

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. XLIV

MARCH, 1939

No. 3



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

A VISION

BY R. G. GUPTA, M.A., L.T.

‘To know my real self,’ in reverie rapt
With many prayers when late hours ‘I kept,
A godly seraph stole into my room,
Said he, with smiling sweet celestial bloom,

‘Thou art thy own true fate to win thy meed;
For thou wilt be no greater than thy deed,
And in no degree nobler than thy thoughts,
However lucky Fortune draws thy lots.

Purge away thy sins and thy vain ego,
Transcend thy all desires unfair and low,
Ways of ill-will and words of little worth,
All ills between the heaven and the earth.

Yet joy of piety isn’t thy final goal,
Nor purest virtues of the stainless soul;
To find thy real self thou art to soar
Yet higher than the reach of wit and lore.

Rise to the boundless skies from earthly bars,
Far from the clouds, the moon, the sun, the stars;
Beyond thy conscious knowledge of thy might,
Where utter darkness is celestial light.

The pow'r that keeps the heavens burning bright,
 And all the stars to their positions right,
 Is the same, in joy and woe, in birth and death:
 Yes ! feel its ever present silent breath.

Divine-like-potent soul, reveal thy force,
 His Beauty, Truth and Love can win thy course:
 Thy latent spark is that of the regions wide;
 An atom is the Universe all allied.

Realize thyself a part of all the rest,
 And think thou art none other than the best,
 Thus merge thyself in Him, the Eternal Soul,
 Who's All-Joy, Conscious Light reflecting whole.'

WHITHER INDIAN PHILOSOPHY?

BY THE EDITOR

I

In the scriptures of the Hindus an infinite variety of approaches to Truth has been laid bare before humanity. But, for the sake of convenience, the Acharyas have reduced and generalized this multiplicity of avenues to four principal paths, *viz.*, the path of action (Karma-Yoga), the path of devotion (Bhakti-Yoga), the path of meditation (Raja-Yoga) and the path of knowledge (Jnana-Yoga), and every individual has been given complete latitude to follow any of these trials according as it suits his temperamental bias. But, of all these lines of *sâdhanâ*, the path of knowledge (Jnana-Yoga) has been described as the most difficult one. It is as hard as walking on the edge of a sharp razor. In fact it demands the highest degree of mental preparation and intellectual alertness to grasp at the outset the true import of this recondite philosophy. "It is a discipline that believes in the absoluteness of the Self and recognizes no other reality than the Atman or the

Self. It finds consummation in the realization of the Self which is identical with Brahman." But the realization of this Self by the self is not like the attainment of an extraneous object by a subject but is exactly like the discovery of the forgotten necklace worn on one's own neck (*Atmabodha*, 44, by Sankaracharya). The Brahman of the Upanishads is thoroughly a homogeneous identity, eternally complete. It is self-luminous and self-existent. What is needed in the realization of this Being is the removal of the veil of ignorance that screens It off from human vision. It is this Atman which is 'to be visualized, to be heard of, reflected and meditated upon' (*Brih. Up.* 4. 5. 6.). For, by knowing the Atman alone, one transcends the cycle of birth and death (*Sweta. Up.* 3. 8). A person that makes self and the Supreme Self goes from birth to birth and is subject to fear (*Taitt. Up.* 2. 7). But the person who has realized the Atman that is beyond the categories of mind and speech, becomes Brahman Itself and thus trans-

cends all the apparent limitations of life.

This conception of liberation from the tentacles of ignorance is associated with the Vedantic doctrine of superimposition (*adhyâropa*). According to it this world of multiplicity is a false superimposition on Brahman even as an illusory snake is superimposed on a rope, or false silver on a mother-of-pearl. This snake or the silver, according to the Advaitin (Monist), is neither real (*sat*) nor unreal (*asat*), nor a combination of the real and the unreal. It is a false appearance the nature of which is indefinable (*anirvachaniya*). Even so is the case with the three states of consciousness, *viz.*, the waking (*jâgrat*), dream (*swapna*) and deep sleep (*sushupti*), which comprise in fact the entire gamut of human experience. The Sruti furnishes the method of arriving at the nature of Truth by examining these three states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. The Vedantist holds that these states are unreal appearances that manifest themselves having the Self as their locus, just as the illusory snake or silver manifests itself having the rope or the mother-of-pearl as the substratum. But the illusion disappears as soon as it is contradicted or sublated by the cognition of its locus (*adhishtâna*). The metaphysical theory of the Vedantist is grounded on this fact of experience. He holds that what is true of the microcosm is true also of the macrocosm and the relation between the Soul and these mental states corresponds to that between Brahman and the world. In fact the Soul is neither contaminated by, nor is opposed to, these different states, inasmuch as the transcendent Self by virtue of its transcendence cannot be and is not opposed to anything. "It is designated as the fourth (*turiya*) only to mark its essence as transcending all the

three (states) individually and collectively and not to point it as another individual state on a par with the other states. The transcendent Consciousness supports and is ever equally present in the states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. If we think that rising to the transcendent Consciousness (*turiya*) would involve a cessation of the waking and dreaming states, we would be confusing the state of dreamless sleep (*sushupti*) with the transcendental Consciousness (*turiya*). While the former, *viz.*, dreamless sleep, is conflicting with the states of waking and dreaming, the latter, *viz.*, *turiya*, does not conflict with any state at all. Nothing can disturb the transcendent serenity of the *turiya* Consciousness, and its seeming compresence with the unreal (*mithyâ*) states belonging to the lower order of reality can neither touch its sublime heights nor soil its eternal purity."

It may here be pertinently asked: What then is the factor that tears the veil of ignorance, if Pure Consciousness (*turiya*) is not opposed to these different states which are the products of *avidyâ* (nescience)? The Vedantist asserts that it is only the modalized consciousness (*Brahmâkârâ-vritti*) that destroys ignorance (cf. *Vedântasâra*, 171-173), inasmuch as this knowledge (*vritti-jnâna*) is opposed to nescience as light is to darkness. With the dawn of knowledge the universe which, with its sparkling variety of names and forms, appeared as real is perceived as false (*mithyâ*), and such a knower of Truth becomes *jivanmukta*, *i.e.*, liberated in this very life. Realisation here means the unfoldment of the latent infinitude of the apparently finite. For, the Vedantic doctrine of Pure Consciousness as the ultimate Reality rests on its logic of identity. It is due to our *avidyâ* alone

that the non-relational Absolute appears as the relative. The Advaita Vedanta therefore declares that it is not the finite that attains to the Infinite but it is the Infinite that realizes its own infinitude through the removal of the veil of ignorance after the dawn of knowledge. But one must baptize himself in the fire of self-sacrifice, if one desires to enjoy the Supreme bliss of liberation. For, unless the spiritual discipline as enjoined in the scriptures is scrupulously gone through, it will be vain to dream of attaining to the illumination whereby one can realise one's identity with the Brahman.

