Mother of the universe manifests Herself in man who is no taller than three cubits and a half. . . .

Sâdhanâ (spiritual practice) is necessary for realizing God, for knowing an Incarnation. There are big fish in the tank, but one has to throw lure. There is butter in milk, but milk has to be churned. There is oil in mustard, but it has to be pressed. The fenugreek seeds redden one's fingers, but they have to be pounded.

*A Devotee* (to Sri Ramakrishna): Is He with form or without it?

*Sri Ramakrishna:* Wait, go to Calcutta first, only then can you know where the Maidan lies, and where the Asiatic Society and the Bengal Bank are situated.

Is it not necessary to reach Kharda first before one can go to the Kharda Brahmin quarter?

Why should worship of God without form be impossible? But it is very difficult. It is impossible without the renunciation of lust and gold—externally and internally. It is impossible if there is the least desire for sense-objects.

The worship of God with form is easy, though not so very easy.

The worship of the formless aspect of God, the practice of Knowledge, etc., should not be talked about in the presence of devotees. A little devotion is had after great struggles. It is injurious to devotion to say that all is like a dream.

Kabir Das was a devotee of the formless aspect of God. He used to ridicule Siva, Kali, Krishna and others.

The worshipper of the formless aspect of God has perhaps the vision of the deity with ten arms at first; then of the deity with four arms, next with two-

arms. Lastly, he sees limitless light and is immersed in it.

It is said that Dattatreya and Jada-bharata never returned after the Knowledge of Brahman.

One school has it that Sukadeva tasted just a drop from the ocean of Brahman. He saw and heard the billows and the rolling of the sea; but he never dived into it.

A Brahmacharin said that if a person went beyond Kedar his body would drop off. Even so after the Knowledge of Brahman the body perishes. Death takes place in 21 days.

An endless field stretched beyond the wall. Four friends tried to discover what lay beyond it. One after another climbed up the wall, and as soon as they saw the field they broke into a laughter and dropped down on the other side. None of them brought any news except one. His body remained even after the Knowledge of Brahman for the instruction of humanity, as is the case with the Incarnations.

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## PLACE OF THE MYSTIC IN SOCIETY

BY DR. S. DAVID MALAIPERUMAN, M.A., Ph.D.

Mysticism has been regarded by critics as the highest form of religious individualism since the mystic claims to reach God through immediate apprehension and seeks to isolate himself from society. The mystics have attempted to transcend the individual as well as society. The question has arisen whether sociology can pronounce a verdict on mystical experience any more than psychology. One may also ask whether social efficiency is the measure of spiritual stature.

Mystical experience is both individual and social. Both solitude and interaction with environment are

essential. Personality rests not on individual foundations alone but on the whole universe. It combines varied elements growing out of individual endowment and experience on the one hand and social heritage or tradition on the other hand. Institutional religion may be explained in terms of social psychology, as rooted in the actual life-needs of the people, but mystical experience requires further elucidation in terms of individual consciousness and manner of reaction. Mysticism has been recognized as a "force that has preserved religion from formalism, social life from entire



hypocrisy."<sup>1</sup> The mystical moments of the ages are characterized by the revolt against static religion, the undue dominance of dogma and orthodoxy. Jesus' protest against Hebrew legalism, Buddha's revolt against Brahmanism, the rise of monasticism and mysticism in reaction against medieval Christianity, the revolt of Al-Ghazali, Sufi mystic of the twelfth century, to rescue his faith from the clutches of barren speculation and bring into focus the reality of the experience, suffused with the love of Allah, are noteworthy examples. The mystic leaves the world in order that he may return to it with renewed strength, vigour and dynamic fervour for service, fellowship and reformation. This principle of alternation may be noticed in the mysticism of the Upanishads, in the Bodhisattva ideal in Mahayana Buddhism and in the life of Christian mystics.

There has been much controversy regarding Whitehead's oft-quoted statement: "Religion is what a man does with his solitariness".<sup>2</sup> What Professor Whitehead is urging is that religion is not merely a social phenomenon nor is it an apology for the existing social order or an instrument for social salvation. Rather, it is an attempt to discover the ideal possibilities of human life, the quest for freedom from the fetters of habit, custom and dogma. Instead of being merely a traditional view, religion must become an experience. The core of religious experience is mystical. Mystical experience is the reaction of the whole man to the whole of reality, though it may be achieved only in moments of solitude in the lonely forest sanctuaries, in the mountain

caves, in the wilderness or by the seaside. In such moments of solitude the whole man reacts, and, in so doing, all that the individual has gained, through social interaction with his fellow-men in a culture milieu, functions. The achievement of the individual in solitude is highly social, because of the very fact that this separation from society is a temporary affair. In the case of dynamic mystics there is the inevitable relation to the world, before and after his (mystical) experience. Not only the spiritual truths of mankind but also the great discoveries in science have been achieved by men in solitude. The solitariness of the mystic, though it provides the conditions essential for his experience, is but one pole of the mystical life. The other pole is action and work.

"For solitude sometimes is best  
society,  
And short retirement urges sweet  
return."<sup>3</sup>

Mystical experience yields a profound vision of a larger whole, vision of life's larger meaning and value which helps man to gain a social attitude towards the universe. One of the fundamental tendencies of Christian mysticism is the universalization of the individual will. The submerging of the ego takes place not only in a psychological but in a moral sense as well. There is immense feeling tone in the experience which usually finds adequate discharge in the activities that ensue. The value of the ecstatic trance, experienced by the mystic, must be related to other values pertaining to the social life.

Incessant pre-occupation with the social scene often tends to diminish energy, circumscribe vision and lower sensitivity. Our urban life and the inevitable depersonalising tendencies of

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Inge, *Mysticism and Institutionalism*, Hibbert Journal, July, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> A. N. Whitehead: *Religion in the Making*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Milton: *Paradise Lost*. Book IX.

modern civilization, together with the bewildering chaos and feverish frenzy of the work-a-day world, rob one of poise, balance and rhythm. One moves by wheel and pinion, day in and day out, with monotonous routine pacing along the same old rut which contributes to intellectual stagnation and spiritual poverty. Modern man has invented all kinds of diversions as means of escape from mechanizing routine, work and worry. There are various amenities and amusements, night-clubs, movies, shows, trips to the country, recreation, dinner-dances and cocktail parties. But all these give only temporary relief and satisfaction. Therefore he needs to rise above social bonds and intricacies and constantly go back to the deeper levels of his own life—"the flight of the alone to the alone." Mysticism and worship make this possible, and this is the alternation from the part to the whole. It is then that one empties oneself thoroughly of bias and selfish cravings and awaits the kindly light or an integrated vision. It is only then that one can escape the contradictions of life. Jesus, St. Paul, St. Augustine, and Buddha are classical examples of those who constantly sought in solitude to solve the conflicting elements of unrest. St. Francis and John Bunyan gained profound recentralization of life through the mystic experience. As Professor Radhakrishnan points out, it is possible to gain spiritual poise only when we "get back to the depths constantly, and develop a disinterestedness of mind which no pleasure can entice nor pain overpower."<sup>4</sup>

Our life is so constituted that we are constantly exposed to suggestion. We tend to become stereotyped and

slaves of social bias and prejudice to which we are exposed through newspapers, movies, lectures, radio institutions—be they family, school or our government—and the only way that we may emancipate ourselves is by intermittent withdrawal. This has been the living gospel of the great founders of religion, the "mahatmas", "rishis" and prophets. These were the transformers of humanity who rose above the barriers of social chaos, wars, violence, bloodshed, racial and caste discrimination. These are the makers of the spiritual history of mankind who touched life not on its circumference but at its centre. Jesus, for example, had not much to say on the details of the social problems of his day but he uttered spiritual truths with such immeasurable innocence that they have continued ever since to remake the social order all over the world.

The approach to society and social problems has sprung from within in the case of the mystics and spiritual reformers. Mystical experience has a transforming effect and brings a permanent enrichment of living. It does not stop here. The mystic proceeds with ethical sensitivity and social zeal to improve and reform society. So he cuts with a double-edged sword. There is fusion of mysticism and social consciousness in the great Hebrew prophets such as Amos and Ezekiel. As Evelyn Underhill<sup>5</sup> points out: "The real achievements of Christian mysticism are to be seen in St. Catherine of Siena regenerating her native city, Joan of Arc, leading the armies of France, Ignatius creating the Society of Jesus, or Fox giving life to the Society of Friends." The Quakers have exercised a great influence in social reform, anti-slave movement, pacifism, Red-

<sup>4</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *The Idealistic View of Life*, p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> *The Mystic Way*, p. 45.

Cross work and educational enterprise. All over the world schools and philanthropic institutions have been established that bear the name of Ignatius Loyola. Ramakrishna's mysticism gave impetus to the movement and to the missionary enterprise that bears his name. The mystics of the fourteenth century and their disciples paved the way for the Reformation with the growing emphasis on the inwardness of religion.

Mystics have been accused of anti-social tendencies. Two criticisms have been levelled against them: (a) They lived separated from the rank and file of their fellow-men; (b) They practised asceticism and neglected many of the goods of life. With regard to the first accusation, it might be said that most of the mystics, though they lived in the cloisters or monasteries, spent a great deal of their time in practical service in schools, churches or hospitals. One may not blame a mystic for spending most of his time in solitude anymore than one may blame a scientist for working constantly in seclusion within the laboratory. The light that radiates in the face of a mystic may often be such as to enable a few to catch the spirit of his message and translate it into action. This has been true of many a mystic, wrapt in meditation, who occasionally broke the spell of silence and uttered short messages which the disciples sought to relate to the life of the group. However, we must admit that static solitude may lead to psycho-pathic states and is not always commendable. With regard to the second accusation, it is valid in so far as the goods of life need to be related and organized in the quest for the more abundant life. But there are exceptional personalities as, for instance, Buddha who had a knowledge and experience of the different goods

of life, pertaining to political, economic and social life, prior to his departure to the seclusion of the forest. He was a prince as well as the head of a family. As such he was better able to understand human nature and make the supreme sacrifice for the sake of humanity. It was his capacity for making his knowledge and experience the key to a sympathetic appreciation and imaginative comprehension of the experience of other men, that prompted him to forsake his home and kingdom in quest of a solution for the ills and miseries of mankind. Gautama was twenty-nine years when he fled from society. After six years came the Great Illumination while he sat in meditation under the Bo tree. He became aware of the secret of existence with a flash of insight and grasped the cause of life's misery. He uttered the Four Noble Truths, as also the Holy Eightfold Path consisting of guiding principles for practical and ethical living. Need his mysticism be called anti-social? What was achieved in solitude the Enlightened Buddha reflected back on the world as the true clue to its interpretation. There is a community of believers loyal to him because he is considered to be the revelation of their own possibilities. Religion has been considered as the socialization of the concepts arrived at in the course of mystical experience. Religion has not only appealed to the individual soul but has sought to transform society. It is the force of the inner experience and dynamic energy that results in ethical or religious living.

There are mystics who are, in one sense, products of social forces. Prophetic mysticism is characteristic of times of great national crises such as the Babylonian captivity, the frustration of the hopes of Israel in the eighth century B. C. or the awakening of a whole

race of men against oppression and subjection. These mystic-prophets are rare individuals, especially sensitive to the social stress and chaos of the contemporary age. They have been able to find within themselves an integration of the social interactions of the age, and thus, seeing farther than those caught in the mad whirl-pool of life, they have anticipated events of the future. But for their social sensitivity, their interaction with fellow-men and hearing their pulse-beat, they could not have achieved in solitude those experiences which give a wider vision or social perspective. The quest and striving of mankind through many years finally culminates in the personality of unique individuals as, for instance, Joan of Arc who led the legions of France, or Gandhi at the helm of Indian affairs to-day. When such individuals are surcharged with energy accruing out of mystical experience they cannot help coming out into the open and declaring their message so that others also catch that spirit of passionate enthusiasm and zeal. In the case of artists, the energy instilled in moments of solitary inspiration subsequently breaks forth in songs, music, poetry, painting or sculpture.

The present social order tends to recognize the gregarious person who is

socially successful much more than the retiring contemplative type. The criterion of normality and worth seems to be entirely in terms of adaptation to the group. Many a great personality or genius is classified, on account of certain rare traits, as an eccentric or maladjusted individual. However, inner adjustment or harmony does lead to a well integrated personality. Hence, the contemplative mystical personality must be duly recognized. The wealth of social experience must be supplemented through interpretation in our own experience. In the evolutionary process one may notice that awareness of the environment precedes awareness of self, or rather, consciousness precedes self-consciousness. It is self-consciousness that makes man superior to animals. Ethnology shows that in primitive groups there is no well developed sense of personality though they may have reached a reasonable measure of adjustment to the surrounding universe. May we not therefore conclude that mystical contemplation or awareness is a higher level than mere environmental adjustment? The stature of man must not be reduced to the requirements of society. Neither is social efficiency the measure of spiritual manhood.

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## PROBLEMS BEFORE RELIGIONS

BY KAKA KALELKAR

What is it that is bringing all religions together under a common roof to-day? I think it is the genuineness, the intensity and the catholicity of the experience of a Columbus of the spirit, fearlessly going through all possible varieties of Sâdhanâ that he might

realise the reality of the all-loving Power behind the universe. Newton, Faraday, Eddington, Jeans and Raman are so many pigmies before giant experimenters in the spiritual field like Ramakrishna. The latter have to experiment on themselves, pass through

periods of doubt and depression and they have to test again and again the results of their search even after they have arrived at their goal. Ramakrishna was a brilliant star of the first magnitude in the unbroken galaxy of Brahmajñânis who have made India what she is. The uniqueness of the Sâdhanâ of Ramakrishna Paramahansa lay in this that he went through the various Sâdhanâs prescribed by the various faiths that he might reach for himself the finale of each path. It was on account of this that he could say with confidence that all the faiths led to the same goal. With him it was not a question of speculation. He had experienced what he affirmed. This made him the Prophet of his generation. It is his spirit of universality that all religions are faintly trying to echo to-day.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa emphasised in a concrete way the necessity of a genuine study of all the principal faiths in India. A conflict is almost inevitable between the various peoples of the world unless we evolve some way of mutual understanding and harmony of life. A Convention of Religions or a Conference of liberal thinkers can do it if it cease merely working on the intellectual plane. Religion is a thing of the spirit. The approach to it is through the heart and faith. Practical idealism alone can show us the way of establishing a harmony of all the races and the schemes of life that they have evolved.

A study of all the religions and their varying solution of world problem is no longer the luxury of the cultured aristocrats of the world. It is becoming more and more the *sine qua non* of all ordered social existence. Only their study must not be allowed to be a mere intellectual recreation. It must relate itself to life and must conduct experiments in order to arrive at proper solu-

tions. It is only in a spirit of service that people can come together and unite their hearts. Intellect may promote mutual understanding, it may assist to some extent the spirit of goodwill if it is already there; but service and service alone can bind the hearts together and weld us all into one humanity. Service that can go the fullest length of self-sacrifice and self-immolation is the only factor that can bring about harmony and make us into one family. Organisations may help this process to some extent; but often times we destroy the utility of organisations by expecting things which it is not in their nature to secure or yield. True servants of the spirit can instinctively understand each other and assist each other in their work by themselves remaining free. It is not a regularly constituted federation of faiths that we want but a spontaneous and free co-operation of kindred spirits. Is it not a painful fact that the great faiths of the world have become rivals, not because their creeds vary but because they have each behind them a mighty organisation controlling them?

The principle of aggrandisement has become the faithful ally of the principle of legislation and the religion of might. It only helps to broaden the field of human activity in all its blindness and misery. The might of numbers and the consolidation of power have made men almost disbelieve in the inherent strength of justice and goodness. Numbers, organisation and concentrated power are the three living Gods at whose shrine humanity is worshipping to-day and the established religions are fighting amongst themselves whilst abjectly submitting in actual practice to this living trinity of the age.

I am not unmindful of the utility of an organisation like the Church to foster the discipline which alone can transmute

a doctrine into a living faith; but the Church should be like the bark of a tree that gives protection to the inner core and yet itself cracks every winter in order to allow fullest growth of the tree. Unfortunately for man his organisations very soon begin to smother his own spirit and do not allow the sap of vitality to flow freely.

I have always felt that the antithesis of *satya* (truth) is not *asatya* (untruth) but *satta*,—authority. Untruth has always to pay homage to truth and all its strength is derived from its being a semblance to truth. Thing that is opposed to truth (*satya*) is (*satta*) which has always tried to smother, humiliate and weaken *satya* even when it is out to defend or enforce truth. The religions of the world tried to organise themselves on the plan of medieval monarchies and fondly believed that right could be easily established if it was backed by might. I do not think unbelief would do any worse. You cannot worship right and might together unless your might is the inherent might of right itself, even as you cannot worship God and Mammon together. The religions, therefore, must try to rid themselves of the ideology of might which they have gathered round themselves. Non-violence thus is but a particular phase of right or truth. The core of all religions consists, in the last analysis, of the uttermost devotion to truth and non-violence. Right is, as A. E. happily puts, its own appropriate might.

At the basis of the whole war of creeds lies the refusal to recognise the great truth that right is its own appropriate might. Religions have lost consciousness of their right and come to believe that their organisation, their strength of numbers—in short, their might is in truth the right. Otherwise would there be such scramble for increasing the

adherents of one's fold? Would there be the proud talk of mass conversions? The only true conversion is from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from wrong to right, from injustice to justice. That conversion has yet to come over the adherents of all religions in the world.

It is the glory of Hinduism that it very early discovered the two phases of every religion, viz., its doctrine—*satya* and its discipline—*satta*. And Hinduism further discovered that it is only the discipline that can be organised and not the doctrine. A man's thoughts, ideas and ideals were left perfectly free; that is why we have got the highest philosophy of Vedanta and the richest variety of the Darshanas. But mere intellectual pursuit could never satisfy us. We made experiments in life which resulted in the innumerable sects and Sampradâyas, each having its own rigid code of conduct and discipline of life. It is this discipline that lends reality to the faiths of man; but some strange intellectual and vital lethargy came over our people and they ceased to modify their discipline even when their doctrines changed. Perhaps *satta* dethroned *satya* and also religion along with it.

The Adwaitin and the Dwaitin are poles apart so far as their perception of the ultimate Reality is concerned. But examine their lives and you find no difference in their conduct. The Dwaitin may perhaps become an Adwaitin and yet there won't be any corresponding change in his outlook on life and his code of conduct. Our philosophers have invented a convenient distinction in life—that of *Vyâvahârika* and *Pâramârthika*. It was not for nothing that Swami Vivekananda used to lose his patience with the *Pondits* that advanced this distinction in defence of their inertia of life. Each Darshana must have its corres-

ponding Smriti. The Vedantins worked out with merciless logic, a stoic Smriti but it was reserved for the Yatis or Sannyâsins to live according to that code.

The Bhâshyakâras or commentators of old have pointed out the logical consistency and metaphysical implications of the various systems. It is high time now our modern thinkers gave us the sociological implications of the different metaphysical doctrines and religious denominations. This new approach will, I believe, yield a new and richer meaning to our orthodox as well as the unorthodox Darshanas and revitalise our society.

A study of Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and all the other faiths from a sociological point of view must give us a solution of the present problems that are troubling present-day humanity.

What are these problems?

I have already referred to the problem of conversion—not the conversion from one faith to another, but the conversion from wrong to right, from injustice to justice. Have we brought about that conversion in the social and economic and political spheres? Strife is rampant in all these spheres because of the general absence of justice.

The great pacific movements are carrying on an as yet ineffectual campaign against all war, and whilst armaments are being increased with break-neck speed everywhere, a Convention of Religions may not be able to make its voice effective, but let it at least declare that war is but a periodical explosion or eruption, the result of a standing worldwide malady of exploitation which in itself is the result of a very high standard of material life, and a very low standard of moral life. Let us declare that believers in God and man have immediately to revise both these standards. Establish-

ed ideas about chastity, sexual purity and social well-being are being challenged everywhere. Frantic efforts at the defence of the old order on grounds of authority and textual interpretation will no longer help. Religious ideals must be made potent in the minds of people by a new enunciation of a social ideal. Here too united counsel and united will are bound to help.

Another result of such coming together of the various religions of the world must be the modification of the spirit of finality and authority that reigns supreme in most of the religions including the blatant religion of science. The result of the labours of a Parliament of Religions should go to liberalise all religion just as the science of jurisprudence has liberalised all legislation. This work must not be left to the labours of Christian doctors of divinity or of the members of the Rationalistic Associations.

We talk of emancipation of the slaves. But have slaves been really emancipated? Slavery as such may be non-existent but social and economic exploitation exists everywhere and the exploited people are the slaves. A so-called Christian nation made aggressive war on another Christian nation in the interests of expansion, exploitation, and empire. The League of Nations could not prevent it. Could a Parliament of Religions prevent such wars?

Efforts are being made in every religion to interpret ancient texts in modern light. Each religion, therefore, is gradually trying to develop its own canons of interpretation. Instead of confining ourselves to textual criticism and textual interpretation we had better accept the aid of anthropology, sociology, art, the theory of evolution and, above all, living, spiritual experience, in order to throw light on the doctrines

and disciplines that constitute the religions of to-day.

When we talk of religions in plural, we think of the established religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity. But under the shell of these established religions new religions are being evolved on different bases altogether. The religion of humanity is one complete scheme of life offering satisfying solutions for all the problems of life. Art is another religion offering to harmonise life and solving problems of human development. Legislation is, perhaps, the most popular and powerful religion of the present times.

But my only hope lies in the slow establishment of the religion of education, not the education that is controlled by the ministers of education but the education that is fostered by the as-yet-few prophets of a better life—a life of the spirit. This education seeks to educate the whole man both individual and social, national and international. Viewed from this point Jñâna, Bhakti, and Karma are not so many alternative modes of culture; they are merely the facets of the jewel of Sâdhanâ which is our work for self-education.

Devotion to truth and non-violence are no doctrines. They are the best and never-failing disciplines ever known to man. They are the very touchstone of all religious life and religious practice, and education is the only means of drilling this discipline in the lives of individuals and the masses.

It seems humanity is waiting for a new orientation and a new faculty for reviving the religious spirit. The ancients were under the spell of a period of powerful instincts and flashing inspiration. They tried to dive into the mystery of the infinite by an intensity of concentration which is a characteristic of pristine vigour; perhaps, they evolved in a mysterious way the faculty of inspiration which we have lost. With the days of Socrates, Zoroaster and Buddha and some of the later Upanishadic sages mankind entered into a ratiocinative period. This was followed, perhaps, by the period of organisation on one hand, and art-expression on the other. The theory of evolution, then, came into the field and has given the historical outlook which was not much known to the ancients. Artistic perception and international outlook are the main phases of the present day humanity. Religions, if they are to thrive and vitalise mankind, must follow the spirit of the age and give a new lead to life. Long have the religions rested on their oars only to discover that with the best of cargo in them they are going down the current instead of being abreast of the times. Human endeavour has in the meanwhile chosen the field of science, politics and high finance for its main activities. Religions can hope to recover their sublime mission only if they are able to interpret, harmonise and control these major activities of man.

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# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S ECONOMIC IDEAS\*

BY SHIB CHANDRA DUTT, M.A., B.L.

Swami Vivekananda was a great spiritual giant. He was no less an intellectual giant and was a keen observer of things and men. It was his ideas more than those of any other person that have led to the birth and growth of modern India. His love and sympathy for the struggling millions of India was not only deep; it was something unique. Great as were his achievements and pre-occupations in the spiritual line, his intense love for the poor and the helpless made him think repeatedly on economic questions and problems. Any person therefore who wants to make a systematic study of the thought-world of Vivekananda cannot afford to ignore the economic thinking of this great Hindu Saint.

## SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, ETC.

Modern economics and modern economic life are the results of the development of modern science, of modern physics, chemistry, engineering, etc. To understand therefore the attitude of the great Swami towards modern economics, we must observe his attitude towards modern science, engineering, etc. The following passages will help a study of that attitude :

“What our nation needs to-day is quickness in action and the type of genius that helps scientific invention. Hence it is my desire that “M” should be an electrician. Even if he does not succeed I shall be happy simply with

the thought that he tried to be great and to be of use to his country.”<sup>1</sup>

“My idea is that it is better even to die under the treatment of a scientific doctor than expect recovery from the treatment of a layman who knows nothing of modern science.”<sup>2</sup>

In this connection we cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following eulogistic reference to Dr. (later, Sir) J. C. Bose who had been invited to attend the Congress of Scientists held in connection with the Paris Exhibition of 1900 :

“And where art thou, my Motherland, Bengal, in this great capital city swarming with German, French, English, Italian and other scholars? Who is there to utter thy name? Who is there to proclaim thy existence? From among that white galaxy of geniuses there stepped forth one distinguished youthful hero to proclaim the name of our Motherland, Bengal—it was the well-known scientist Dr. J. C. Bose! Alone, the youthful Bengalee electrician, with galvanic quickness, charmed the Western audience to-day with his splendid genius—that electric charge infused pulsations of new life into the half-dead body of the Motherland! At the top of all electricians to-day, is Jagadish Chandra Bose, an Indian, a Bengalee! Well done hero!”<sup>3</sup>

## MACHINERIES

In the course of his second visit to America *via* Europe the Swami wrote his “Memoirs of European Travel”

\* Based on lectures delivered at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bagerhat, on 9th December, 1938, and at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, on 22nd January, 1939.

<sup>1</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, Part IV, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Complete Works*, Vol. VII, p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 861.

("Parivrâjaka"). Those Memoirs contain some observations which make clear what the Swami thought regarding machineries. We quote those observations :

"Who invented the ship? No one in particular. That is to say, like all machineries which are so *indispensable to men*,—without which they cannot do for a single moment, and by the combination and adjustment of which all kinds of factory plants have been constructed,—the ship also is the outcome of joint labour. Take for instance the wheels; how absolutely indispensable they are! From the creaking bullock cart to the car of Jagannath, from the spinning wheel to the stupendous machinery of factories, everywhere there is a use for the wheel."<sup>4</sup>

"Machinery in a small proportion is good, but too much of it kills man's initiative and makes a lifeless machine of him. The men in factories are doing the same monotonous work, day after day, night after night, year after year, each batch of men doing one special bit of work—such as fashioning the heads of pins, or uniting the ends of threads, or moving backwards or forwards with the loom—for a whole life. And the result is, that the loss of that special job means death to them—they find no other means of living and starve. Doing routine work like a machine, one becomes a lifeless machine."<sup>5</sup>

The passage quoted just now will show that the Swami was not an uncritical admirer of machineries and that his approval of machineries was a qualified one. But that passage must be considered along with his general and definite attitude, as it will be borne out by several quotations in the course of this article, that the Hindus must absorb the material civilization of the West.

<sup>4</sup> *Complete Works*, Vol. VII, p. 292.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

## COMMERCE

Vivekananda was fully aware of the importance of commerce in modern life. In the course of a letter written from New York in 1895 he wrote, "Tell *Da Babu* that a vigorous trade can go on in England and America in *Mug* and *Arhar* pulses. *Dal* soup will have a go if properly introduced. If pulses are made into small packets containing directions of cooking in them and if these are sent to the houses of customers—and if a depot is set up and a quantity of pulses is sent, a good trade can be carried on. If somebody forms a company and brings articles to this country from India then a vigorous trade can be carried on."<sup>6</sup>

Sarat Chandra Chakravarti, a disciple of the Swami, was a private tutor to some boys. The Swami urged him to go in for business. Said the Swami, "If you want to live the life of a worldly man, and have a desire for earning money, then go over to America. I shall give you directions. You will find that in five years you will get together a lot of money." The disciple replied, "What business shall I go in for? And where am I to get the money?" The Swami replied, "What nonsense are you talking? Within you lies indomitable power. Only thinking, 'I am nothing, I am nothing', you have become powerless. Why you alone! The whole race has become so. Go round the world once and you will find how vigorously the life-current of other nations is flowing. And what are you doing! Even after learning so much, you go about the doors of others, crying, 'Give me employment.'"<sup>7</sup>

In the course of the same conversation the Swamiji said, "If you cannot

<sup>6</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, Part III, pp. 87-88.

<sup>7</sup> *Complete Works*, Vol. VII, p. 142.

procure money, go to foreign countries, working your passage as a *lascar*. Take Indian cloth, towel, bamboo-work and other indigenous products and peddle in the streets of Europe and America; you will find how greatly Indian products are appreciated in foreign markets even now. In America I found some Mahomedans of the Hooghly district had grown rich by peddling Indian commodities in this way. Have you even less intelligence than they? Take, for example, such excellent fabric as the Benares-made *Saris* of India, the like of which are not produced anywhere else in the world. Go to America with this cloth. Have gowns made out of this fabric and sell them, and you will see how much you earn.”<sup>8</sup>

What has been said above makes it perfectly clear that saintly and other-worldly as Swamiji was, and conservative as he was in the best sense in certain aspects of his life, he was nevertheless intensely modern in his attitude towards science, engineering, machineries, commerce, etc. This will be amply borne out by the following eloquent passages in his “Memoirs of European Travel” :

“Of all the causes which have worked for the present state of human civilisation from the ancient times, the commerce of India is perhaps the most important. From time immemorial India has beaten all other countries in point of fertility, and commercial industries. Up till a century ago, the whole of the world's demand for cotton cloth, cotton, jute, indigo, lac, rice, diamonds, and pearls, etc., used to be supplied from India. Moreover, no other country could produce such excellent silk and wollen fabrics like kincob, etc., as India. Again, India has been the land of various spices such as cloves, cardamom,

pepper, nutmeg and mace, etc. Naturally, therefore, from the very ancient times, whatever country became civilised at any particular epoch, depended upon India for those commodities. . . .