II

But we find that there are some scholars in India whose interpretation of *avasthâtraya* (the three states of human consciousness) fundamentally differs from that of the orthodox school of thought. In the opinion of these modern thinkers the state of deep sleep (*sushupti*) is not a *state* at all but is identical with Pure Consciousness (Transcendental Absolute). In support of their position they have pitched upon certain Sruti texts, one of which runs as follows: "Uddâlaka, the grandson of Aruna, said to his son, Svetaketu, —Learn from me, my dear, the true nature of sleep; when a man is said to sleep, then, my dear, *is he united with Pure Being and gone to his own.* Hence people say, 'He sleeps (*svapiti*) since he is gone to his own'" (*Chhândogya Up. Ch. VI. 8. 1*). In the opinion of this new school this state of *sushupti* is 'a state of absolute unity' without the least vestige of *avidyâ* being latent in it. *But such an assumption which stands contradicted even by subsequent Sruti passages (cf. Chh. Up. Ch. VIII. 3. 2-3) cuts not only at the very root of all spiritual discipline so strongly incul-*

cated in the Sruti but also runs counter to the bold and rational utterances of the great Acharyas such as Sankara, Râmânuja, Sâyana and others representing the orthodox school of Vedantic thought. Acharya Sankara in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras* (Ch. III. 2. 9) pertinently observes that on such a hypothesis (as stated above) "it would follow that a person might get final release by sleep merely, and what then, we ask, would be the use of all works which bear fruit at a later period, and of knowledge?" "Nor is it difficult to refute the analogical reasoning", he further argues, "that the soul, if once united with Brahman (in sleep), can no more emerge from it than a drop of water can again be taken out from the mass of water into which it had been poured. We admit the impossibility of taking out the same drop of water, because there is no means of distinguishing it from all the other drops. In the case of the soul, however, there are reasons of distinction, *viz.*, the work and the knowledge (of each individual). Hence the two cases are not analogous . . . Brahman itself on account of its seeming connection with limiting adjuncts is metaphorically called individual soul. Hence the phenomenal existence of one soul lasts as long as it continues to be bound by one set of adjuncts, and the phenomenal existence of another soul again lasts as long as it continues to be bound by another set of adjuncts. Each set of adjuncts continues through the states of deep sleep as well as of waking; in the former it is like a seed, in the latter it is like the fully developed plant."

This point has been made all the more clear by Acharya Sankara in his illuminating commentaries on the *Mândukyopanishad* 5, 7, the *Mândukya-Kârikâ* 13, 14, and the *Chhândogyo-panishad* VIII. 3. 1-8. In his commen-

tary on the *Mând. Up.* he says, "As at night, owing to the indiscrimination produced by darkness, all (percepts) become a mass (of darkness), as it were, so also in the state of deep sleep (*sushupti*) all (objects) of consciousness, verily, become a mass (of consciousness) . . . (At the time of deep sleep) the mind is free from the miseries of the efforts made on account of the states of the mind being involved in the relationship of subject and object: Therefore it is called *ânandamaya*, that is, endowed with abundance of bliss. But this is not Bliss Itself; because it is not Bliss Infinite." Similarly in his commentary on the *Chhândogya* texts (VIII. 3. 2-3) he says, "Just as those people that do not know by the help of the science of treasures, where the golden treasure is hidden—do not discover the treasure hidden under the ground, even though they walk over the place; in the same manner, all these creatures, steeped in ignorance, though daily, during deep sleep, going over the Brahman-world (*Brahmalokam*) in the *âkâsha* of the heart, do not obtain it—*i.e.*, do not know that 'I have reached Brahman-world'—being, as they are, carried astray by the aforesaid ignorance of His own form." In reply to the argument of the opponent that even one who does not know this does get at the Brahman in the heart during deep sleep, as it has been declared that 'during deep sleep one is endowed with Pure Being' (cf. *Chh.* VI. 8. 1.), the Acharya emphatically declares, "Yes, it is so; still there is a difference. Just as all living creatures—knowing or ignorant—are real Brahman, yet it is the knowing one alone who is cognisant of the fact 'That Thou art', and so knows himself to be Pure Being, that becomes Pure Being Itself; in the same manner, though both the knowing and the ignorant reach Pure Being during

deep sleep, yet it is one who knows this, that is said to reach the world of Heaven (*hridayâkhyâ Brahman*)". Thus from what has been quoted above it is now distinctly clear that in deep sleep the mental stuff of an ignorant soul, while containing within it germs (of infinite differentiation) of the waking and dreaming states, assumes an undifferentiated existence. In this state Atman or Pure Consciousness dwells in the *ânandamaya kosha*, identifying itself, as it were, with the *kâranasarira* (causal body), and the bliss which is felt in that deep sleep is not the transcendental joy of liberation (*mukti*). So Acharya Sankara while refuting the arguments of Vrittikâra in the interpretation of the *Brahma-Sutras* (Ch. I. 1. 12) concludes that '*ânandamaya* cannot be the highest Brahman inasmuch as the very idea of the preponderance or abundance of bliss suggests that there is also misery in it, however slight.' As a matter of fact ignorance persists in its causal form even in this state of *sushupti* (deep sleep). It is only in the state of *samâdhi* attained through a rigorous course of mental and intellectual discipline that this veil of nescience is torn off; and as a result the Pure Being, the abiding Substratum in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, is realized as *turiya* (Transcendent) divested of all the tentacles of *mâyâ*, through the dawn of modalised consciousness. The very same fact has been accentuated by Acharya Sâyana in the *Panchadasi* (Ch. 1. 39, 41) and by Dharmaraja Adhvarindra in the *Vedanta-Paribhâshâ* (Ch. 7), where it has been conclusively shown that a 'potential world' persists even in dreamless sleep and this has to be crossed so as to be the recipient of the transcendental bliss of liberation. It is needless to multiply quotations. Suffice it to say that the edifice of

spiritual life can be built only on the adamant basis of strict discipline both mental and intellectual. And that is why the scriptures and the Acharyas are unanimous in their emphasis on the need of spiritual exercises for the ultimate intuition of the highest Truth. Whether a *jñāni* or a *yogi*, a *bhakta* or a *karmi*, he is to undergo a rigorous course of discipline which is the *sine qua non* of ultimate success in the epic search after Truth. For, declares the Sruti: "Whoever has not ceased from wicked ways, whoever is not controlled in his senses, concentrated in his intellect and subdued in his mind, does not obtain the goal. The Atman cannot be attained by the mere study of the Vedas, nor by intellect, nor even by much hearing the sacred scriptures. This resplendent pure Self whom the sinless *sannyāsins* realize as residing within the body can be attained by truthfulness, self-concentration, unbroken continence and true knowledge. The wise one strives with all these means—and his self enters into the realm of Brahman" (cf. *Katha Up.* 1. 2. 22-23; *Mund. Up.* 3. 2. 3-4). Indeed there is nothing great and noble in human life, which is possible of achievement without heroic self-sacrifice and suffering, strict continence and spiritual discipline.

III

It must be borne in mind that the greatness of a culture depends on the soundness of its philosophy. But when the supreme edifice of philosophical thought of a nation is pulled down to the level of sordid utilitarianism, the very foundation of its cultural life is automatically undermined. The intellectual daring as displayed in the bold conception of the Advaita philosophy has evoked an unstinted admiration from even the profoundest thinkers of

the West. Prof. Max Müller has remarked in the *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, "None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. 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. We need not praise or try to imitate a Colosseum, but if we have any heart for the builders of former days, we cannot help feeling it was a colossal and stupendous effort." In the present age Swami Vivekananda, by his bold and rational interpretation of this Vedanta philosophy, succeeded in establishing the supremacy of Indian thought in the very heart of modernism. Even the people of India have been awakened to the consciousness of the strength and power that lie hidden in the womb of India's philosophical literature. India, nay the rest of the world, needs once again a proclamation of the synthetic message of Vedanta which upholds the divinity of the human soul as also the spiritual oneness of mankind. That India is not merely a subject of academic talk but a living force to be reckoned with in the conflict of cultures must be demonstrated not by a defeatist mentality, or by a compromise with the pragmatic philosophy of the West, but by holding aloft the glory and sublimity of her achievements in the domain of her religio-philosophical culture. But it will be nothing short of a travesty of Indian philosophy and an insult to the wisdom of the great thinkers of India to interpret the Sruti in a way which is likely to belittle the importance of spiritual discipline and thereby rob this lofty Vedantic idealism of its intrinsic beauty and worth. Indian philosophy,

it should be remembered, is not a speculative venture but is rooted deep in the actual realisation of the Spirit. And this fact was ably pointed out by Dr. S. C. Chatterjee of the Calcutta University in his learned Presidential address at the Fourth Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, held at Allahabad in 1938. He said *inter alia*, "Analysing the Indian conception of Philosophy we get the following points : (i) Philosophy is the knowledge of reality as distinguished from appearances, (ii) this knowledge is not a matter of intellectual understanding, but a direct experience or vision of absolute Truth, (iii) it requires indeed the help of a rational study of all experiences, but cannot be completed by mere reasoning, (iv) it is to be attained through a *life of moral purification and constant contemplation.*" India shall live so long as her culture

and philosophy shall endure, in spite of her political cataclysm and economic atrophy. And rightly has it been said by another distinguished philosopher of India, "If the nation is to become strong and virile, all of us must cultivate love of truth and freedom that is inculcated by every school of philosophy in India and we must base our activities upon the foundation of *moral discipline which is made the first preliminary condition of a philosophical enquiry into truth in Indian philosophy.*" Let this bold message of our philosophy be once again proclaimed with all the courage of conviction not only to the people of the West but also to the grovelling masses of India as well. For, India needs it to-day as much as the West for the achievement of that eternal freedom which is the birthright of every individual.

GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The Master heard that Isân had been building a big shed on the bank of the Ganges at Bhatpara for purposes of practising religious rites.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Isân, showing concern): Well, has the shed been set up? Know, the less these acts come to the notice of men the better. Persons of Sâttvic nature meditate in mind, in a corner, and in the forest; sometimes they meditate inside the mosquito net.

Isân would take Mr. Hâzra to Bhatpara now and then. Mr. Hazra used to behave like one having an obsession about external purity. The Master had forbidden him to behave that way.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Isân): And mark, don't be so particular about observing customary usages. A monk

felt very thirsty; a water-carrier who happened to be carrying water offered him the water. The monk asked, "Is your bag (made of skin) clean?" The water-carrier replied, "Your holiness, my bag is quite clean, but your bag contains a lot of impurities, so I am asking you to take water from my bag; there will be no wrong in it." Your bag means your body, your belly.

And have faith in His name. If you have that, there will be no need of visiting sacred places. [So saying the Master broke into a song being overwhelmed with emotion.]

Sri Ramakrishna (to Isân): Question me if you have any doubts left.

Isân: Yes sir, faith, as you were saying.

Sri Ramakrishna: He can be realized by true faith alone. And if one believes everything, one realizes Him more quickly. The cow which is squeamish about its fodder yields little milk; the one that eats every kind of plant gives plenty of milk.

Rajkrishna Banerji's son was telling a story that someone had been bidden to look upon a sheep as his chosen deity. He believed it. He alone dwells in every being.

The *guru* had told the devotee that Râma dwelt in every object. The devotee believed it at once. When a dog was fleeing with a piece of bread in its mouth, the devotee was running after him with a pot of ghee and was saying, "O Rama, wait a little; I have not put ghee on the bread."

And what faith Krishnakishore had! He would say that the utterance of the sacred word "Om Krishna! Om Rama!" bore the fruit of a million twilight prayers!

Further Krishnakishore used to tell me secretly, "I don't like these

twilight prayers, but don't tell it to anybody."

I too feel that way sometimes. Mother shows me that She has become everything. One day I was coming towards the Panchavati from the place over which the casuarina trees stand. I saw a dog coming with me. I then stopped near Panchavati thinking that Mother might say something through it.

So, as you have said, everything can be had through faith.

Isân: But we are householders.

Sri Ramakrishna: What does it matter? The impossible becomes possible thanks to His grace. Ramprasad sang, "This world is a structure of illusion." Someone retorted in song, "The world is a mansion of joy" etc.

One can be a "King Janaka" only after one has done spiritual practices in solitude and realized God. How else can it be possible? Notice that Kartika, Ganesha, Lakshmi, and Saraswati are all there; yet Siva is sometimes absorbed in Samâdhi and sometimes he is dancing uttering "Rama! Rama!"

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SRI KRISHNA'S LIFE-STORY

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA, M.A.

I

Sri Krishna, the most perfect Divine Man of India, is said to have been born within the dark prison of Mathura, where his parents were confined and fettered by Kamsa, the embodiment of the spirit of materialistic self-aggrandisement of the age. The most unpardonable crime of which the parents were guilty, was that there had been the prophecy of the self-revelation of the Divine Spirit in human form through them. The glorified animal spirit of

man was then ruling the country, with the greatly developed power of intelligence at its service. The developed human intelligence acquired thorough knowledge of a great many laws and forces of nature, established mastery over many of these forces and made various discoveries and inventions which immensely added to its power and successfully exploited a good deal of the resources of the human, the animal and the physical worlds. It placed all these products of its systematised and

organised efforts at the disposal of the animal spirit in man and equipped the animal spirit with the power of keeping in check the moral and spiritual forces operating in the human nature. But however strongly consolidated the power of animality may be in the human society and however efficiently it may for any period of time control the moral and spiritual forces, it is always in fear of being dethroned and destroyed. It always inwardly feels that the Divine Spirit, though smilingly allowing it to have its own way for the time being, is holding Its sword aloft upon its head and can any moment bring the sword down to behead it.

It is out of this fear that the selfish animal spirit puts all sorts of obstacles in the way of the self-assertion of the Divine Spirit in the human society. The history of the human race furnishes ample evidence to show that wherever there are indications of the descent of the Divine Spirit upon man and the attempt of the true self of man to assert itself in his worldly affairs, the iron-hand of materialistic selfishness with all the resources at its disposal rises furiously to avert the calamity. Kamsa was no exception to the rule. He adopted all possible means to avoid the advent of Sri Krishna and his own inevitable dislodgement from the supreme position of ruling authority. But the Divine Spirit in man is immortal, and when the time for Its self-assertion comes, no animal power can stand in its way. At dead of night, when all the forces appointed by Kamsa to keep vigilance over Vasudeva and Devaki, through whom the Lord was to make His appearance, fell asleep under the deceptive impression of complete safety, Sri Krishna was actually born. The parent's fetters were immediately broken. The darkness of the prison was gone. The entire world of their consciousness was illu-

minated by the halo of the self-luminous spirit. The iron-gates of the prison automatically opened. When the Spirit is born on the surface of the worldly consciousness, there is no bondage and sorrow anywhere.

But the time was not yet ripe for the open appearance of the Divine Spirit face to face with Kamsa and his Satanic organisations and for the establishment of Itself as the visible governing authority in the human society. It designed to descend upon the field of worldly activities step by step.

II

Sri Krishna asked Vasudeva to carry him to Brindaban, the forest-residence of his own people—the naturally God-intoxicated Gopas and Gopis. He silently retired on his father's shoulders from the land of the materialistic civilization of Kamsa to the refuge of the spiritually disposed simple-hearted men and women without power and prestige, without scientific culture and economic prosperity, without social vanity and political authority. It is in relation to these unsophisticated humble people that the Divine Man first realised and enjoyed the life of perfect Divinity in union with perfect humanity, and set up for the human race the eternal spiritual ideal to be pursued. Here he was partially successful in putting off any open conflict with the organised forces of the selfish animal spirit of the world, and demonstrated before the humble truth-seekers how all the departments of human life could be converted into one serene flow of blissful sports. He exhibited his Divinity there on various occasions, but always as a sort of play. His demolishing of the anti-spiritual forces that diplomatically approached him with evil purposes, his humbling down of the egotistic particular duties that came forward to assert

the superiority of their supernatural powers to his human power, his bestowal of liberation upon some penitent persons undergoing punishment for their past haughtiness—all these were performed by him in the course of his boyish sports. His Divinity was shown not as something superhuman, but as something perfectly human. It is love, beauty and bliss which characterised his entire existence and all his movements in relation to the Gopas and Gopis, whose nature was spiritualised by all-absorbing love for him.

In Brindaban the Divinity as well as the humanity of Sri Krishna was manifested in perfection. The life-story of Sri Krishna in the midst of the Gopas and Gopis represents the highest conception of the spiritual character of God and man. In no other stage of his life was his unique Divine power so gloriously revealed. Here from his early infancy he killed without any physical weapon or military organisation a large number of demons, who as the representatives of the forces of materialism approached him to put an end to the growth of spiritual power in the human society. Here all the Vedic gods were brought down to the feet of this human God and were made to realise that they were only partial manifestations of the One Absolute Spirit, who was eternally Divine and eternally human. He introduced the worship of the living god of agriculture in preference to the traditional form of the worship of the Vedic deity, Indra. He is said to have shown his mother the presence of the entire universe within his mouth.