“Ye labouring classes of India, as a result of your silent, constant labours Babylon, Persia, Alexandria, Greece, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Baghdad, Samarkand, Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, Holland and England have successively attained supremacy and eminence !”<sup>9</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY

The problem of Indian economic life which absorbs the attention of Swamiji most is, as it should be, the problem of poverty. “The root cause of all the miseries of India is—the poverty of the people.”<sup>10</sup>

#### POVERTY A BAR TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Why does he want the removal of poverty? Because, as he teaches, one cannot preach religion to people with empty stomachs.

“The crying evil in the East is not religion—they have religion enough—but it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out for with parched throats. They ask for bread but we give them stones. It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion.”<sup>11</sup>

“Throw your religious observances overboard for the present and be first prepared for the struggle for existence.”<sup>12</sup>

“There can be no religion with the stomach empty.”<sup>13</sup>

“Some sort of materialism toned down to our own requirements would be a

<sup>8</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. VII pp. 338, 339 and 340.

<sup>10</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, part I, p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 143.

<sup>13</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, part II, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. VII, pp. 143-144.

blessing to many of us who are not yet ripe for the highest truths."<sup>14</sup>

#### FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE—ENJOYMENTS NECESSARY

Swamiji was of the opinion that the people should not only be provided with ordinary food, clothing and shelter, that is, with necessaries, but they should even be given scope for enjoyments. He stresses that that is desirable from the spiritual standpoint. Spiritual progress cannot be thrust upon people inwardly hankering after pleasures and luxuries. Ordinary people who have not the courage and the capacity to adopt at once a life of complete renunciation must be given an opportunity to experience and to realize the hollowness of worldly pleasures.

"We know that this is the ideal—to give up after seeing and experiencing the variety of things. Having found that the heart of the material world is a mere hollow, containing only ashes, give it up and go back. The mind is circling forward, as it were, towards the senses, and that mind has to circle backwards; the Pravritti has to stop and the Nivritti has to begin. That is the ideal. But that ideal can only be realized after a certain amount of experience."<sup>15</sup>

"But it is a most difficult thing to give up the clinging to this universe; few ever attain to that. There are two ways to do that, mentioned in our books. One is called the *neti, neti* (not this, not this), the other is called *iti* (this); the former is the negative and the latter is the positive way. The negative is the most difficult. It is possible only to the men of the very highest, exceptional minds and gigantic wills. . . The vast majority of mankind choose the positive way, the way through the world, making use of

all the bondages themselves to break those very bondages."<sup>16</sup>

"Possessed of a plenitude of *r.ijas* they (Westerners) have now reached the culmination of enjoyment. Do you think that it is not they, but you, who are going to achieve *yoga*, you who hang about for the sake of your bellies?"<sup>17</sup>

#### NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN MATERIAL- ISM AND SPIRITUALITY

A great spiritual giant as he was, Swamiji had the boldness, the insight and the depth to appreciate that there is no fundamental contradiction between material progress and spiritual advancement. "The infinite power of the Spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves intellectuality and made to act upon Itself makes of man a God."<sup>18</sup> This passage is one of the deepest and most illuminating utterances of the great Vivekananda. A good deal of the progress of our great motherland depends on how we appreciate and translate into action the inner meaning of this significant utterance.

#### THE IDEAL CIVILIZATION—THE ASSIMILA- TION OF TWO CIVILIZATIONS

Just as, according to Vivekananda, there is no inner or fundamental contradiction between materialism and spirituality, similarly, according to him, there is no contradiction between the civilization of the East and that of the West, but rather, these two civilizations are complementary to each other and the ideal civilization of the future will ensue from their assimilation.

"The present-day civilization of the West is multiplying day by day only the wants and distresses of men. On the

<sup>14</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. III, p. 149.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 150.

<sup>16</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. I, p. 96.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 414.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 297.

other hand, the ancient Indian civilization, by showing people the way to spiritual advancement, doubtless succeeded, if not in removing once for all, at least in lessening in a great measure, the material needs of men. In the present age it is to bring into coalition both those civilizations that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was born. In this age, as on the one hand, people have to be intensely practical, so, on the other hand, they have to acquire deep spiritual knowledge."<sup>19</sup>

"India has to learn from Europe the conquest of external nature, and Europe has to learn from India the conquest of internal nature. Then there will be neither Hindus nor Europeans—there will be the ideal humanity which has conquered both the natures—the external and the internal."<sup>20</sup>

#### HOW TO COMBAT POVERTY—THE SPREAD OF SPIRITUAL AND SECULAR KNOWLEDGE

To come back to the question of poverty from which we had digressed a little for the discussion of a point not quite irrelevant; what are the measures proposed by Vivekananda for combating the evil of poverty? These are not discussed systematically, as he did not profess to discuss them scientifically as an economist, but we can gather his views on the point from his speeches and writings.

The first two measures would appear to be (1) the spread of spiritual knowledge, so that the Vedanta can be brought down to the practical plane and be applied to the everyday life of the people; and (2) the spread of secular knowledge.

"We have enough of that (*i.e.* gift of food), let us go for the other two, the

gift of spiritual and secular knowledge."<sup>21</sup>

"Secure a few cameras, some maps, a globe and some chemicals. Then secure a big hut. After that you should assemble some of the poor masses, and then show them pictures relating to Geography, Astronomy, etc., and teach them about Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Try to open their eyes with respect to what happens or is happening in the world and as to what the world is. Go to the houses of the poor illiterate that are there after the evening or at noon and open their eyes. Books are of no use—teach them orally."<sup>22</sup>

"One defect which lay in the Advaita was its being worked out so long on the spiritual plane only, and nowhere else; now the time has come when you have to make it practical. It shall no more be a *rahasya*, a secret, it shall no more live with monks in caves and forests, and in the Himalayas; it must come down to the daily, everyday life of the people; it shall be worked out in the palace of the king, in the cave of the recluse, it shall be worked out in the cottage of the poor, by the beggar in the street, everywhere, anywhere it can be worked out. . . . The time has come when this Advaita is to be worked out practically. Let us bring it down from the Heaven into the earth; this is the present dispensation."<sup>23</sup>

#### SPREAD OF THE RAJASIK SPIRIT

Idleness, according to him, is one of the principal causes of our poverty. The remedy of that is the spread of the *râjasik* spirit.

"The real evil is idleness, which is the principal cause of our poverty."<sup>24</sup>

"But can all these (securing the necessaries of life, promotion of industry,

<sup>19</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. VI, pp. 417-418.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. III, p. 168.

<sup>22</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, part II, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. III, p. 427.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 291.

commerce, communications, etc.) be ever brought about, if real *rajas* is not awakened in men? Wandering all over India nowhere I found this *rajas* manifesting itself. It is all *tamas*, *tamas*! The masses lie engulfed in *tamas*, and only among the monks do I find this *rajas* and *sattva*."<sup>25</sup>

"Tell each and all that infinite power resides in them, that they are sharers of immortal Bliss. Thus rouse up the *rajas* within them, make them fit for the struggle for existence, and then speak to them about salvation."<sup>26</sup>

"*Rajas* is badly needed just now! More than ninety per cent. of those whom you now take to be with the *sattva* quality, are only steeped in the deepest *tamas*. Enough if you find one-sixteenth of them to be really *sâttvika*! What we now want is, an immense awakening of the *râjasika* energy, for the whole country is now wrapped in the shroud of *tamas*."<sup>27</sup>

#### ADOPTION OF WESTERN METHODS OF PRODUCTION

The next measure, according to him, for the removal of poverty is, that we must adopt the Western (*i.e.* modern) methods of scientific production. We must learn all that we can from the West to make us strong for the struggle for existence. This need not be done in a low, grovelling or beggarly spirit. For, we can impart spiritual knowledge to the West and can be their teachers in that sphere.

"Have we not then to learn anything from the West? Must we not try and exert ourselves for better things? Are we perfect? . . . There are many things to learn, we must struggle for new and higher things till we die."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. VI, p. 464.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. VII, pp. 179-180.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 319.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 410.

"I want the intensity of the fanatic plus the extensity of the materialist. Deep as the ocean, broad as the infinite skies, that is the sort of heart we want. Let us be as progressive as any nation that ever existed, and at the same time as faithful and conservative towards our traditions as Hindus alone know how to be."<sup>29</sup>

"We should learn from the West her arts and sciences, from the West we have to learn the sciences of physical nature."<sup>30</sup>

"With the help of Western science set yourselves to dig the earth and produce foodstuffs—not by means of mean servitude of others—but by discovering new avenues to production, by your own exertions aided by Western science."<sup>31</sup>

#### EVERYTHING TO BE SUBORDINATED TO THE NATIONAL IDEAL

Whatever we learn from the West we must be careful to see that everything is done on the basis of the bed-rock of Indian spirituality. Everything must be subordinated to the national ideal. The key-note of the national life must be preserved.

"We must always keep the wealth of our own home before our eyes, so that every one down to the masses may always know and see what his own ancestral property is—must exert ourselves to do that; and side by side, we should be brave to open our doors to receive all available light from outside."<sup>32</sup>

"Here is another nation whose great theme of life is spirituality and renunciation, whose one watchword is, that this world is all vanity and a delusion of three days; and everything else, whether science or knowledge, enjoyments or

<sup>29</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. III, p. 174.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 443.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 181.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 339.

powers, wealth, name or fame, must be subordinated to that one theme."<sup>33</sup>

"Whether you believe in spirituality or not, for the sake of national life, you have to get a hold on spirituality and keep to it. Then stretch the other hand out and gain all you can from the other races, but everything must be subordinated to that one ideal of life."<sup>34</sup>

"There in Japan, you find a fine assimilation of knowledge, and not its indigestion as we have here. They have taken everything from the Europeans but they remain Japanese all the same, and have not turned European."<sup>35</sup>

#### THE CREATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENTS

The fifth measure, prescribed by Vivekananda, for combating poverty, is that of creation of new employments.

"We are crying against external civilization like fools. Why should we not? If we can't get at the grapes, we can't but call them sour! . . . External civilization is necessary; not only that; it is necessary also to use articles other than necessaries so that new employments may be created for the poor."<sup>36</sup>

"Material civilization, nay even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor."<sup>37</sup>

#### GREAT SCOPE FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Vivekananda has taken pains to point out that there are certain factors in Indian economic life which make for great and even unbounded economic progress, *viz.* (1) the poor of India are better than the poor of other countries, (2) Indians are believers in the strength of the spirit, whereas the Westerners are believers in the strength of the muscle, and (3) the existence of abundant natural resources in India.

<sup>33</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. III, p. 152.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 153.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 288.

<sup>36</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, part I, p. 91.

<sup>37</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. IV, p. 313.

#### SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR, THE MASSES AND THE LABOURERS

"I am poor—I love the poor. I am seeing those who are called the poor of this country (*i.e.* U.S.A.)—their condition is very much better compared with that of the poor of my country. In spite of that, the hearts of many weep for them. But whose heart weeps for the eternally depressed twenty crores of men and women of India? What is the way to their Salvation? Whose heart weeps for them? They cannot come from darkness to light—they cannot get education—who will bring light to them?"<sup>38</sup>

"When I was in the Western countries I prayed to the Divine Mother, 'People here are sleeping on a bed of flowers, they eat all kinds of delicacies, and what do they not enjoy, while people in our country are dying of starvation. Mother, will there be no way for them?' One of the objects of my going to the West to preach religion was to see if I could find any means for feeding the people of this country."<sup>39</sup>

#### FORECAST ABOUT SOCIALISM

Swamiji made a very intelligent and far-seeing forecast about the spread of Socialism. This will be evident from the following passage :

"Yet a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class with their Sudra-hood, that is to say, not like that at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits,—not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining Sudra, will gain absolute supremacy in every society. . . . Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism, like all

<sup>38</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, part V, p. 106.

<sup>39</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. VII, p. 243.

other sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow."<sup>40</sup>

#### SOME ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

The present writer does not want to suggest that the doctrines of Vivekananda were a precursor of modern National Socialism. Nevertheless, the point has forcefully impressed itself on the present writer that some of the important elements of modern National Socialism are without doubt to be found in the thoughts and ideas of Vivekananda.

At several places in his speeches and writings Swamiji has laid great stress on the principle of obedience, that is, on rendering due obedience to the leader, in other words, on the leadership principle. As instances, we quote the following passages :

"Power cannot be centralized without obedience—without centralization of power nothing can be done."<sup>41</sup>

"He who knows how to obey, knows how to command. Learn obedience first."<sup>42</sup>

The following passage would show that Vivekananda fully appreciated the importance of dictatorial rule for a backward society or people :

"When with the spread of education, the masses in our country would grow

more sympathetic and liberal, when they would learn to have their thoughts expanded beyond the limits of sect or party, then it would be possible to work on the democratic basis of organization. For this reason it is necessary to have a dictator for this society. Everybody should obey him, and then in time we may work on the principle of general voting."<sup>43</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The India of the future will not be a repetition of the India of the past. "One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies, one's dreams. *My* hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age only in a natural way."<sup>44</sup> The India of the future is bound to be infinitely greater than that of the past. "A wonderful, glorious future India will come—I am sure it is coming—a greater India than ever was."<sup>45</sup> What is the way to do it? The speeches and writings of Vivekananda are replete with valuable suggestions towards that end, which must be carried out before the great India of the future, existing in our dreams, can be made into a vivid, tangible and a glorious reality.

<sup>40</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. IV, p. 401.

<sup>41</sup> *Bengali Epistles*, part I, p. 99.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, part II, p. 184.

<sup>43</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. VI, p. 432.

<sup>44</sup> *Life of Vivekananda*, vol. II, p. 796.

<sup>45</sup> *Complete Works*, vol. III, p. 154.

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## NEED OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

BY REV. FREDERICK A. WILMOT, B.A., S.T.B.

Let us try to understand what is in the heart of a God-man. He tries to comprehend God. He tries to become one with God. We know what a tremendous ordeal this was to Jesus,

how he was constantly in prayer, and how sometimes when he was praying, the beads of perspiration were as blood upon his forehead. Jesus came to this mystical experience and he said, "I and



the Father are One", and I suppose that is exactly what has been the result of the mystical experiences of our great spiritual personalities throughout the ages. They have comprehended God and, as in the case of Saint Thomas, it is an indescribable experience. It is an experience as if a man suddenly in a flash were let into the realms that were forbidden, and saw things that no man had seen before and came back speechless and powerless to express those things. Such a man was also Sri Ramakrishna.

He was born at a time when the great missionary movement went from America over into the Orient. Probably as he grew up he was surrounded by this tremendous confusion of faiths, and he wondered, as many of us wonder, why it is that there are so many religions, so many different faiths, and as he grew older he tried to enter into the devotional experiences of each different religion; and he discovered, as he identified himself with each religion, that it was a true avenue toward God, and I suppose if there is one truth or one new thought which comes to us out of the life of Sri Ramakrishna that is of great help to us in this time, it is that all religions are leading us toward God and that what we need to do is to most faithfully follow our own particular religion and become most adept in the spiritual practices of our own particular religion, and if we do that we come to a realization of God. That is what Sri Ramakrishna teaches us, and if we come to a realization of God through our own religion, we should look with charity upon the spiritual practices of others. I think that this age in which we are living is forcing us, people of religion, to not only a tolerance toward one another but it is leading us to an acceptance of the light and the dignity and the worth and the deep truth of the

other man's religion. In the last two decades, we have seen organized religion face the most terrific impact of the secular and atheistic and anti-religious world of all time. We have seen Russia, with the church practically wiped out in fourteen years, churches used as granaries, athletic clubs and anti-religious museums and, here and there, just a mere handful of people allowed to worship in a church, with the aim of the Russian people, the Soviet Government, that by the end of the second Five Year Plan religion will be driven underground. Then we have seen what has been going on in Germany, the persecution of the Jews, of Catholics, of Protestants. We know what is going on to the south of us in Mexico. We have also read in the papers of what is going on in Madrid. Everywhere are these signs of anti-religious persecution, and it is time that people began to think about these things a little more seriously. I believe it is just simply like the tide that goes out and then there is a lull before it comes in again, or that calmness when the wind changes. I am confident that the spiritual forces in the life of man and his dependence upon God are just exactly as valid and true to-day as they ever were, and I believe that *when the tide turns again and man is filled to the full of eating of the husks of materialism and turns back toward God, then we will have a revival of religion such as this world has not seen.* We are almost ready for it.

It is a true thought that Sri Ramakrishna gave of the validity of each great world religion and the possibility that a man, if he be true and deep in his spiritual practices in the religion which is native to him, will realize God. Now, that doesn't mean proselytism. If you have a tree that is planted here, there is not any sense of taking that tree

and pulling it up by the roots and taking it over here and planting it here. The thing that you want to do is to dig down around the roots here and give this tree new life, new power. That seems to me to be the essence of this

effort on the part of great spiritual personalities to comprehend God, to get close to the source, to the fountain-head of all spiritual power and strength, to identify oneself with the Creator of the universe.

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## A MAN OF GOD

BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

Rare is the soul that shakes off the grim grip of *Mâyâ* and embraces the life divine with all earnestness. The fascination of the sense-world is so strong that it is well-nigh impossible for man to look beyond it for anything higher. One in a million aspires for perfection and very few among the aspirants struggle to the end without abatement of zeal and tenacity. Yet there are souls, though they are few and far between, whose lives serve as beacon-lights to the erring humanity. They are men of God. Without them mankind cannot exist. They are born to hold aloft the banner of spirituality.

Swami Adbhutananda was such a man of God. As the prefix of his name signifies he was in the proper sense of the term a wonderful man. Unique was his *viveka* and *vairâgya*! His life was a long stillness of prayer and meditation. God was his all in all and he had no other interest in life except to think of, to speak of, and to hear of Him. For about forty years of his monk-life he never slept at night! He used to enjoy noon-day naps and pass the night in the contemplation of God, his Beloved. What was day to the world was night to him and what was night to the world was day to him. His life was a divine service of continuous dedication and devotion and literally he lived, moved, and had his being in God. He was actually a *Gudâkesha* or conqueror of

sleep, and food, which is life to man in this Kali-yuga, had lost all charm for him. He never allowed his lower self to dominate his life. His life was a flame of inspiration to all who saw and heard him. He was as silent as the dumb but his life was more eloquent than his lips.

Latu Maharaj was the title by which Swami Adbhutananda was popularly known. He belonged to the inner circle of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna who relinquished their hearth and home to live and preach His gospel. He was one of those three who were the first to wander from home to homelessness to consecrate their lives to their Master and to form the nucleus of the monastic order that developed afterwards into a full-fledged organisation named after their Teacher. As a young boy he came in contact with Sri Ramakrishna who awakened his soul from the slumber of ignorance and kindled the fire of spirituality in him. Since then the fire burned without break with more and more brilliance till it consumed his whole being. "If you want to see the miracle of my Master," said Swami Vivekananda, "look at the life of Latu. I have not seen the like of it before." Latu was the prototype of his Guru.

The domestic name of Latu was Rakhatu Ram. He was born of humble parents in an obscure hamlet in the district of Chapra in Behar. His father was

a poor shepherd. He became an orphan in childhood and so he was brought up by his uncle. When he was quite young he came to Calcutta in search of a job and was employed as a house-boy by Ramachandra Dutta, a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The boy used to carry fruits and flowers to Ramakrishna from Ramachandra and thus he came to see and know the prophet of Dakshineswar. At the first sight Sri Ramakrishna recognised the spiritual potentialities of Latu and blessed him. Before seeing him Latu had pictured the saint as a monk dressed in ochre but when he saw him in plain clothes he was a bit surprised. On the first day Sri Ramakrishna received him kindly and conducted him to his own room where he gave the boy some refreshments and talked with him on various subjects. He felt great joy, he did not know why, in the presence of the Master. Dakshineswar, though a suburb of Calcutta, was a long way off from the heart of the city; so in the evening when Latu was about to take leave of Sri Ramakrishna he asked the boy not to go on foot but to take some pice from him and arrange for a seat in a boat or a carriage. As he had some money with him he did not take anything but thanked him for the kind offer. At the time of departure Sri Ramakrishna asked him to come again. The boy replied in the affirmative and left him.

Details of his childhood are now lost in obscurity. He never disclosed them to anybody. He never gave any reply to the queries regarding his antecedents. He was reluctant to tell even the story of his monk-life. In a sense his life was eventless. He lived for one idea and was absorbed in one thought, and that was the thought of his Master. From the very first day he was deeply impressed by and attracted towards his Master. As he was frequently employed

by Ramachandra to carry presents of fruits and sweets to Sri Ramakrishna, he had ample opportunities of visiting the saint whom he had made the idol of his heart from the first day. One day he reached the temple when Sri Ramakrishna was about to take his meal. Latu went there without food; so Sri Ramakrishna welcomed him to join him. Latu was very orthodox; so he declined the offer with the words that he did not take food cooked by Bengali Brahmins. The saint procured a plantain leaf on which food was served. He told the boy not to hesitate to take that sacred Prasad of Mother Kali. The boy was still unwilling to eat. Sri Ramakrishna still pressed the boy to do so. The boy had infinite love and veneration for the saint; so he said that he had no objection in eating his (Sri Ramakrishna's) Prasad. The Master gave him some food from his plate and the boy gladly ate it.

At the direction of the Master, Latu started his spiritual life in right earnest. One day Sri Ramakrishna roused his latent spiritual powers by touching his breast in an ecstatic mood and Latu began to sob with exuberance of joy. He told Ramachandra who was then present there that the fountain of divine thought which had so long been covered in him (Latu) had been opened. The Master however stopped this spiritual ecstasy of the boy by re-touching his breast as before and increased his thirst for spirituality infinitely. Sri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary teacher and could grant the vision of Truth to competent candidates. He did so in the case of all his disciples including Vivekananda, the foremost of them. He was a Divine Touchstone whose contact metamorphosed many lives. Latu became more and more devoted to the Master. Sometimes he would spend two or three days with him

to serve and hear him with rapt attention and devotion. Thus it went on for some time when one day Sri Ramakrishna extolling Latu's spirituality proposed to Ramachandra that he should allow Latu to remain permanently with him at Dakshineswar. Ramachandra thought it a great privilege and cheerfully agreed to the proposal with the whole-hearted approval of the boy.

Thus the rebirth of Latu took place. His stay with the Master marked the beginning of his new life. He was the first of that band of pure-souled young men who renounced the world and dedicated themselves to the service of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna was an affectionate father to him and loved him very dearly. Latu became his personal attendant and served him with great devotion. He was to his Master as Hanuman was to Ramachandra. He used to shampoo his legs, rub oil over his body, help him to take bath, wash his clothes and such other things. The Holy Mother (the wife of the saint), who was then living in the Nahabat, looked upon Latu with motherly love. Latu also used to do all household works for her. Day by day he began to delve more and more into the mysteries of the spiritual world and lose himself entirely in the thought of God. According to the scriptures the Guru is the embodiment of the Kalyani Shakti of God and so the disciple should always look upon him as God in human form. Latu actually did the same and so his service to the Master was as good as meditation to him. His Guru-bhakti was so deep that his Guru's words were more than divine injunctions to him.

The Master gradually trained him in higher forms of spiritual discipline, and in the holy company of the Master he made rapid progress. He was very fond of *kirtan* and other devotional music. When he was in the house of Rama-

chandra Dutta in Calcutta he used to run to *kirtan* parties like a mad man forgetting all his duties when they passed by the road, and remained absorbed in those songs for a long time. He was taken to task for such negligence of duties frequently. But he could not help it. At Dakshineswar religious singing was done very often and he would join with great enthusiasm in those songs and dance. The Master noticed the ecstatic attitude of Latu in *kirtan* and prayed to the Divine Mother to vouchsafe some spiritual experiences to him. The Master's prayers were soon answered and Latu began to get spiritual ecstasies during meditation. Latu was really an illiterate man and was ignorant of the three R's. Sri Ramakrishna wished that he should pick up at least the rudiments of primary education. He himself began to teach the boy the Bengali alphabet. But Latu being a Beharee his pronunciation amused the teacher very much. The Master repeated the experiment in vain several times and had to give up the task in despair. The education of Latu thus ended there.

One day the devotees of the Master were playing the indoor game named Golakdham or the region of Vishnu. Golak is Heaven. The 'pieces' of some players fell in hell and this displeased them. This touched the heart of the Master too, who was witnessing the game. Latu's 'pieces' at the very start crossed the plane of *samsāra* and straightway reached into Golak, the land of liberation. Latu was beside himself with joy and began to dance. That he attained *mukti* even in game delighted him very much. At this the Master remarked, "See, how happy is he at the very thought of salvation! Had he not got this, his feelings would have been certainly wounded. Those who have sole reliance upon God do not

meet with any defeat in any walk of life." The thought of redemption from the bondage of this world was so preponderant in his mind that its attainment even in game filled him with an excess of joy. Dominant desire of a man finds expression unconsciously in thought, word and deed. As a great saint has said, "If you press one rice from a cooking pot, you may know whether the entire rice in the vessel has been boiled or not." Steadily Latu went on scaling the dizzy heights of spirituality in the divine association of his Guru. The Master himself used to sing devotional songs very often and Latu hearing them was lost in ecstasy. To hear the Master was not only to be inspired but also to be enlightened. Truly the Upanishads have said that the *Āptavākya*, the gospel of a knower of Brahman, bestows revelations and realisations. A certain part of Latu's mind used always to be indrawn. When he sat alone he looked like a man absorbed in meditation. One day when he was quietly sitting alone in a deep meditative mood resting his head on his hand, the Master looked at him and observed, "As if He (Lord Shiva) is squatting there." His divine intoxication developed so soon that he lost his outward consciousness very often. His state of spiritual madness necessitated one attendant for him. Meditation became second nature to him. Most part of the day or night he would remain absorbed in deep contemplation and so could not even attend to his duties to the Master any more.

His love towards the Master beggars description. Every morning he used to see the face of the Master first before seeing any other human face. He was afraid that if he saw any other face any day that day would be vain to him. One morning he went to the room of the Master but could not find him there, as

he was out to satisfy the call of nature. Out of child-like simplicity Latu closed his eyes with the palms of his hands and shouted out, "Where are you, Guru Maharaj? Please come to me so that I may see your holy face first and begin the day in an auspicious moment." His voice did not reach the Master's ears as the latter had gone to a considerable distance both for answering the call of nature and for taking a morning walk also. He came out of the room and bawled out more loudly. The Master heard his voice while returning and said, "Wait, my child, I am coming." When the Master had come to his presence he opened his eyes and his face beamed with peace and joy.

Latu Maharaj did not at all agree to take part in the works started by Swami Vivekananda after his return from the West. He continued his spiritual disciplines till the last day of his life. His life was so wonderful (*adbhut*) and his love for spiritual life was so intense that he was given the name of Adbhutananda. Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Our Teacher and Lord was original. Each one of us must be original or nothing." Swami Vivekananda paid glowing tribute to Swami Adbhutananda's originality. He said, "Latu has attained to the high stage of a Paramahansa in a comparatively short time in very humble environments whereas we have commenced our life amidst favourable surroundings. If we compare his state of affairs with ours he is certainly much greater than we. We were born and brought up in cultured families and were highly educated before we came to the Master with a refined intellect. Latu was fully illiterate. When we felt monotony in spiritual practices we could get rid of it by study and the like. But Latu had no other support or diversion, he had to spend his whole life in *one* way alone. Only by means of medita-

tion and *japam* he rose to the exalted stage of a Paramahansa. This testifies to his latent spirituality and the infinite grace of Guru Maharaj to him."

As he had to work hard during day-time in the early days at Dakshineswar he used to fall asleep in the evening. The Master saw this and scolded him one day saying, "What is this? If you sleep in the evening when will you meditate? Evening is one of the best times for meditation." This was enough. From that day he gave up sleep at night till the last moment of his life. He followed every word of the Master in thought, word and deed throughout his life. He used to sleep at noon and spend the whole night in meditation.

The characteristic of Latu Maharaj was that he never hated anybody. He used to mix with one and all, saints and sinners, equally with an open heart. He had no egoism as a Sadhu. Boys, youths and the old alike, came to him and enjoyed his sweet company and took from him sweets, fruits and flowers. He encouraged all to practise prayer, supplication and other religious rites. Though he could not go through any scriptures even in his mother tongue he was extremely fond of hearing them from others. He listened to the readings of the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Puranas and other holy books with one-pointed attention. He grasped the inner meaning of the Shastras with great ease. Once a monk was reading the following sloka of the *Kathopanishad* :

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा

सदा जनानां हृदये सञ्चिविष्टः ।

तं स्वात् शरीरात् प्रवृहेत्

मुञ्जादि बेबीकां धैर्येण ॥ (II. 6. 17)

—"The Purusha or the Divine Person is the inner soul. He is of the size of the thumb and dwells always in the heart of beings. One should separate Him from the body with patience as the stalk

from a grass." He said at once, "Yes, I understand this from the core of my heart." He spoke with authority because he realised this state. His soul was detached from body and mind, from the gross and the subtle body and remained in its full freedom and glory as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. He could elucidate the knotty problems of philosophy and religion so nicely that well-read and well-educated people were simply astonished to hear his learned exposition. Even the Pandits used to flock to him to get the solutions of disputed questions. Pandit Vishnu Tarkaratna used to say that the spiritual talks of the illiterate Latu Maharaj were simply illuminating. He said : "When I heard him it seemed as though his Master was talking through him." Girish Chandra Ghose, the father of the Bengali stage and a prominent lay disciple of the Master, remarked about Latu Maharaj thus : "My eyes have not come across such a spotless saint as Latu Maharaj. His air purifies and uplifts others. Millions will have spiritual welfare through his grace. Both the householders and the Sannyâsins will derive great inspirations from this God-mad soul."