Thus on innumerable occasions the child Sri Krishna exhibited his unique Divine powers. But all these manifestations of powers, however apparently superordinary, were merely the sportive self-expressions and self-enjoyments of his eternally perfect and blissful nature.

All his activities were effortless, without any deliberately designed plan and contrivance. His actions flowed down, as it were, from the highest spiritual plane of love and bliss, which transcended the plane of physical might and social obligation. Accordingly the performance of his actions, which appeared to be the most heroic from the standpoint of physical force and the most beneficial from the standpoint of social well-being, involved in his case no serious effort and preparation and no breach in the even flow of his sportive mood. The actions were so spontaneous, so playful, so lightly performed, that to all those loving playmates who had the privilege of enjoying his sweet company and of witnessing those activities, he did not appear to be acting at all, but always playing. This identification of action and play, this conversion of the most serious actions into the sweetest sports, this perfect assimilation of power and grandeur into serene beauty, is a spiritual ideal of supreme importance which the Divine Man put before all human beings.

The Gopas and Gopis of Brindaban, young as well as old, were the very embodiments of human love, and all their love was concentrated on the Divine child. They worked for Krishna, lived for Krishna, constantly thought of Krishna and were incessantly in internal communion with Krishna. All their interests revolved round loving service to the Divine Beloved. Their very existence was identified with his existence in intense super-sensuous self-abnegating, self-fulfilling and self-beautifying love. He was the child to some, the friend to others, and the husband to many. The love for him was in each case so deep and all-absorbing that it constituted their very being. This made them interpret all his doings, ordinary as well as extraordinary,

human as well as Divine, in terms of love and sport. It is the inherent character of love to see and enjoy beauty in all the movements of the beloved. The Divine Man was accordingly all beauty to them. The heroic, sublime and miraculous features of his activities never exerted any awe-inspiring influence upon their loving hearts and never created any distance between him and these simple people. He was only the beautiful, blissful, playful spirit to them, and this spirit in human form was the self of their selves, the heart of their hearts, the bone of their bones. He was of them and they were of him.

The relation between Sri Krishna and the Gopa-Gopis was not a social relation, not a blood-relation, not a relation established through marriage or sanctified through any Vedic rituals. It was a pure unalloyed relation of spiritual love. This is the highest type of relation between man and man and between man and God. Man becomes perfectly spiritualised and divinised through the love of the Absolute Spirit, and the Spirit becomes humanised through the love of His creatures. The human and the Divine natures become identified with each other through pure love. This is what the *Brindaban-Lilá* of Sri Krishna illustrates. This unity of God and man—the humanity of God and the Divinity of man—is the ideal which Sri Krishna in his relation with the Gopa-Gopis puts before the human race.

III

Sri Krishna's self-manifestation in Mathura represents the descent of God to a comparatively low spiritual plane. In this plane a distance is created between humanity and Divinity. Sri Krishna is not here the sole object of all-engrossing love to the people, and

the humanity in the people cannot perfectly assimilate the Divinity in Sri Krishna through pure love. He is here the highest object of wonder, fear, admiration and reverence, mixed with love. Pure love alone can dissolve all differences between the high and the low, the great and the small, the powerful and the weak, the learned and the illiterate. No kind of organisation can possibly remove these differences and bring all together. The sentiments of wonder, admiration and reverence, however noble and ennobling, though attracting the low, the weak and the illiterate towards the high, the powerful and the learned, do not encourage the former to regard the latter as wholly their own. The people of Mathura look upon Sri Krishna as the destroyer of the demons, the punisher of the sinful, the subduer of the forces of evil, the bestower of blessings on the virtuous, the giver of wisdom to the seekers of Truth, the saviour of those who surrender themselves at his feet, the affectionate lord of those who are humbly devoted to him. All men and women here feel that though the Lord is present in their company, He is not one of them. They feel His presence, but cannot feel their unity with Him. His actions appear to them as miraculous, extra-ordinary, incapable of being performed by ordinary mortals like themselves at any stage of their development, and not as beautiful heart-winning sportive expressions of their Beloved. Thus the ideal of Divine manhood is looked up to by the actual man with eyes of awe, wonder, admiration and reverence from beneath, and not realised by him within himself as the true expression of his own eternal spiritual nature. The perfect character of God as the absolutely loving and beautiful and blissful personality is in this plane partially veiled by His grandeur, lordliness, miraculous power

and purposeful activity, which inspire men and women with His unique greatness and stand in the way of their free communion with Him in terms of absolute equality.

Sri Krishna's *Mathura-Lilá* shows that the domain of Divine activity consists of diverse orders of creatures with essentially different characteristics, and that God deals differently with different creatures according to their deserts. He rewards the virtuous, punishes the wrong-doers, kills the incorrigible, emancipates the devotees. His creatures create disharmony in His world by the abuse of the freedom given to them for the realisation of the Divinity inherent in them, and He exercises His Divine power to restore harmony and to put them on the true path. It appears to be a part of the Divine plan that in course of the evolution of the world-process, and particularly in the history of the human race, sometimes the forces of materialistic greed, selfishness, and haughtiness rise to the position of power, authority and prestige, and attempt to disturb the equilibrium of the moral and spiritual order of the universe and to suppress the Divinity operating in man and Nature. The omnipotent and omniscient, but playful and self-enjoying, Divine Spirit takes delight in allowing these apparently anti-spiritual forces to grow and prevail, till the seeds of destruction inherent in their nature unfold and manifest themselves in course of time along with the inordinate growth of those forces. When the materialistic forces, apparently rebellious against the spiritual order immanent in the universe, reach outwardly the zenith of their power and splendour, the time for their destruction comes. The Divine Spirit avails Himself of such occasions to come down to the human world for making a special

exhibition, as it were, of Its unique greatness and goodness, power and loveliness, grandeur and beauty, wisdom and playfulness. The anti-spiritual forces lose their vitality in Its presence, and the moral and spiritual forces gain fresh life and strength. The sovereignty of the spirit over matter, of the spiritual ideal implanted in the inner nature of man over the demands of his sensuous and psychical nature, of the spiritually advanced men in the society over the men possessing wealth and political authority, is re-established. Wealth and power are ungrudgingly dedicated to the loyal service and glorification of the spiritual character of man. A harmonious adjustment is brought about between the requirements of man's spiritual and sensuous nature. This is the purpose which Sri Krishna sought to achieve in Mathura. His *Mathura-Lilá* represents the interference of the Divine Spirit in worldly affairs from above for the restoration of harmony and beauty in them through the suppression of the overgrown materialistic forces.

When God reveals Himself in His transcendent glory to the consciousness of man, the physical and the moral laws, which in the lower planes appear to govern the courses of nature and the human history, are comprehended as originating from and subservient to the Divine Will, which is the sole source of these laws and the supreme regulator of all worldly forces. It is at His will that the diverse powers in the world rise and fall, and all together constitute a harmonious system.

IV

In *Dwáaraká* Sri Krishna appears as the ideal normal man of a spiritually constituted society. He is here the head of a big joint family, the head of a great community, the administrative

head of a great kingdom. He acquires the reputation of being the greatest statesman, the greatest warrior, the greatest philosopher, the greatest religious and social reformer, and the greatest organiser and unifier of conflicting forces in the world. Throughout India he is recognised by all, high and low, as the most powerful personality of the age. Everybody is conscious of his superiority, but as a man and not as God. His actions in this plane of his *Lilá* are generally in conformity with the Shástric injunctions, social customs, political expediencies and occasional needs. He is within himself always conscious of his Divinity and unrestricted power and wisdom. In his inner consciousness he always dwells in the highest spiritual plane. His actions flow out smoothly and beautifully from his inwardly self-enjoying self-fulfilled playful spiritual character. But in outward appearance the forms of his actions, as reflected on the external political, social, moral and cultural conditions of the country, indicate in most cases an intelligently and deliberately laid plan and design. He is, however, never perturbed by the intricacies of the situations in which he is placed. Even while engaged in the most complex forms of activities, he always inwardly transcends the actions and their results. With his unveiled spiritual insight he always sees and enjoys himself in all persons and things and phenomena; but in his outer behaviour he is found to have friends and enemies, to make alliances with some and to declare wars against others, to kill many kings and princes and to place others on their thrones. He becomes the object of fear and love, awe and admiration, antipathy and devotion, hatred and reverence, in accordance with the ways in which the interests of the people are apparently

affected by his actions. But all are sure that he would not do anything inconsistent with the principle of justice and equity and that he would deal with everybody according to his deserts.

In his ordinary ways and manners in relation to the domestic, social and political affairs, he never displays any occult or superhuman powers, he never claims any infallible authority, he never subdues others by the exhibition of his Divinity. He allows full freedom of judgment and action to all around him. No body is made to feel that his freedom, which is the moral birthright of every man, is curbed or trampled down by the superior power and authority of Sri Krishna. But all the same he exercised an inviolable regulative influence upon the actions and destinies of all individuals and communities without letting them fully know its extent. Everything round him took place in accordance with his design; but the people thought that they were having their own ways. This represents the way of the Lord in relation to the active people looking up to God for light and guidance in the scheme of His universe.

In Dwáráká he plays the parts of a son, a brother, a husband, a father and a master. But all these parts are played in strict accordance with the scriptural injunctions and customary laws. He does not transgress the social and religious rules and practices as he did in Brindaban. In Brindaban he dwelt in the plane of pure love, pure enjoyment, pure sport and pure spirituality; but in Dwáráká he lives in the plane of law and wisdom and expediency, and consequently his essential and eternal nature of pure love and bliss is manifested through the self-imposed veil of worldly morality. In Brindaban his power also was unresisted and un-

restricted and his actions were therefore perfectly manifested as of the nature of pure play; but in Dwáráká his power displays itself through the resistance of worldly forces and restrictions of human conventions, and consequently his actions appear to be laboriously designed and full of complexities.

V

Thus we find that Sri Krishna, the ideal Man-God of India, descends step by step to lower and lower planes in this world and illustrates in his human life the Divine nature as realised in relation to lower and lower orders of spiritual consciousness. Sri Krishna of Dwáráká represents to us the God of the worldly *karmi-bhaktas*—the ordinary active men with consciousness of moral freedom of the selves and with faith in and devotion to God as the moral Governor of the world. Sri Krishna of Mathura represents the God of the *mumukshu-bhaktas*,—the devotees who look up to God as their deliverer from evil and bondage and have learnt to conceive Him as the sole regulator of the universe according to His own irresistible will. Sri Krishna of Brindaban is the God of the *mukta-bhaktas*,—the devotees who have transcended the plane of moral and social duties and responsibilities, have surrendered their ego wholly to God and have been united with Him in unmixed love and bliss. In Dwáráká his supernatural and superhuman aspects are veiled and operating from behind the scene, while his natural and human aspects are prominent. In Mathura he appears as essentially a supernatural and superhuman personality, only garbed in a natural and human form. In Brindaban there is perfect unity of the natural and the supernatural, the human and the superhuman, in his character. Here humanity and Divinity

are perfectly unified in the Incarnation of Love and Bliss. Here men find their selves fully realised in God, and God enjoys His self in the plurality of human selves.

In his *Kurukshetra-Lilá* Sri Krishna shows the further self-withdrawal of God behind the scene of the world-drama, which therefore appears as a horrible field of battle among diverse rival worldly powers. Though it is in accordance with his carefully formed plan and deeply cherished purpose that all the affairs are arranged and though he is perfectly aware of the ultimate consequences of all these affairs, he is nowhere found to be in the forefront of the stage. As one of the many forces operating there, he plays sometimes the role of a messenger of peace, sometimes that of an ordinary adviser, and sometimes that of a charioteer. He is not at all a prominent actor in the drama, though the entire plot is conceived by him, all the parts are distributed by him, and the end is quite obvious to him from the very beginning. This represents the way of God in relation to the ordinary men of the world, who think of themselves as the real actors and powers for the determination of the courses of events in this field of competition, rivalry, the triumph of the strong and the sufferings of the weak, and conceive of God only as an intelligent power behind the universe indifferent to its particular phenomena.

Sri Krishna,—the eternal and infinite, the blissful and playful Lord of the universe,—enjoys Himself in His world in various ways by putting veil upon veil over His essential transcendent character. He descends from His transcendent world of absolute unity to Brindaban, the world of perfect love. Therefrom He descends to Mathura, the world of supreme power, which puts a veil on His love. From Mathura He

comes down to Dwáráká, the world of His moral government, allowing limited freedom to His creatures and regulating their destinies. From Dwáráká He comes further down to the plane of Kurukshetra, where He acts as an unseen force. When He descends still further down, His very existence appears to be veiled. To appreciate the significance of the life of Sri Krishna, we have to adopt the reverse process in the development of our spiritual life.

VI

We have to go up from our sensuous plane, in which God is completely veiled, to the plane of Kurukshetra, in which He may be recognised as determining the courses of the world and the destinies of the creatures from behind the scene. From Kurukshetra we should ascend to the plane of Dwáráká to see Him face to face as actively managing all the affairs of man and the universe in accordance with the moral and social laws without destroying our freedom of judgment and choice, and to realise ourselves as essentially related to and dwelling in the proximity of Him. From Dwáráká we have to go higher up to the plane of Mathura for the purpose of realising that He is the

infinitely wise and powerful absolute ruler of the universe, that He transcends all the wisdom and power and magnificence manifested in His worldly self-expressions, that the moral and the physical laws of the phenomenal world are nothing but the modes of the self-expression of His will, which transcends them all. From Mathura we are required to rise up to the plane of Brindaban, in which He is realised as the perfect embodiment of pure supra-moral love, beauty and bliss, and all creatures are realised as the partial self-expressions of the same love, beauty and bliss for His own self-enjoyment, in which we and all around us become completely His own and He becomes fully our own, in which He is felt as fulfilling and enjoying Himself in us and we experience self-fulfilment and self-enjoyment in Him, in which He and we are in eternal spiritual and blissful communion with each other. If the plane of Brindaban is transcended, there is no duality or plurality, no actual enjoyment or experience, no manifestation of love, beauty and bliss, but there is perfect absolute non-duality, in which knowledge, love, beauty and bliss are one.

PATH TO INDIA'S FREEDOM

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

A considerable number of young men and young women of India think that the panacea for India's ills lies in copying the West: To be equal to Europe we must banish God and religion from life. The idea is that to be considered sane one must share the insanity of his neighbour. Some leaders of Indian thought believe that we must import to

our country the European brand of Communism. These new-fangled ideas are still in the stage of experimentation in Europe. For hundreds of years they tried in Europe to establish the Fatherhood of God without the brotherhood of man. As this scheme failed they are now trying to establish the brotherhood of man without the Fatherhood of God.

The Christian Communists believe that they are following in the footsteps of their Saviour. But there is an important difference. Christ admonished his followers to be dissatisfied with themselves whereas the Communist leaders ask their devotees to be dissatisfied with their neighbours.