During the life-time of the Master at Dakshineswar, Latu experienced Samâdhi, the highest state of spiritual life. One day he became so unconscious in Samâdhi that his Master had no other way than to rub his chest with his knee for a long time to bring him back to the normal plane. The thought of the world was so much blotted out of his mind that it became difficult for him to do any work. Once at the order of the Master he had to go to the garden of Jadu Mallick to cut and get some plantain leaves, and lo, there under the tree he stood motionless and senseless in Samâdhi! Who would cut the leaves? He forgot the world. Meals were

delayed for want of plantain leaves. The Master called aloud the name of Latu but there was no response. Who will hear whom! Latu was not in this world. At last Sri Ramakrishna went to the garden and saw Latu standing there like a statue. He pressed his legs with his own legs and jerked his body and then he came to his senses. One day Latu was missing. The Master went out in search of him and found him to his astonishment absorbed in deep trance on the Panchamundi Asana under the Vilva-tree where the Master had undergone various Sâdhanâs. Two dogs, quite unknown, were guarding him from intruders.

Latu had deep love for his brother-monks. He said, "I do not care for any number of births if I get such brother-monks. The disciples of my Guru are my kith and kin not only of this life but also of the next as well." After the passing away of the Master he used to pass his day time on the banks of the Ganges in meditation and at night he would go for meals to the Basumati Press whose proprietor was a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. He identified himself so much with his brother disciples that in spite of his robust health his body suddenly broke never to be recouped again at the sudden death of Swami Vivekananda. He told confidentially to a monk that there was no other cause of his physical breakdown than that. He would take some money from S. J. Upendra Nath Mukhopadhyaya, the owner of the Basumati Press, and buy some chapatti and curry with it and eat them. At last he decided to stay in the house of Balaram Basu, another devotee of the Master. The latter's son prayed to him to be in his house and take his meals whenever he liked. The food was served to him in time and he was given full freedom to accept or reject it. He effaced his ego-consciousness so totally

from his mind that when one began to worship his photo he got angry and scolded him saying, "What is the use of worshipping this nasty body? Worship Him who is inside this body and whom I too worship". He never mixed with the rich. He associated with those (no matter, they were poor and rustic) who would delight in religious matters. He did not go on any pilgrimage. One day while he was massaging the feet of his Master he thought of going to some holy places. The Master at once read his mind and asked him to live there and dive deep into Sâdhanâ. He followed his advice to the letter. Latu Maharaj was a *jangam tirtha*. Wherever he went the place became holy, and pious souls congregated in large numbers.

After the establishment of the Belur Math Swami Vivekananda lived with his brother monks there and many young men joined them. Swamiji made it a rule that all must get up in the morning at 4 a.m. as soon as the bell was rung, and practise meditation. One morning Latu Maharaj was seen to leave the Math premises with a piece of cloth and a napkin, his sole belongings of this world on his shoulder. Swamiji asked him where he was going. He replied that he was going out of the Math as he could not follow the new regulations. His mind went beyond the realm of rules as it was always in tune with the Infinite. Swamiji explained to him that these rules were not for him but for the novitiates for whom these things were essential as they were in preliminary stages. Then he came back and lived in the Math. He was held in high respect by his brother disciples as also by junior Swamis. His life was an ideal example to them. Once a gentleman asked him how he thought of his Master. He said that he was a great man, a perfect soul. This reply did not satisfy

the questioner who requested him again to speak out his heart. The questioner wanted to know whether He was a Divine incarnation and, if so, whether he was one of the Avatars described in the scriptures. He got angry and said, "If you cannot believe in what I say there is no meaning in asking me these questions. Do you not understand that He is my God—the sole refuge of my life—for whom I have renounced all and dedicated my life?"

Nominal food, and sleepless nights of hard penance for long 40 years told seriously upon his health. His body became worn out day by day and was reduced to a mere skeleton. He went to Benares towards the end of his life and spent his last days at the holy feet of Lord Viswanath. He was not heard in those days to speak anything that is not spiritual. He had no other work except to remain plunged in long trances. He was repeatedly reminded to take his food which was very often omitted. Nights were passed in Divine ecstasies and nobody dared to approach or talk with him then. One day his attendant went to his room to request him to take food and found to his surprise that the hairs of the saint's body and head stood on end and the saint was lost in a beatific vision and his face was beaming with divine light. The last two or three years of his life he suffered seriously from dyspepsia, indigestion and other stomach troubles. Still he did not take care of his body. He got a poisonous boil on his back and he suffered from it seriously. The boil developed into a gangrene, and on four consecutive days two or three operations were made on his back. But the wonder of wonders is that he was not at all moved by them. He was wholly devoid of body-idea and was one with his Lord so much so that no amount of physical suffering could disturb his mental placidity. He kicked

off his mortal frame and passed into Mahâsamâdhi on the 24th April in 1920 in Benares.

Swami Turiyananda, his beloved brother-monk who was present there on the occasion, wrote about him in a letter to another brother as follows: "Hope you have got the news of Latu's end by wire. I have not seen a second death like this . . . During his protracted illness extending for about two years he was always in meditation. His eyes pointed to the middle of the brows. He was totally detached from all affairs of the world. He was always conscious and awake but did not care for any news or outward things. One day when the dressing of the wound was over after the operation he asked me what the disease was in the opinions of the doctors. I told him that it was sheer weakness due to extreme austerities. He said at once, 'I would be glad when this body drops off.' He had not the slightest attachment for his body that is dearest to man. During the last few days he did not like to eat. If the attendant persisted that he would starve if he did not take anything, he would swallow some food as a patient takes a bitter medicine. On the last night of his life he did not touch any food or drink. When the Sevaka threatened to fast he said straightway, 'Don't eat.' His mind was free from Mâyâ. Next day I went to him and saw him in high fever. There was no pulse. Doctor examined the heart but could not get any trace of it. Temperature was only 102°.6. He was fully conscious but made no effort to speak or do anything. . . He could not, like other days, sit erect. He took nothing but a few drops of fruit-juice. Milk was refused but he drank with great pleasure the *charanâ-mrita* (holy water) of Lord Viswanath . . . I left him at 10 a.m. with a desire to return at about 4 p.m. Doctor



was expected then. After coming to the Home while I was resting after meal, news was brought to me that Lata Maharaj had passed away at about 12-10 noon. I hurried to the place at once and saw him lying on the right side as if he was asleep. I touched his body which was then as warm as in fever before death. Who can understand from his face which was then radiating as before peace and bliss that he is lost in eternal sleep? Devotional music went on for three hours and then his body was duly decorated and worshipped. When he was worshipped the Divine beauty of his face was indescribable. I never saw such compassion, Ananda and Shanti in his face before. While alive his eyes were half-closed but after death they were

wide open. Oh, how beautiful and lovely were the eyes then! Everybody was charmed by them. There was no trace of sorrow. All present were overwhelmed with heavenliness. The scene was extraordinary and wonderful. The Lord enacted this scene, as it were, to prove the truth of his name, 'Adbhuta'. Both Hindus and Muslims came to pay their last tributes to this man of God. He conquered death; so his passing away was not like ordinary mortals. Then clad in new cloth and placed in new bedding his body was immersed in the Ganges." The man of God returned to the place from where he came to this vale of tears to lead a wonderful spiritual life.

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## SUFISM

BY PROF. HIRA LALL CHOPRA, M.A.

The first great controversial point in Sufi-ism is the derivation of the word Sufi. Opinions differ as to its origin. Some say it is derived from the word *safa* (purity) and Sufis are those who are pious persons; and others say that *saff* (bench) or the row is its source where the chosen few, who rank foremost in the eyes of God, will be seated on the Day of Resurrection. But Abu Nasr-al-Sarraj, the author of the oldest treatise on Sufi-ism, declares it to have been derived from the word *suf* (wool), as in the ancient times ascetics used to wear woollen cloth.

In earlier times Sufi-ism did mean asceticism and the present meaning of mysticism hardly existed then. The retirement into seclusion on account of the ever-bloody battles of Persia contributed to drive away spirits of devotional character from the scene of continual unrest to the blissful peace of an

ever-deepening contemplative life. The Semitic character of the life and thought of these early Mohammedan ascetics is gradually followed by a large-hearted pantheism of more or less an Aryan stamp, the development of which, in fact, runs parallel to the slowly-progressing political independence of Persia.

The beginning of Sufi-ism in Islam takes us back to the 7th century A.D. In the third century of Hijra pantheism was prevalent and ideas like "everything perishes excepting the face of God" and "God is omnipresent," were in vogue. Undeniably this pantheism was influenced by Christianity, Neo-Platonism and Buddhism. Some prove it as a reaction to Aryan Vedantism when Islam was imposed upon it rather forcibly. Early Sufis tried to harmonise everything according to the will of God. This principle has descended down to them from asceticism and consequently

resulted in Divine Love or *raza* (His will) or ecstasy.

Rabia, the first Muslim poetess and female mystic, declared that she could not love the Prophet as she was too absorbed in Divine Love. Gradually the barrier between God and His creatures broke down. The definition of *tauhid* (Monism) became pantheistic. The unique personality of Allah was revealed in every object, and a Sufi found his life in self-abnegation. He had to leave his own self to find the shadow of God pervading everything. This was the essence of Sufi-ism, and no doubt it was borrowed from some other sources outside Islam. Merx is wrong when he declares it to be absolutely a Greek element, though it was only influenced by it.

The Sufis say that Mohammed was also something of a mystic and that many Quranic passages yield such an interpretation, and some of them even declare that God manifested Himself in Ali. The advocates of the view are known as Aliyites or Aliyin. Their claim is that Ali could interpret the Quran better than anyone else. The Quran yields an infinite variety of meanings, and every Sufi interprets it according to his own spiritual heights and power.

The Sufis professed themselves as a specially favoured class endowed with an esoteric knowledge of the Quran. They held classes and this system became so popular that for a budding Sufi, a teacher (*pir*, *shaykh* or *murshid*) was considered to be an indispensable one. Every teacher had his own views, which he passed on to his disciples. It created difference in the various schools of Sufi-ism, as the propounders of these sects were instructed by different mystics in different ideals. These disciples went abroad and preached the doctrines which they had learnt from their spiritual

guides. The authority of these *shaykhs*, and *murshids* was *absolute*, as that famous bard of Iran (Hafiz) declares: "Drench your prayer-mat with wine if your magi teacher commands you to do, as a Teacher (spiritual) is not ignorant of the various ways of the Divine Stages." On taking initiation a novice was invested by his teacher with a garment made of stitched pieces of cloth which in latter times superseded the woollen cloth worn by the original Sufis. All these formalities were observed at the time of admission to mysticism. The veneration which those novices had for their teachers is wellknown.

The rule, method and religious practice inculcated by the *shaykh* and followed by the disciple were known as *tariqat* (Path). Different teachers taught different doctrines and in different ways. They tried to overcome *hunger*, and observed the vow of *silence* to kill the *nafs* (self). It is just like *tapas* of our Hindu system. For the attainment of *perfection* or Truth one is to go through many stages (*manazil*, *madarij*, *maqamat*). Unless one becomes perfect in the first discipline, he is not allowed to take up the second one. The first is *tauba* (repentance), *i.e.*, turning away from sins and concentrating on God. One admits his previous sins and promises not to repeat them in future.

The results of *tariqat* are unselfish moral ideals, the renunciation of worldly possessions and desires, sincerity in word and deed, patience, humanity and charity or trust in God and single-hearted devotion to His will.

But the true ends are attained by ecstatic experiences and exercises in spiritual meditation which just coincide with our *Yogābhyāsa* and *Prānāyāma*. The way to practise the ecstatic experiences is *zikr* (recollection), *i.e.*, repeating the name of Allah. It is done by

various methods,—by holding the breath for a certain period so that one's mind may be raised to the state of trance.

Al-Qushairi and Al-Ghazali give the general view of the Sufi psychology thus: "*Nafs* (appetitive soul), *ruh* (spirit), *qalb* (heart), and *aql* (intelligence) comprise the sensual, spiritual and intellectual nature of man respectively. *Nafs* (appetitive soul) is wholly the seat of passion. It is an evil thing and can be overcome by *jihad* (holy war). *Ruh* (spirit) and *qalb* (heart) are the proper organs of mystical life. Here *qalb* is not the heart of flesh but the transcendental subtlety or a non-material essence by which the reality of all other things is perceived and reflected as in a mirror, but these faculties of perception and reflection depend on the purity of heart. The purer the heart, the sooner and greater it shall perceive and reflect. Sufis prescribe *ziker* (recollection) and *maraqbat* (seclusion) for the purification of the heart as by doing so, one forgets everything else excepting the thought of God. There are moods of feeling *ahwal* (states) or the fits of trance which come and go when God wills. Usually they are transient but can abide permanently, if God requires. The *maqamat* (stations) are subordinate to these *ahwal* (states). Yielding to the Divine influence a Sufi is a son of time dominated by a *hal* (state). In those moments he forgets the past and ponders not for the future."

Through ecstasy a Sufi reaches *haqiqat* (Truth) where he is one with God. Thus enraptured he is a *majzub*, a *wali* or a saint. He is not to be judged by his appearances. His knowledge of unseen things can justify him to do that, which the religion prohibits or even condemns. This state of mind in particular and the intuition of mysticism in general is not restricted to men alone but many women have also sub-

scribed to it, and are enumerated in the rolls of high class Sufis. In that fit of trance, the miracles they perform are not wrought by them but are granted and manifested to them by God. Even if they wish, they cannot avoid the reputation of being a supernatural Being; God Himself makes them famous and takes the expression of their miraculous faculty into the very nook and corner of the world.

The Sufi theory of ecstasy recognises two aspects of the experience of one-ness of God. First is *fana*, *fuqd* (self-loss), *sakr* (intoxication) and the second is *baqa* (abiding in God), *wajd* (finding God), *sahv* (sobriety). With regard to Sufi-ism, there is nothing beyond the supreme negation of self, when what is mortal disappears and religion no longer exists.

To abide in God or *baqa* after having passed from *fana* (self-loss) is the emblem of the perfect man, who not only traverses the path from plurality to unity but merges in God. Continuing in this state he comes with God to the phenomenal world from which he sets out and manifests unity in plurality. In this way he displays Truth to mankind while fulfilling the duties of religious life. This is the Hindu theory of the *Incarnation* of God.

The Sufis subordinate *shariat* (Law) to *haqiqat* (Truth) and even to *tariqat* (Path). Every act of the man who has attained Truth is holy and in harmony with the *spirit* of law.

According to the Sufis, before the beginning of time when there was no plurality, God who is Absolute Beauty, Absolute Being and Absolute Spirit existed alone in a calm and unmanifested state. God desired to manifest Himself, and the Sufis justify this Divine Will to be many by saying that it is the innate desire of everything beautiful to

express and show itself. A beautiful face never likes to remain hidden and a beautiful thought also seeks utterance.

*Lahut* (Divinity) is manifested in *nasut* (Humanity) and it is the realization of this doctrine that led a deified Mansur to declare, "Anal Haq" (I am God), which does not fit in with orthodox Islam, and forced theologians and even later Sufis to give it a monistic interpretation, e.g., Ibn-al-Arabi reduced *lahut* and *nasut* to interchangeable aspects of the one Reality.

The other school holds *wahdat-ul-wajud* (the unity of Being) and says that all apparent multiplicity is the outcome of unity and is an outward manifestation of the Real. The two are one like ice and water. This world is not an illusion or *mâyâ* but the self-revelation of the Absolute. Ibn-al-Arabi says, "We are necessary to God for his manifestation, and He is essential for us to live."

The simple essence is called *al'ama* (darkness) and this develops consciousness in three stages: (i) *Ahadiyyat* (oneness); (ii) *huyyit* (he-ness); and *ananiyyat* (I-ness), which prove that man is the microcosm in which all these attributes are united. He is the 'head and crown of creation.' God and man become one in the perfect man. God descends and man ascends through these three stages. A perfect man is the final cause of creation, and a *qutb* (axis) round which the whole universe revolves. He is the copy made of God,—Divinity correlated with Humanity.

The Sufis generally regard Mohammed as Logos (the light of God) which existed even before creation, and for the sake of which all things were created. To induce and persuade people to worship God, Logos is manifested in the form of saints and Prophets in every age. His one object in life is the eradication of evil and propagation of good, an idea

which is clearly explained in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Whenever there is decline of Law, O Arjuna, and an outbreak of lawlessness, I incarnate myself. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of Law I am born from age to age."

Jili propounds that God sends Prophets to teach men the true method of worship, and the religion which is preached by God-sent Prophets is a perfect one. But in the Quran God has said, "I breathed my spirit into Adam," where Adam means every human being and thus the surest and the easiest way to worship God is to serve His creation.

The Sufi poet is not concerned with metaphysics, but desires to probe into the sublime conception of all-embracing unity and all-conquering Love, which is the real basis whereon all the rest is built. He conceives God as an Eternal Beauty, who manifests Himself for the sake of Love and is the real object of Love. *Ishq-i-majazi* (earthly love) is a bridge leading to *ishq-i-haqiqi* (love of Reality). The soul which is divine in essence longs for union with the whole, of which it is a part. Love is the alchemy which transmutes even the basest elements into gold. "Love is the final cause of creation" (Jami). Love is the essence of all religions. "The more a man loves, the deeper he penetrates into the divine purposes." Love is the "astrolabe of heavenly mysteries." In short the first and the most essential qualification of a seeker after God is Love, though it be *majazi* (earthly) and not *haqiqi* (real); otherwise it will avail him naught, as Jami says: "Be a prisoner of love to attain deliverance." So does Maulana Rumi say: "May you live happily for ever, O my intoxicating Love. You are the healer of all the maladies."

# THE MASTER OF JESUS

BY SWAMI VIJOYANANDA

John the Baptist was Jesus's cousin, and a few months His senior. He was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. His father had a vision about his divinity. It is narrated in the Gospel of St. Luke in this way: "And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people . . . that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; that He would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways: To give knowledge of salvation unto His people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us. To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Zacharias was divinely inspired when he spoke in this manner. Two things are noteworthy in the above saying. The first is the concept of serving the Lord without fear, and the second is the idea of bringing light in the shadow of death.

We must all realize that inspired sayings are not in the form of explanatory notes. Great Truths have always been uttered in a direct, simple and straightforward manner.

Even the suffering Jews, the down-trodden, subjugated, priest-ridden, des-

pised Jews, were never completely without the correct idea: that to serve the Lord is natural, only when this service is free from fear. And every true devotee aspires to this freedom from fear.

As long as religious feeling is goaded by the thought of necessity there is very little chance of feeling Love towards God.

It is not strange to find ordinary devotees asking for their daily bread. They have not yet filled themselves with the Love of their Beloved God. Had they done so, they would have replied in the words of Christ, to the great tempter, Ignorance, who presents himself in the form of hunger, thirst and other desires: "That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke IV. 4).

In the first stages of devotion, the aspirant feels certain desires in the form of needs on the physical plane; but other feelings urge him to go beyond those desires. He has just begun to love, he has just imagined love for the Beloved, Whom, as yet he has not felt as his own. But after becoming acquainted, when love ripens, then the lover forgets everything about hunger, about thirst, and the necessities which he himself considered so essential; and he goes on living, feeding himself on the words of his Beloved God.

Now we come to the second idea: of giving light to them that are sitting in the shadow of death. We know that one of the most important ideas, and among the majority of religious people, the *first* thought of religion, came from the search of the unknown state after death.

Man wants to live. The continuance

of life is natural to him, but every day, every moment he comes across the terrible and unavoidable fact that some one whom he knows is no more. Amidst all the flux and change with which he is surrounded, among all the uncertainties of life, it seems that the only certain and unchangeable fact is death. Every being changes, every one dies, and he wonders about this unwelcome reality.

He cannot accept it as Reality, for in his heart of hearts he feels that he cannot, or rather should not, die; yet his experience tells him constantly that he too must die. This never-ending struggle between acquired experience and personal feeling, in the case of an awakening spirit, gives birth to religion. When his feeling ripens into realisation, then the light which dispels the shadow of death, is born.

Zacharias had seen death, perhaps cruel death and murder, perpetrated by the agents of the king who hated the Jews; yet he not only imagined, he felt that man is immortal in essence, and that death is but a shadow, temporary in nature, covering the Light of Life, Immortality.

John had to fulfil in his life the vision of his father. He began his search for Truth. The priests did not help him. They were very erudite, they knew well the art of explaining the scriptures, but this did not satisfy the constant burning desire of the future teacher of Jesus. Scholarship did not attract him. And moreover he saw the discrepancy between the life of the priests, and their teachings; and their precepts made his heart sore; so he began his search for men who really lived and practised their religion. He joined the order of the Essenes.

Some historians say that the members of this order, though mostly composed of local people of Semitic origin, were following the system of religious practices of the Buddhist monks. We know that

Lord Buddha came nearly six centuries before Christ, and the monks of his order were great missionaries. It is quite possible that Buddha's message not only reached the banks of the Jordan, but was actually practised by monks there. That the Essenes were practising a cult not entirely Jewish can be proved from the following facts. First, the order of the Essenes, contrary to all Jewish acceptance, was a secret order, and the members were wandering monks living far away from the touch of society; and secondly, the Jews had no monks living among them, and strictly prohibited a life of absolute celibacy. All their Rabbis were married, and the Jews being a very conservative race, they followed (and still follow) their religious and other customs extremely strictly. This rigid adherence to their laws and dogmas, however, has made certain Jews very narrow-minded; but this same cause has made it possible for this great race to adorn the earth, from time to time, with the gift of children who were and are real geniuses in various fields of life.

Of his religious practices, meditation, penance and mortification, neither John himself nor the Apostles say much. It is a pity that a person so great as John the Baptist, the Teacher of Jesus, has been so neglected in the history of Christianity. Let us remember, however, what Christ says about His teacher: ". . . And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John; What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is He of whom it

is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" (Luke VII. 24-28).

Though Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests, the word of God came in the wilderness to John, the son of Zacharias.

Dressed only in a robe of Camel's hair, and a leathern girdle round his loins, somewhat rugged in appearance, apparently harsh in his dealings but full of love for his fellow beings, this great teacher preached in the wilderness of Judea. People flocked round him, they came from Jerusalem, the region around the Jordan, and from all Judea. He told them first to repent, and then, with the waters of the Jordan, he baptised them into the religion of love.

The first awakening to religion comes through its ethical aspect. Man finds himself on the conscious plane, and his past, the memory of his many doings in the past not only puts him to shame, but gives him much anguish. He says to himself: 'I shall never do those things again, I shall never allow myself to be deluded again by ignorance, which tempted me to live the life of an animal. I separated myself from my Beloved God. I forgot Him, I neglected Him, I was ignominiously occupied with lower ideas and baser passions. These were the causes of my persistent sorrows. Now that I am awake, now that I am conscious, I am determined not to fall back, not to allow myself to be tempted again.' With this determination in his heart, man is reborn to a natural life.

In his unnatural state of existence, man thinks that he is a kind of super animal, and the only object in his life is to enjoy sense pleasures; he forgets his divine origin. And even when he is half awake, he but faintly remembers that he

has come to the earth to fulfil his real mission of realising his divinity. But the determined, sincere man, feeling ashamed of his past, says: "I am sorry, Oh, Lord, forgive me".

Many of us do not know one very important fact about religion that it can never be inculcated. Inculcated religion is like a barren tree, bearing no fruit. When you have *realised* the religion which you practise, you acquire the right to speak of it to those who go to you and expressly ask for it. Otherwise there is the danger of your degenerating into Pharisees and Sadducees, who cause more harm than good. Preach whatever you consider to be really beneficial, after you have practised it yourself.

John the Baptist baptised and preached his own realisation to those who came to him and asked for it sincerely, men and women who like himself, suffered from the sorrow produced by ignorance about the real nature of God, the ever merciful God Who is our Father, Who is our very own. John opened the gates of Love to the earnest seekers. But his behaviour was quite different towards the Pharisees and Sadducees, men who had hardened their hearts with too much study and no practice, men full of vanity, men who had no knowledge of their real nature and who had no respect for others. When these men came for baptism without having in them any feeling of repentance, John received them with reprimands, and sore as he was, his utterances were bitter.

John knew very well that ordinary householders fall into the habit of hoarding, and avarice is difficult to cure; so he advised the multitude in a general way: "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" (Luke III. 11).

The idea of possession is positively

against all religious aspiration. We must make ourselves absolutely free from all ideas of possession before we receive Divine Grace. The same concept of renunciation is also beautifully emphasized by Christ : "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on" (Luke XII. 22).

Renunciation and repentance were the main theme of John the Baptist's preaching. He knew that without these two requisites no progress is possible in religious life.

But he could be mild; hear what he says to the publicans, who were agents of the government, and notorious for their unjust, exacting nature, and harsh dealings with the people. To them John very mildly says : "Exact no more than that which is appointed to you" (Luke III. 13). To the soldiers, who came to be baptised by him, he said : "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages" (Luke III. 14).

John was a realised soul. He had suffered, but he had no thought of vengeance or hatred against his persecutors. He was a super-man and all super-men are exceedingly humane, and great as they are, they know the secret of slowly, patiently and correctly guiding those whom they accept.

Ordinary teachers, like ordinary doctors, prescribe the same remedy for all; and sometimes their ignorance is so great that they give but one counsel for all difficulties. We must remember that before reaching the state of a teacher,

one has to pass through the state of a student, and only from good students, can good teachers be made. If the life of the teacher is not well prepared, his presentation of the teaching lacks the force that comes only from realisation of the ideal he preaches.

To-day all over the world, in every religion there are unfortunately so many unprepared teachers that religion, falling into their hands, is becoming decadent. Many faithless men have entered into the temple of the Lord, and their in-exemplary lives are the cause of much loss of faith in the hearts of adherents.

It is the life of the teachers that works miracles in the minds of disciples. Mere words everyone can articulate. Every educated fool can turn the heads of an ignorant audience; but to illumine the hearts of hankering souls needs something more than that; it requires an exemplary life.

The difference between a Pharisee (a mere scholar) and a real teacher, lies in the true experience which only comes from hard practice, practice that cleanses and illumines the spirit, and ultimately liberates us from ignorance.

The publicans and soldiers, and even the scholars marvelled at the wonderful change that happened to their hearts after being baptised by John. And as they were expecting a saviour, all men began to speculate, whether John was the Christ or not. But he told them frankly that he was not.

News of John reached the ears of Jesus and He came to him to be initiated.



# FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF LIFE

BY KAPILESWAR DAS, M.A., B. Ed.

The Pândavas had just left their kingdom and gone into exile. In the solitude of the *Dwaita* forest before their cottage dwelling, one evening the five brothers with their beloved Draupadi were pondering over their calamities and prospects. In course of talk Pâñchâli said to Yudhishtira, "My Lord, having forsaken the bejewelled throne, the resort of princes, the smearing of sandal paste, camphor and scents, the wearing of costliest silk, the relish of sweetest and most tasteful condiments served in golden plates, you have courted the hard earth, mats of grass, trees and plants as courtiers, dust, barks and leaves, dry roots and fruits. Remember, we are Kshatriyas, and as such we are to be blamed if we do not exhibit our prowess. Too much forbearance leads one to pain inflicted by persons less deserving than he. He is ignored, slighted and ridiculed. My lord, when I see how adversity haunts you, the incarnation of virtue, while Duryodhana, the vicious, sports in affluence, my belief in righteousness diminishes. What is decreed by fate happens; how can Dharma counteract it? Happiness or misery is experienced by all according to destiny. All in this world are like wooden toys made to dance to the tunes of the unknown. Bound by the bondage of illusion all are drifting on the swift current of time like logs of wood. Who can control the inevitable? The mysterious, the inscrutable pervades the whole like ether, dispenses the pleasant and the unpleasant, the auspicious and the inauspicious, and drags all by the halter like dumb cattle. Of what avail is discrimination? The course is settled by the Omnipotent;

who can alter it? Living beings are born in the world, move for a time and fade away into the realm beyond, be it of light or darkness. Personality is of no value; we are tossed and tumbled like slender reeds in a powerful gust of wind. Nothing is stable; life is an incessant flux, a perpetual change, a continuous becoming: what is to-day will not be to-morrow. What are we but helpless children before the hidden secret? They say right wins and wrong suffers. But in my opinion justice is the plea of the weak. The struggle for existence is severe: we have to be up and doing to live; let us act with the living present. The swan is ever vigilant in the water for its prey: why should we be silent and idle? There cannot be fruit without action. He who relies on destiny and goes to sleep, is destroyed. He who earns wealth by his own efforts deserves the name of a person. Personality is the cause of action, for action is possible through the functioning of personal will and understanding. There is oil in the sesame seed or milk in the cow's udder: but is it available without exertion? Good or evil depends upon our own action, righteousness or the opposite flows from it, success or failure depends upon it. It is with the farmer to sow his seed in time upon fertile soil, though the crops depend upon rain. If action is not crowned with the desired end, at least one cannot be blamed, if he has done it. It is the imperative duty of the king to manipulate circumstances, gauge the strength or weakness of the foe, determine the shortest line of action through means peaceful or forcible and strike unflinchingly."