If Communism aims at giving people, especially the neglected masses, food, clothing and other amenities of life which are theirs by birth-right and at the same time allow them the completest self-unfoldment which is their divine heritage, then we approve of it. But if it promotes class hatred, if it resorts to violence and oppression in order to silence those who honestly differ with its method, if it destroys one class in order to further the interests of another, if it aims at creating a dead uniformity in society on the basis of materialism alone, and if it interferes with man's legitimate freedom in thought, speech and action, then I submit in all humility that it will not help us in our struggle to emancipate the nation from its present stage of degradation. No civilization or culture can be created or developed on the basis of class hatred or class prejudice alone. Have we not learnt this lesson from the history of India's downfall? I think Communism as practised in Europe to-day is a bad way of doing a good thing. But through bad means one can never achieve a good end. It is the means which is transformed into the end. India's ideal is not to drag down everyone to the level of the Sudra assuring him complete creature comforts, but to raise all to the height of the Brahmin who represents an exalted spiritual state. I do not deny the fact that many radical changes shall have to be introduced in our society to clean up the Augean stable. But in order that these reforms may be conducive to our

national welfare, they must be in tune with our inherited instincts and racial traditions. Any scheme of reforms in India which is not in keeping with our spiritual ideal must fail and if it ever succeeds it will certainly destroy our society.

Everywhere in the world the high water-mark of culture has been achieved by religion. Europe is no exception to this rule. The tall sky-scrapers of New York, the concrete roads in the Alps over which rumble on high-powered motor trucks, the battle ships, the airplanes or the underground fortresses are not the indicators of European civilisation. Take away from Europe the great monuments of religion and it will appear bleak and desolate. The masterpieces of Raphael, Da Vinci and Michael Angelo have been inspired by religion. The *leit motif* behind the creations of Brahm, Beethoven and Wagner has been religious. Take away the sculptural exhibits inspired by religion from the pillared museums of France and Italy and there will be nothing left to attract the world's attention. The cathedrals of Rheims and Milan, the flowering of the Gothic architecture, testify to the religious fervour of the middle ages. And in point of literary excellence, the Holy Bible still stands superior to Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth or Browning.

The Hindus, with the possible exception of the Chinese, are the oldest race in the world. They have survived many shocks of external aggression and internal disruption on account of their sticking to the spiritual ideals of life. All the social institutions of the Hindus have been inspired by spirituality. Take the case of the much-criticised caste system. I think it is the best organisation, ever evolved by human mind, to eliminate friction from society and make the social machine run along

a smooth course. It has vindicated by its Brahmanical ideal, the triumph of renunciation and service. Take the instance of the four Purusharthas or goals to be achieved in life as enjoined by the Hindu scriptures, viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. These include all legitimate human aspirations. Economic security and artistic expressions are to be guided by Dharma and must lead to Moksha or ultimate freedom. Again take the division of life into four stages—Brahmacharya, Garhasthya, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa. These do not leave any room for inhibition or repression of any natural desire of man. These stages, properly followed, enable man to climb step by step to the highest peak of human evolution. Life in old age becomes serene and free from that tension which one sometimes sees in the Western society, where a mother tries to be the younger sister of her own daughter. Maybe these institutions are to-day covered with many encrustations; but the ideals they represent form for this society, our social reformers must not forget, the spiritual ideal of the race.

The advent of Sri Ramakrishna has shown where the vitality of the Indian nation lies. It cannot be gainsaid that during the last millennium, Indian life has been at a low ebb in many aspects of its existence. Foreign ideas and ideals, coming in the form of tidal waves, have, again and again, sought here to sweep everything before them and wipe out the very word 'India' from the map of the world. But India producing a Ramakrishna during the nineteenth century, when the onslaught from the materialistic West was perhaps the severest, shows where the strength of the Indian nation lies and through what channel its life current flows. When the light burns at the tip, it shows that the whole lamp is ablaze.

Spirituality has been the mission of India and always it will be so. There is no need for us to go to Moscow or Berlin for inspiration. We shall get it from the banks of the Ganges, caves of the Himalayas and the Vedas and the Upanishads. Above all, the eternal Lord, the indwelling spirit in us, will lead us from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light and from death, disease and suffering to Immortality.

WHAT IS GOD ?

BY PROF. MOHAN SINGH, M.A., PH.D., D. LITT.

(1)

“What is God?” is bound up with the two preliminary questions : Is there God and can we know Him? What we can see with the two eyes and with the one eye of mind is heaven and earth, and our body and our self; the without and the within. Now, if there is any entity we can call God He must be in those three or two places, at the same time. Thus when we say that there is God, we

mean there is something which exists in space and time, in space-time, in our own consciousness and the consciousness of history, in our own movement and in the motion of the stars and that He is both in union and in detachment, for we know things both from contact and from observation. Can we know God? Yes, we can know time-space, name-form in which He resides—the three divisions of time and the four or eight or ten quar-

ters—through observation and inference, the two which, in union, provide us with truth.

Let us, therefore, proceed to know the content, the categories, the principles, the processes of time-space, of Heavensman, of the outer-inner so that at their centre and throughout them and at their circumference we may look for God.

Now, the very first attributes of time-space are eternity manifest as an unending periodicity or cyclicalness, and an infinity of change. Everything that we see outside or inside, above or below, near or far is subject to three or six periods of change, from birth to death and represents a stage spatial as well as temporal; further we see cycles repeating themselves,—the larger cycle in a larger unit of time and encompassing a larger variety. The numbers and forms involved in this procession and precession, evolution and involution, outgrowth and ingrowth are not merely similar but same. We conclude that at the heart of things, pervading them, at their outermost is order which should logically be expressed as a series of double and triple movement or consciousness, infinite at both ends.

(2)

What do we mean by time and space or time-space? From how many directions does the revelation of their contents and forms come to us? What are the Angas of Sruti and, therefore, of Brahma, the periods of the Puranas which an individual can collect and collate in his consciousness,—knowledge, of the scheme of things as a whole and in relation to himself? We take man at his best, with his privilege of speech and mind, *Saraswati* and *Soma*, *Prāna* and *Manas*, *Karma*, and *Jnāna*. The number six is the answer to our query. All testimony, all revelation comes to us through observation-inference from this threefold

time-space through six ways, stages, sciences, Shastras, Angas, systems, numbers, angles, points, etc. To put it in modern parlance, the fundamental Sciences, branches of knowledge, arts are six (or eighteen if we further divide each of these sources of our testimony into three). These we find named by the Westerners as Astronomy and Physics; Atmospheric and Botany; Medicine (including Chemistry) and the science of human speech (which includes human anatomy, music, grammar, psychology, poetics, Nirukta, Siksha). These six are three groups of two, pertaining to the upper, middle and lower, each having an outer and inner aspect both interconnected. There is complete, continuous interrelatedness, interdependence and correspondence between the three groups, as it is between the inner and the outer. The perfect study of the atom, the cloud, the wind, the star, the plant (*Aushadhi*), the word, must lead to the palace of mysticism. The poet (including the grammarian), the physicist, the medical man, these are our surest guides to order, *Riti*, and are witnesses to Truth which is God. The average reader of poetry or science gets as much out of them as he puts into them, and no more. All that we can know is the order, according to our own measure of hearing and seeing, and all that we can know of God is as in that Order, *Dharma*, as that order and no more. All what the Vedas warrant as the bare, entire Truth is that in these three or six or eighteen or eighty-four, that we see and infer from, there is order, and that the perception of that unity of the orders is our goal; to know is to become, and when we know that order, we fall in with that order and become It. By imitating the order constantly we help to “establish” It; by constantly contemplating that order we

instinctively fall into step with all the categories of that order, the gods, and ultimately become the One, all-gods.

(3)

We do not see God for two reasons. Firstly, we see him only in one unit of time or space and not in all, in whole time-space; we see him either without or within, either above or below. What we see above and below, in and out, we do not correlate, integrate, compare. Could we start on the poetic process of discovering similitudes in apparently dissimilar (opposed) things, we would surely end in the mystic magic-house of identification. The glory of the poet is the simile and the metaphor. Where are the scientists and theologians and militarymen and economists who have tried to imitate and acquire this glory of the poet-mystic? If they did, the militaryman would become a Yogi, a Yogi would become a charioteer, a lexicographer would expound Vedanta, and a Vedantist would write books on astronomy and medicine and alchemy and political ethics and architecture and painting and music, as the Hindu Rishis have done. He and the Sankhyaic would also botanize among the plants and explore among the seas and summarise dynasties. All that, just because they would be going deeper and deeper into things and discovering not a mere mathematical equation, a physical influence or a poetical correspondence, but a divine, living, full interpenetration, interdependence and interpretation everywhere about them. To see God, as to see the Truth, you must see the whole disinterestedly and then you will find that what you have seen ultimately is the same, identical with what you have all along been seeing and what everyone else has seen, and is seeing or will see.

(4)

It is, indeed, stupid to demarcate and delimit the gods of theology, philosophy, idealism, realism, science, art, etc., for there are as many gods as there are beings to conceive of them, worship them, identify themselves with them. When the Vaishnava conceives of Him as Krishna, God becomes, and is, Krishna to him; when the Christian conceives of Him as the Trinity He becomes, and is, the Trinity; when the Shunyavâdin conceives of Him as the Supreme Void, Zero, He is the Supreme Void for him. Don't betray your ignorance of the first principles by asking what is the utility of such a God who is everything to everybody and all things to all. If you want a useful God, you have to create one, who will undoubtedly respond to your appeal for help and guidance. Having done with you He will be no more that useful God and having done with Him, you will be no more what you were. The real God is, thus, not an ideal, a figment of imagination. In Himself, He is all things at the centre and at the circumference and all through. In relation to you, He is what you want Him to be, and what you want to become: You can measure out as much as you want, can measure and treat it as God, if you so relish it. Your God is God absolute for you. The best thing is to call such a one only a god, with a small g, as the Vedas do. That god is real to you and real in the realm of Ideas, for what you have managed to conceive, to embrace, to encircle, to encompass, is already there in the Universal Imagination as a possible Division of the Absolute. If the modern Hindu has ceased to worship Indra and Varuna, that does not mean that Indra and Varuna have ceased to exist in time and space, as name and form; when "time" comes, they will once again operate. So,

too, with the Greek gods and with the Christ. In fact there is from the absolute standpoint no God, but only gods, and they—their names and forms and functions—change in different seasons and places. They become greater and smaller, they win and lose, they hide and seek, rise and fall in cyclic periods for ever.

(5)

A greater, more powerful God only stands for a greater and wider consciousness, want, and self-study. As our knowledge advances, as we correlate, integrate all branches of our action and thought, we begin to see more in the greatest and the least, the Virâta and the Vâmana,† our wonder increases till a time comes when we cry out, “not this alone,” “not this alone.” With that cry our quest ends but that stage is a far cry and not until the season for that matures and dawns, can the individual or the nation utter it and be at peace. In the meanwhile every individual, society, age, clime observes life, time-space, in a particular season, star, measure, crop, phase, number, form, process, junction and manifestation, and draws its own inferences with regard to God. But even all that is already measured out in the scheme of things. Thus not only all gods are there in the Divine realm of Ideas, but there are also the seasons of the appearance of those gods, the qualities essential for the worship of them, and the rituals of such worship.

If there is a God, rest assured He is all-gods; He is there, has been there and will be there in His complete Infinite Uniform and with His Full Court and Retinue. The Sun on his journey, the *Avatâra* in his descent, the Planet in its revolution, the great leader in his age,

† Even the Vâmana encompasses all in but two and a half steps.

all come fully prepared and the drama that is staged is in accordance with the infinite Plan eternally repeated on every other plane correspondingly. But let us remember that this is not exact repetition, insipid and meaningless. For, for one thing there is procession and precession,—a change is always welcome whether in good or in evil—and for another, where the total, whole, in repetition, is concerned, it is just wonder and no more, a confession of the inconceivability of the Inconceivable.

(6)

Who can, in these circumstances, say what is God? And what is the good of describing Him in His manifestations? Enough to know that He is everything and can be anything to us. It is absolutely necessary that you should know the details of time-space, name-form, etc., which are required for His worship, which really help to establish, describe, glorify Him, which are acceptable to Him, which help us to unite, harmonize with the mental worship of Him,—that Relative which you have carved out from the Absolute according to your *karma*, *bhakti* or *jnâna*, according to your knowledge. Now such information about the cosmic relationships of the God you have selected and deserved, can only come if the theological teacher has been at the same time an astronomer, an architect, a medical man, a poet, a grammarian, etc., etc. In other words, both in the worshipper and the worshipped all such branches of knowledge should meet.

(7)

I now reach the statement of my answer to the query, what is God. He is the principle and practice—process of unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity. And this God has made Himself known as such in all climes, to all ages,

to every state and phase of becoming. He has installed Himself in every heaven and every heart where He is both as Sat-Asat and as the Beyond, the Void, the measured and the unmeasurable, the one-fourth or one sixteenth or one-eighth and the *shesha*, the Remaining, the Unmanifest. He is not the manifest, the seen alone; He is the unmanifest and the unknown also. Every season, every place manifests a part of Him, suited to time-space. But every mystic in every age and country who has gone through the discipline of analogy and identification, a correlation of all branches of knowledge, has known, through Yoga, the union of the one-fourths and the three-fourths, that whole, that entire, and through that knowledge seen all as One, seen Him in everything past, present and future, as manifest and as unmanifest. Winter solstice is the beginning and end of the mystic year, and the mystic withdrawing himself into the cave has seen Him who is beyond time-space, who is the secret of secrets, the Cloud of Unknowing, the Silent Music, the Darkness of the Waters, the Dark Nebula of the burning, refulgent stars which when manifest in part takes on a spherical shape. He is, when manifest, of the shape of a point, the egg, the eye and to see Him we cannot see with the naked eye; the third mental eye of the Yoga, the conjunction, is required. Man as man can only see the gods; when man, the moon, the mind, has been eclipsed, can the Sun see the Sun? For He is the conjunction, the Supreme Neuter It, the Supreme Void. The stars reveal Him as do men and as do the intermediate stages and phases between the star and the man, nay between the Idea of the star and the Idea of the man. The stars bear silent testimony through light alone, man bears testimony through

sound and the testimony relates to the silent sound and the dark light.

(8)

What man has thought out, thinks and will think out has already been imaged by or in God; what the Universe is, is already patterned in His Imagination for as we have already said God is that one-fourth which is manifest as time-space, as the law, the order, in any one unit of creation of which there are numberless units of course. But as God fulfils Himself in all Eternity and Infinity so man has to discover God through eternity and infinity. God is what the universe knows at the end of its journey, what it knew—saw—at its cyclic beginning and what it feels at its heart every moment, at every inch of its existence, march, revolution. God reveals Himself, peeps out of every moment, atom, heart, star and yet man has to discover Him in, piece Him out of every phenomenon and only then God becomes real for him. The processes of existence (self-realization), of God and man are reverse of each other,—God at one end and the lover of God, the mystic, the perfect man at the other end. Man has to re-traverse the way in an inverse manner, inverse to the way in which God came down to, manifested Himself in man. God to man is the southern way, man to God is the northern path. The word was the first of God, it is man's last; the Idea which was the first product of creation is man's last achievement. In fact what is true of man is true of any other created being.

The discovery of God in the heart is the duty of all from gods down to the ants. In fact it is God seeing Himself, fulfilling Himself in diverse ways. All ways are in Him and His. God proceeded with the work of creation in time-space through division, splitting up; man returns to God through analogy

and identification. The end of the Veda is Vedânta and the process is through the six Shâstras, through naming of Him and—a realization of His splitting up, and through the resolution of those names through correspondence of principles, processes, categories, numbers, etc., into a Unity, which is another name for identification. Every process of time-space is studied and then realized as a ladder up to God.

He is in fact the Void, the Zero—Sunya. He is all human relations, all natural laws, all physical and metaphysical discoveries, He is every thesis and antithesis but let me remind myself and you that such a statement is a purely essential, absolute statement, in relation to no action, no other thought or object. When God is thought of in relation to a worshipper He is transformed, He incarnates and becomes a god. Thus the theist who brags of the superiority of His one merciful, loving, moral God is indulging in sheer nonsense for another has as much right to apportion the needed digit, part of God as a god to himself, as has the theist. The man who says he worships the one God and no idols or false gods is either a fool or a great deceiver who practises deception as much upon himself as upon others. Philosophically one God who is only good and true and moral is an absurdity if all-power, all-knowledge is at the same time claimed for Him. The proud theist is really not worshipping any God. The Hindus and the gods of the Hindus are far more sensible and logical. The God of Vedânta and the Veda is the Truth of Unity to which the *Disc* and the *Atmâ* bear witness and that God-Truth is for *jnâna*, for intellectual perception. He is Truth. But for worship, in action, for study, the gods are many and any one can be chosen, Siva or Vishnu, any deity, any stone in which major or minor deity first the attribute

is established and realised and then the deity is praised not only as itself but as analogous to others, as identical with others and lastly absolutized as God, the One. Herein lies the explanation of the greatest champion of Transcendentalism or Monism becoming in practice a Tantric, a worshipper of Shakti and advocating Yoga.

I refer, of course, to Sri Sankarâcharya. For worship, for uniting with, for loving, you have to image the unimagable and unimaginable. So long as you are you, you must conceive of a humanized God to understand and respond to you and then you have done with the *Ishta Devatâ*. The Hindu gods are equally sensible. They have the attitude of being God Himself towards their worshipper and of being but digits or digits of digits, parts and parts of parts of the Maha-Maha-Vishnu or Maha-Maha-Siva whom they themselves adore. They do not forget their dual role. They are hymned by the Rishis and they themselves hymn the God, as a god could image and imagine and adore Him. They even praise and are praised by their wives and the mother. The real character of the Hindu gods is made clear first, by their very names which are *essential or etymological, functional, attributive*, second, by their frequent identifications with other gods, and third, by the use of various other synonyms for them equally etymological. The Vedic gods are Time-space Categories, Ideas, Processes in every plane which are universal and which when contemplated as in the cosmic order lead to a perception of the total order; the Pauranic gods, the Tantric Shaktis, the village gods, the Maha-Gurus are humanized gods for worship. Both types of gods are, however, the same, intermingle and are described as in frequent contact and conflict. The Vedic gods are gods of *karma*, that is,

the order as manifest in Nature and human body, while the Pauranic gods are gods which the different types of Bhaktas, worshippers (and not Rishis—seers) can envisage and should envisage. Of the worship of both, however, details mingle and resemble and in the Purânas these first principles of creative activity, known as Vedic gods, reappear in different roles, under other names and with additional functions.

(9)

There is God not only at the heart and centre of science and art, but at the base of individual and social human activity as well, not only in abstract space-time but actual, historical space-time as well. History like astronomy, like the science of the seasons, agriculture, reveals the same laws, principles, categories, cycles, numbers, etc. In fact History (*Mahâbhârata*) is *Brahmadarshana*, as the *Mahâbhârata* itself puts it. In the Purânas and the two Histories there is no doubt History and Geography, as it is in the Veda, but in both cases it is *essential*, that is, only such names and forms, places and persons, events and dynasties are selected as illustrate the working in History and Geography of the same laws as operate in Astronomy, Astro-physics, etc. Someone has evolved a new term Bio-Politics. I could coin Astro-Sociology, Astro-Politics, Astro-Ethics, Astro-Architecture, etc., and apply them to large portions of the *Mahâbhârata* and the Purânas. In other words, the God-order is shown in these time-records to have been working exactly on the same lines and in the same spirit as found in the heavens, in the seasons, in the human body, and in complete assonance and interdependence with all those.

(10)

God as the principle of unity in multiplicity warrants the Pauranic elaboration of gods descended on earth, and gods to be installed. The latter deduction falsifies the two presumptions of atheist Russia. There is nothing wrong in Atheism, for the belief in law and order is still there, in equality, in truth, in freedom. But Atheism is harmful for it deprives the ordinary citizen of a belief in himself. Belief in self, in the universe, in their truth and vitality and interconnectedness is, at its highest, belief in God.

I have just read an account of the changes in the land of the Czars. It reads: "The idea of God creates class division, the immortal God and mortal human beings. As God is not our equal He must be banished." Now that is untrue so far as the Hindu gods are concerned. Man is poor, so is his God, *Daridra Nârâyana*. God comes down as a poor god to the poor man and as a rich god to the rich, as a woman to the woman. As the Puranas say: all women are the forms of Shakti, who is Herself the woman, the mother, the wife, the daughter,—the celestial whore as well. All that men are, the gods are, bad and good, beautiful and ugly, rich and poor. The glory of gods like that of the light of the sun and the breath of the air is that they are as innumerable as the devotees, whom the gods meet in the measure of the worshippers' *shraddhâ*, faith. Why should the Christian fight shy of, condemn a god or gods who are both good and evil, beautiful and ugly, great and small, merciful and cruel, for cruelty, ugliness, evil, smallness are in the order as much as their opposites; they are the autumn and winter, as opposed to spring and summer. There are life-rays and death-rays, there is upward Prâna and downward

Prâna. Both serve the purpose of life and death and of their cyclic character. The Principle which resides in both is beyond and above the pairs of opposites and yet in manifestation, universal and individual, He is both the positive side of the manifest principle as well as the negative. It would be a poor god who could not sanction killing and appreciate ugliness. He, of course, is able to do all that as a god, without blame or credit to him as to a Rishi. If we could look upon good and evil, north and south, lower and upper, mercy and cruelty as categories, as relatives, as time-space phases, we would better evaluate the gods of the Tantrics and the village gods. If and when, however, the worshipper chooses and deserves, he can see God, the greater, the whole order, in his village deity, in his stone *lingam*, in his own limbs. God as gods is in every limb of the human body, in the body of the birds and stones and stars, etc.; with different names of the deity the Purânas identify the various limbs and organs and faculties and processes of the human body. Such descriptions are very illuminating, indeed, and most forcefully impress upon the mind of the reader the whole Pattern of God. Such narratives and identifications or locations I call as Bio-astronomy, Bio-botany, Bio-physics, Bio-theology, etc. Every science can in fact be interpreted in terms of any and every other science and art. The poet and the seer have, however, alone the privilege of using synaesthesia, of using the imagery of one sense or organ for the descriptions of another. It is the poet-seer who alone can see the whole as it is God alone who is the whole, the Sarva-Devata, the All-gods. It is this character and teaching of His which is the law for heavens and for earth. Instead of dividing men, an understanding of the gods through worship of them, unites the worshippers amongst them-

selves and with other types of worshippers, puts them in harmony with the whole creation, teaches them the principle of self-sacrifice through which the One has become many and yet retained His transcendence. There is the theory of a science and there is its practice. The Veda and Vedânta give us the theory and we have to live life by practising the theory of the ever-active inter-relationship and inter-dependence of all things in the universe, of all citizens of the Divine State.

Other names for this identification with the order are Yoga and sacrifice or Yajna. All power comes from this Yoga with that order, from this Yajna. It is not the gods out of whom the worshipper or the sacrificer gets the desired fruit; but out of the act of union or sacrifice, that is out of himself. He projects his own vision outside in speech and other forms and then out of it he receives as much as he has put into it.

Thus everything is Yoga, according to the *Bhagavad-Gitâ*. God is Yoga; the union of the seen and the unseen, of the sacrificer, the sacrificed and the sacrifice, of the manifest and the unmanifest, of the outer and the inner, of *Prâna* and *Manas*. But this Yoga or union, equinox or solstice or balance or eclipse or neutralization is dual, vernal and autumnal, northern and southern. There is downward, creation-ward Yoga and there is the northward, God-ward, inward Yoga. He who sins against and forgets this Yoga of self-identification, of neutral equipoise etc., sins against himself and God. Our beginning