These words of passion and incitement roused the strong-limbed Bhima and he cried out, "O king, my heart is filled with remorse when I see your apparent impotence in the name of Dharma. To win in battle is glorious, to die is to ascend to the heavens. Is it Dharma to throw one's nearest and dearest into the wilderness, to plunge them into the sea of affliction? He who follows Dharma exclusively is forsaken by material prosperity (Artha). If Dharma leads to painful poverty, what is its worth? If worldly goods at our command are not properly utilised, what is the use of guarding them? Extreme material destitution makes one mad after the hunt of food: where is the time and mind for him to achieve Dharma? Wealth can be had not by begging but by the maximum of output of individuality. Begging is the shelter of them who seek the hereafter, the spiritual only. But for the ruler cruelty tempered with mercy is indispensable. Will you not maintain your dependents and look to their safety? Let us follow our own Dharma. To the ruler Dharma must be wedded with policy without which there can be no conquest. My heart is attached to that which promotes advancement. Let us create dissensions among the enemies. Even the innocent little bees unite to take off the life of the robber of honey: are we less than these? I have never seen any one except you who is kind to enemies. Alas, how do they well-versed in scriptures sometimes act so indiscriminately!"

Yudhishtira was stung to the quick to hear such counsel. In consoling his queen and royal brother he remarked, "Restrain your anger; anger is the destroyer of all. The angry cannot distinguish between the holy and the sinful. Anger kills one's inner spirit, dexterity and capacity. The ignorant only take its ill-tempered effusion as

strength. Without forbearance and self-control how can sweet love exist? An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth is the law of the jungle. None is higher than he who bears all faults, forgets and forgives, for forbearance is truth, penance and purity all in one; its beneficence is immeasurable. No doubt we should act, but not with a view to reap the fruits thereof. Duty as ordained in the scriptures is our unflinching guide. I follow the good, the Dharma, most naturally irrespective of all consideration of reward or punishment without any doubt. Fall is certain to him who violates Dharma: he is a veritable thief and is in the lowest rung of the ladder of evolution. There is nothing greater than Dharma; there is no salvation for him who doubts its all-pervading sustenance. Dharma is the boat sailing to the sea of heaven. Nothing is equal to a particle of truth. It is admirable to be brave but to be blindly audacious and vainglorious is harmful. Let us calmly deliberate and decide the future course."

## II

It is interesting and inspiring to read how this illuminating chapter from the Mahâbhârata—the fifth Veda, the epitome of the richest Indian thought in historical sequence, of which the Gita is only an episode—touches upon the fundamental problems of life and seeks their solution. What is the source of existence, its significance, its ultimate end and ideal? Is it some blind irrational force, natural or otherwise, groping without end and aim, a purposeless continuity? What is the Reality behind the fleeting panorama of the sensible? Is it apprehensible? On what standard scale of values shall we evaluate our volitions, understandings and actions—physical, mental and intellectual? How are the contradictions

of life to be reconciled? Is ethical conduct necessary? Is the here,—the immediate, all-sufficient, or is there a hereafter? These are questions which have engaged the attention of mankind since the dawn of creation and will do so seriously from eternity to eternity. Philosophy seeks to solve them from the subjective point of view; art through the happy blend of beauty and harmony, rhythm and grace, poise and proportion; common life by means of its ceaseless striving. The unquenchable thirst of the spirit cannot be satisfied until it drinks deep from the nourishing nectar of Immortality.

All diverse questions merge into the focussing point of unity, the ultimate reality. When it is known, everything is known; all contradictions are resolved and synthesised into the whole. It cannot be a dark unintelligent force; atheism, materialism, agnosticism cloud human intellect from time to time only to be dispersed by the piercing rays of the rising sun of truth. The ultimate is Consciousness Absolute: life becomes instinct with meaning by its manifestation. It is Existence Absolute: the purpose of change is served on its bed-rock. It is Bliss Absolute: sense pleasure is but a glow-worm flitting imperceptibly in the sunshine of its radiant effulgence. The source is the course and the goal; identity is supreme. It assumes a personality, a particular unit of individuality of experience. Innumerable are such units of fragmentary partial consciousness even in the human kingdom; numberless are the sub-human and super-human spheres; all forming in their totality, both in their static and dynamic aspects, the whole. Naturally there is clash and friction among the different units functioning in an infinity of relations. The particular is pitted against the Universal. The conception of personal endeavour in opposition to

the cosmic energy arises; the sense of want, suffering and limitation fills the mind. How insignificant are we in the presence of even the physical universe with its tempestuous billows of matter, the starry heavens, millions of planets revolving for aeons, of which this world and historicity are but almost invisible points! Naturally the fatalistic view of life prevails. It has an element of truth in it properly understood, but not the whole of it. When the circumference of pluralised consciousness recedes ever and ever, the centre is located everywhere, and all sense of impediment and compulsion vanishes; the means and the end, the many and the one are merged; limitations cease, all knots are untied, the opposition between determinism and free-will passes into the unrestricted play of absolute freedom, its fathomless depth and serene beatitude. But to achieve this is to run the whole cosmic cycle and sincerely work out the mission of the all-intelligent. Pride, self-conceit, egotism have to go; herein lies the unavoidable necessity of the purest behaviour. As long as the highest truth has not dawned, discrimination has to act; the wrong has to be given up and the right adhered to at all cost. To guide us in the right path the wisdom of the ancients as recorded in the scriptures is the beacon-light. In practical life the golden mean of attraction and repulsion, attachment and renunciation may be followed; but in view of the totality a higher standard is essential. A little knowledge makes us disbelieve: but deeper study, contemplation and perseverance make our head bend low in reverence to the transcendent. The subtler the current, the more comprehensive is its influence, though evidently it takes a longer time to act. We need not be anxious. The savage is satisfied with the fulfilment of his physical

appetites : the philosopher with infinite patience in the course of innumerable lives seeks to attain the end. Life is an adventure, a golden opportunity to redeem our glorious birthright.

We are pilgrims toiling and moiling to reach the sacred shrine on the high-

est peak of experiential content, on the farthest limits of the horizon beyond. As we climb higher and higher on the steep rocks, let us not forget, neglect or ignore the fundamentals in the lure of the evanescent, the transitory, and the unimportant.

## MULAMADHYAMA-KÂRIKÂ

BY SWAMI VIMUKTANANDA

### CHAPTER II

#### THE EXAMINATION OF MOTION

Now is considered the act of going in connection with the agent—whether such an act is identical with or different from the agent.

यदेव गमनं गन्ता स एवेति न युज्यते ।

अन्य एव पुनर्गन्ता गतेरिति न युज्यते ॥१८॥

यत् Which एव verily गमनम् passing स he एव verily गन्ता passer इति this न not युज्यते becomes reasonable गतेः from passing अन्यः another एव truly गन्ता passer इति this पुनः again न not युज्यते becomes proper.

18. It does not stand to reason that the passer is the same as the act of passing, nor is it justifiable that the passer is different from the act of passing.

If the agent and the action are identical they will invariably merge into each other and in that case there will be no need of calling them by separate names. And if they are different they must be known sometimes absolutely independent of each other. But as a matter of fact the existence of an agent is never justifiable without an action and an action is never performed without an agent. Thus the relation between the agent and the action is an unsolved mystery.

If the passer and the act of passing are identical it will involve the following defect :

यदेव गमनं गन्ता स एव हि भवेद्यदि ।

एकीभावः प्रसज्येत कर्तुः कर्मण एव च ॥१९॥

यत् which एव verily गमनम् passing सः he एव verily हि truly यदि if गन्ता passer भवेत् becomes ( तर्हि then ) कर्तुः of doer कर्मणः of deed एव verily च again एकीभावः identity प्रसज्येत becomes inevitable.

19. If the passer is verily the act of passing the identity of the agent and the action will become inevitable.

If the identity of both the passer and the act of passing is accepted the distinction between them will eventually vanish, and it will lead to the absurd position where there will be no distinction between the agent and the action. This is, however, contrary to all experience and as such can by no means be accepted.

अन्य एव पुनर्गन्ता गतेर्यदि विकल्प्यते ।

गमनं स्याद्गते गन्तुर्गन्ता स्याद्गमनाद्गते ॥२०॥

गन्ता Passer पुनः again गतेः besides passing अन्यः another एव verily यदि if विकल्प्यते is thought of (तर्हि then) गन्तुः श्रुते without passer गमनम् going स्यात् is गमनाद्गते without passing गन्ता passes स्यात् is.

20. Again, if the passer is thought of as different from the act of passing then such an act will be without a passer and *vice versa*.

In case both the passer and the act of passing are different from each other, each one of them can exist without having any necessary connection with the other, just as a pot exists independent of a piece of cloth. This will make the passer bereft of all connection with the act of passing and such an act, on the other hand, can be performed without the help of a passer which, however, is absurd.

So there is neither the identity nor the difference between the passer and the act of passing. Thus the failure to establish a relation between them may be interpreted as an indication of their non-existence.

एकीभावेन वा सिद्धिर्नानाभावेन वा ययोः ।

न विद्यते तयोः सिद्धिः कथं नु खलु विद्यते ॥२१॥

ययोः of those (two) सिद्धिः validity of existence एकीभावेन identically वा either नानाभावेन differently वा or न not विद्यते exists तयोः of them (two) सिद्धिः validity of existence कथम् how विद्यते exists नु then खलु at all ?

21. When the two cannot be said to be existing either as identical with or different from each other, how could the validity of their existence at all be maintained?

If a thing is to exist it must do so by its own right, without being dependent on anything else like *paramānus* or the final constituents of things, or two things may exist being identical with each other like a pot and a jar as they are synonymous. But there the passer and the act of passing exist neither independently nor identically as shown above ; so no existence can be ascribed to them at all.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### IN THIS NUMBER

In the *Editorial* we have dealt with the Vedantic Ideal of Service as embodied in the Gita and the Upanishadic literature, and shown its utility in human life as one of the most fruitful means of self-realisation. Dr. S. David Malaiperuman, M.A., Ph.D., of Madras in his learned article on the *Place of the Mystic in Society*, has given a spirited reply to those blind critics who consider the lives of mystics and God-men as anti-social. He has moreover pointed out that social efficiency is not to be regarded as the true measure of spiritual manhood. In the inspiring article entitled *Problems before Religions*, Kaka Kalelkar, Editor of the "Sarvodaya," has ably shown that religions, if they are to thrive, and vitalise mankind and recover their sublime mission, must face the problems of the age and interpret, harmonise and control the major activities of man. In *Swami Vivekananda's Economic Ideals* by Shib Chandra Dutt, M.A., B.L., the readers will find an able and detailed exposition of the Swami's plan and views about the material uplift of the Indian people. Rev. Frederick A. Wilmot, B.A., S.T.B., Religious Editor of the "Providence Journal" and "Evening Bulletin", Providence, U.S.A., in his interesting contribution on the *Need of Religious Toleration*, has discussed the evil effects of fanaticism and shown how true harmony can be attained by following the universal gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. *A Man of God* by Swami Jagadiswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission is a brief biographical sketch of Swami Adbhutananda, one of the direct monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. In the article entitled *Sufi-ism* by Prof. Hira

Lall Chopra, M.A., of the Sanatana Dharma College, Lahore, the origin and essence of the religion of the Sufis have been ably dealt with. Swami Vijayananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Buenos Aires, Argentine Republic, South America, gives, in *The Master of Jesus*, a delightful pen-picture of the simple and unostentatious life of John the Baptist from whom Jesus received his initiation into the mysteries of spiritual life. In the *Fundamental Problems of Life*, Mr. Kapileswar Das, M.A., B.Ed., throws abundant light upon the vital problems of human existence and suggests some practical means for their proper solution.

### CHALLENGE OF THE EAST

The world is rapidly heading towards a great crisis. The huge edifice of Western culture built on the quicksand of militarism is on the brink of an immediate collapse. The forces of disintegration have been let loose from the cauldron of human passion and are playing havoc in the society of mankind. The horizon of peace seems to be ever receding with the progress of world-events. And nobody knows how and when an era of goodwill and brotherhood, dreamt of for ages by mystics and prophets, poets and philosophers, will be an actuality in the history of human civilisation. The annals of the world disclose a painful record of the quick rise and fall of many a well-built civilisation, and the relapsing of many a vaunted and of utter barbarism after a period of power-intoxicated nation into a state meteoric glory and success. Rightly did Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, the late Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, remark in his Patna Convocation

Address, "The pyramids bear mute testimony to a vanished civilisation on the banks of the Nile, the winged bulls are but lifeless relics of another culture that once flourished on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, the ruins of Persepolis and Susa are to-day but subjects of antiquarian interest. Greece has achieved her political independence but the old Hellenic civilisation has disappeared for good like the Medusa and the Minotaur. But the civilisation of India is still alive; its philosophy and teachings still inspire millions of human beings, although Indian culture no longer finds its stimulating support from an independent national state."

The antiquity of Indian civilisation can now be traced back to the age of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, and the latest findings prove with unerring certitude that no other civilisation can have any claim to a greater antiquity than that of India. She has also had brilliant epochs when she could justly command respectful attention from the civilised world. Not only in the domain of philosophy and religion but in matters of arts and architecture, linguistics and positive sciences,—in every field of thought India showed her stupendous genius. In corporate life, in the art of government, in industry, trade, and commerce or in any other sphere, India's achievement was equally great and glorious. India fell from her pristine position of eminence not because her culture contained in it germs of inherent weakness, but because her people were, at the critical hour, divided and disorganised. Whenever there had been political solidarity and the teeming millions of this vast continent united under a common flag by a bond of common aspiration, the mighty streams of India's synthetic culture flowed unimpeded through different channels beyond the bounds of her territory and gave new life to the

various peoples of the East and the West. And thanks to her creative soul, India has just begun a new age of renaissance and entered upon a new epoch in her history—an epoch which is destined to inaugurate a glorious chapter in her cultural life. In the significant words of Sir M. N. Mookerjee, the late offg. Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, "The new epoch has had its beginning in Rammohan Roy, the first prophet of modern India. The age, thus begun, has produced in time Keshub Chandra and Swami Vivekananda. Reinforced in strength by the teachings of these great men, India has again risen to her position as the exponent of the doctrine of universal love and brotherhood of man. The brilliant galaxy of philosophers, poets, litterateurs, Indologists, scientists, mathematicians, jurists, politicians, research workers and orators have brought a new life to Indian culture and have heralded a new era with a new outlook." Indeed things are changing fast, and better minds of all countries are now appreciating India. Says Prof. Max Muller, "If I am to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe—we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of the Greeks and the Romans and of one Semitic race, the Jews—may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly a human life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India." The Anglicisation of the East has stopped and the process of Indianisation of the West has begun. The former process was obvious and apparent, the latter is subtle and silent. It has been said that the West took up a self-imposed mission not only to conquer and dominate India, but also to civilise India. No doubt she has succeeded in awakening

and uniting India. But as for civilising India, she has failed miserably. India is awaking to her own civilisation and has succeeded in gaining her lost ground mainly through two different channels: firstly, some of her best men went out to foreign countries as exponents of her culture and secondly, through the discovery of Sanskrit by the savants of the West. "Swami Vivekananda," says Mr. Mookerjee, "for the first time delivered a new and strong challenge in the name of the ancient culture of the Hindus. No one had before so boldly and so frankly questioned Europe's claim to superiority in thought and spiritual life. Like Keshub Sen in England twenty years earlier, Vivekananda in America suddenly leaped into continental fame and almost convulsed not only American but, to some extent, even the more conservative British and European society by this challenge from a hitherto despised civilisation. The discovery of Sanskrit revealed an unexplored and an almost illimitable world to the better mind of the West, and advanced spirits were not slow to be caught in the illumination and the radiance of India's culture and thought."

Today the militant culture of the West stands on its last leg, and is tottering to its fall; a splendid opening has been

created for an inflow of Indian thought into the very core of Western life and society. "There have been great conquering races in the world," said Swami Vivekananda. "We also have been great conquerors. The story of our conquest has been described by that noble Emperor of India, Asoka, as the conquest of religion and of spirituality. Once more the world must be conquered by India. Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality! Aye, as has been declared on this soil first, love must conquer hatred; hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the West. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West. We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative; we must do it or die. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought." This is the only way to justify the existence of Indian culture as also to fulfil the great mission of peace for which it stands.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**GORAKHNĀTH AND THE KĀNPHĀTĀ YOGIS:** BY GEORGE WESTON BRIGGS, PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS, DREW UNIVERSITY: (*Published in 1938*) by Y. M. C. A. Publishing House, 5, Russel Street, Calcutta. Pages 380, including 27 pages allotted to Glossary, Bibliography and Index. 14 illustrative plates. Price Rs. 4-8.

The book belongs to "The Religious Life of India"—series planned by the well-known Orientalist, late Dr. J. N. Farquhar. "The purpose of this series of small volumes on

the leading forms which religious life has taken in India," the Editorial Preface states, "is to produce really reliable information for the use of all who are seeking the welfare of India." Twelve volumes of this series have already been published, of which the book under review is the last, and nine more are said to be under preparation. The series is certainly of considerable value in "bringing out the salient features of Indian religious life," which has found expression in such diverse forms in the various sects and subsects of Hinduism.



Yoga-system is one of the most magnificent expressions of Hinduism and Gorakhnath's Nath-Yogi sect is a particular organisation of the Yogis, and followers of this sect are found throughout India and even abroad. They are popularly called *Kânphâtâ Yogis* by reason of "their unique practice of having the cartilage of their ears split for the insertion of the ear-rings." The author says in the Preface, "The cult of the *Kânphâtâ Yogis* is a definite unit within Hinduism; but the ideas and practices of the sect reach a far wider distribution than the order." He further says, "*Kânphâtâ Yogis* are found everywhere in India, being as widely scattered as any of the ascetic orders. They are met with separately as mendicants and as hermits, and in groups, in the Northern Deccan, in the Central Provinces, in Gujarat, in Maharashtra, in the Punjab, in the provinces of the Ganges basin and in Nepal." There are very few important sacred places in India, where they have no monasteries or Ashramas. "From Nepal to Rajputana, from the Punjab to Bengal, from Sind to the Deccan, tradition and folklore are full of allusions to Gorakhnath and recount his wonderful deeds." Numerous songs, *gâthâs*, *dohâs*, dramas, legendary tales, etc., in all the provincial dialects, indicate what an astonishing influence Gorakhnath and his followers have for so many centuries been exerting upon the religious and cultural life of this vast continent. Even in the present age Yogis are found here and there, who are, for their deep spiritual insight, absolute control over mind and senses, profound calmness and supernatural powers, universally revered as *Jivanmukta* (perfectly self-fulfilled) and as possessing infinite powers.

In spite of the historical, numerical and cultural importance of the Yogi sect, there has not been, so far as we know, any systematic attempt on the part of the modern scholars to make a deep and thorough study of its literature and traditions, to discover and expound the distinctive features of its philosophy and religion and ethics, to trace accurately the history of its origin and development and its true relation to the other religious systems of India and to form a correct estimate of the value and significance of its teachings. The difficulty of the task lies in the fact that the materials for such a thorough treatment of the subject are to be found in towns and villages,

hills and valleys, throughout India in scattered forms, and the literature of the sect, though based upon authoritative Sanskrit treatises, has mainly developed in the different provincial dialects of the medieval ages. The larger portion of this vernacular literature has not yet been published in printed forms. We therefore heartily congratulate Prof. Briggs on his serious attempt to collect together and make a scientific study of all the materials relating to this sect which were available to him in print. He has not only gone through a vast range of literature, but has also travelled in the different provinces for coming in intimate contact with the followers of the sect.

The book is divided into three parts. The first two parts, dealing with the cult and the history of this sect, are mainly descriptive and historical. The third part deals with the system itself.

In the first part, which is subdivided into eight chapters, the author deals with the customs and manners, the rules and regulations, the vows and modes of discipline, the religious creeds and superstitious beliefs, which are actually observed in this sect, the different sub-sects into which it is divided, the numerous sacred places and centres of culture where the Yogis reside in groups or which they periodically visit, the principal deities they worship, and so on. All these informations are of course of great value for understanding the structure of the sect.

In the second part, which is subdivided into five chapters, he discusses the legends about Gorakhnath and his followers, traces the history of the Yoga-cult from the Vedic period, tries to ascertain the time and the place of Gorakhnath's birth, enumerates the principal literature held as authoritative by the sect, and shows how Yoga and Tantra were intermingled in the teachings and practices of Gorakhnath's school. After discussion of all available data, Gorakhnath's time and place remain unascertained. His opinion is, "until further data are discovered," that Gorakhnath lived "probably early in the eleventh century and that he came originally from Eastern Bengal."

In the third part, which is subdivided into four chapters only, the author briefly discusses the important concepts and the chief aims and methods of the system. In the first of these chapters he gives the text with translation of the entire 'Goraksa Sataka,' which he regards as the most authoritative

work of Gorakhnath, embodying the fundamental principles and practices of the Hatha-Yoga system, preached by him. In the second the author deals with the more important physiological concepts, upon which the Yogis as well as the Tantrics lay great emphasis. Indeed they conceive of the psycho-physical organism as the individualised reproduction of the entire cosmic system, and they hold that through the perfect knowledge and conquest of this body the human soul can attain mastery over the whole universe and become identified with the Absolute Divine Soul of the universe. They think of the world order and the psycho-physical organism in terms of each other. Each individual is a living and moving world system. The world system is a diversified manifestation of Power (Sakti), which pertains to and is non-different from the Absolute Reality (Siva or Brahman), but which veils the self-luminous and self-enjoying transcendent character of the latter through this diversification. The same Sakti is operating in the life of the individual, and the same Siva is his true self. The realisation of the unveiled blissful union of Siva and Sakti within the body as well as in the universe,—the direct experience of the bondless sorrowless limitationless omnipotent and omniscient Siva in all the operations of Sakti in the individual life as well as in the world order—is the highest ambition of a Yogi.

It would be obvious to any reader having some acquaintance with the sect and the system that the learned author of this book is more at home in dealing with the external features of the cult, but fails to overcome his natural difficulties in entering into the inner spirit of the philosophy and discipline of the system. Though he has given ample quotations from authoritative texts and their modern commentators, Indian and foreign, his interpretations are in many cases on lower sensuous planes, and the readers will be unable to form a true estimate of the deeper spiritual significance of this system of Yoga-sādhaná from the book.

The author says, "Frenzy or thrill or ecstasy seems to be the aim all the while; and these experiences are interpreted in terms of union with the divine." Further, "The high religious value of intercourse with women was more and more insisted upon. Romantic love for beautiful women was viewed as a path to release." This is

certainly inconsistent with the fundamental principle of Yoga-sadhanâ, which always emphasises the necessity of asceticism in spiritual life and of freeing the mind from all kinds of sensuous emotions. The indescribable *Anandâ* of the union of the individual self with the Absolute self, of the realisation of the unity of the Power manifested in the world and the individual with the Supreme Spirit, of the attainment of a state of consciousness in which ought and is, ideal and actual, the object and the subject, are perfectly identified, is on many occasions in the scriptures as well as in oral teachings symbolically and poetically described on the analogy of the pleasures of the communion between a young man and a young woman in intense love. But the interpretation of such descriptions as insisting upon "high religious value of intercourse with women" or as viewing "romantic love for beautiful women as a path to release" is certainly unworthy of a truth-seeker. Such interpretation would not hold good even of "the post-Chaitanya Sahajiyá movement" or "the Vámáchára Sáкта cult." The author is not ignorant of "a higher interpretation for the doctrines", but he holds that "so far as this group of Yogis is concerned and those who believe in them as well, the lower is the practical interpretation". We don't think this ought to be the scientific attitude of a truth-seeker in interpreting a *religious system*. All religious doctrines suffer degradation in the lives of the worldly-minded and the sense-ridden followers; but the systems do not consist in what those who have deviated from the true paths actually do and think, but in what the sincere spiritual truth-seekers ought to do and aim at.

In the delineation of the practices and customs of the sect also, the author has, in many cases, presented the degraded forms as if they were the essential features of its religion. Sometimes his expressions of sympathy for the system are more insulting than adverse criticisms. He says, "The Yogi is not to be judged *altogether adversely*. Behind this faith is the philosophy which deserves sympathetic study and an impulse, the age-long search for the experience of the Real, Sadásiva, in this particular sect." But he has not in his interpretations and conclusions laid as much emphasis upon this 'philosophy' and this 'age-long search' as he ought to have done, but he has only touched

them here and there so that the sect may not be 'judged altogether adversely'. We do not think that the drawbacks in his interpretation and emphasis are due to any bias or ill-intention. Many Indian scholars uninitiated into the secrets of the Yoga-doctrine similarly fail to interpret the system in the true light.

In spite of the superficiality of interpretations in several important points, we have been highly impressed by the author's extensive study and systematic treatment of the subject, and commend this nice volume to all persons interested in forming an intellectual acquaintance with this Yogi-sect.

Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, M.A.

## HINDI

**KALYAN: GITA-TATTVANKA.** *Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pp. 1072.*

This is the opening number of the *Kalyan* for the fourteenth year of its useful existence. There are 125 interesting and scholarly articles by well-known writers on the various aspects of the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. It contains the whole of the Gita text with copious comments on each verse put in the convenient form of questions and answers. There are over 180 plain and coloured pictures which are sure to arrest the attention of the readers, for, the illustrations very appropriately depict the thoughts contained in the verses. It is a very useful publication and will prove of immense benefit to all lovers of the Gita.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### PRESIDENT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AT THE ADVAITA ASHRAMA, MAYAVATI

Swami Virajananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, visited the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, last September. This was the first time in the history of the Ashrama that it had the proud privilege of welcoming the President of the Ramakrishna Order. It may be remembered that the Swami was President of this Advaita Ashrama in its early days and contributed much to the development of the institution.

The Swami stayed here for a little more than three weeks. The Ashrama members found a unique opportunity to hear from him his reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda and other direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna as also how the Ramakrishna Order grew and developed from a small beginning at the Baranagore Math. The Swami was kind enough to give interesting discourses on these topics for several days. His presence was a source of great inspiration to all the inmates of the Ashrama. During his stay here all felt that they lived in an elevated atmosphere.

### RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA CENTRE OF NEW YORK: ITS PERMANENT HOME

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, after six years of successful activity at 200 West 57th Street, New York City, has recently moved to its new quarters at 17 East 94th Street. The building, a five-storeyed grey sandstone house, is located in one of the most aristocratic and fashionable parts of the city, just a few doors from Fifth Avenue. It fills a long-felt want of this organization for a larger and more permanent home, where students and devotees may gather.

Founded by Swami Nikhilananda in 1933, at the insistent request of a number of friends and followers of Vedanta, the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre had rapidly outgrown its old quarters. A larger chapel, library and reading-room space, and ampler apartments for the Swami were sorely needed for some time past. Several years ago, a building fund was inaugurated, and through the generosity of the students sufficient funds were donated to make possible the beginning of negotiations for a house

in some less congested part of the city. By the grace of the Lord, a most suitable house was finally located. After extensive repairs and alterations, it was made ready for occupancy about August 1, 1939.

No effort has been spared to make this a fitting centre for the wider dissemination of the universal gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Arrangements are being made for the daily meditation of the students. Members of the Centre will meet a number of times every week in the library, and will be given facilities for reading magazines and books from India, seeing magic-lantern slides and moving pictures, and developing a healthy social life.

The Swami has also been arranging to start an Indo-American Association in connection with the Centre, where lectures will be delivered by eminent Indian and American scholars on spiritual and cultural subjects. He has already received assurances from several American scholars of their sympathy with the aims of this organization.

The new house will further help the Swami to fulfil one of his dreams, namely, to bring young monks of the Ramakrishna Order to this country, from time to time, and train them in one of the leading universities of the city. Such training will give them far better equipment for work in the East and West alike, and will aid in a practical manner in the consumption of Swami Vivekananda's ideal of understanding between the peoples of the Orient and the Occident.

#### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, DELHI BRANCH

##### REPORT FOR THE YEARS, 1936 TO 1938

The activities of this important Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, started in the year 1927, fall mainly under the following divisions :—

*Religious Preaching*:—Religious classes, discourses on religious books, Bhajans and Kirtans are held everyweek both in the Ashrama and at different places in New Delhi. Public lectures are also held occasionally both in Delhi and outside under the auspices of different organisations.

*Library and Reading Room*:—The Ashrama maintains a free Library and a

Reading Room for the public. During the period under review quite a number of books were borrowed from the Library and the average daily attendance in the Reading Room was good.

*Outdoor General Dispensary*:—The total number of patients treated during the three years under report was 64,988 of which 28,649 were new cases. Dietetic help was also given to poor patients whose number came up to 1,566.

*Free Tuberculosis Clinic*:—Here patients suffering from tuberculosis of all types are treated according to the most scientific methods by eminent trained doctors. The total attendance during the three years was 34,030, the number of new patients being 1,365. During the period under review prevention work was also carried on as vigorously as possible by means of verbal instructions to patients, printed pamphlets and home visits by a Health Visitor specially appointed for the purpose.

*Relief Work*:—During the latter part of 1938, when there were severe floods in several parts of Bengal, this centre contributed its share towards the relief work started by the Head-quarters, by collecting money and gifts in kind from the public and sending them to the Head-quarters.

The present needs of this Mission centre are :—

1. *Building Fund Loan*:—A balance of Rs. 1,875 still remains to be cleared out of a big sum borrowed by the Mission for the construction of its permanent home.

2. *Tuberculosis Clinic*:—A sum of at least Rs. 10,000/- is needed to construct a section of the proposed permanent building for the Clinic, and besides this the Clinic is in great need of up-to-date equipment.

3. *Lecture Hall and Dispensary Building*:—A sum of Rs. 5,000/- will be necessary to construct a separate building to house the Dispensary. And funds are needed to build a separate lecture hall for public meetings and weekly classes, which are now being held in the Library room itself.

An appeal is made to all lovers of humanity to help the Mission in all its urgent needs. Contributions can be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi.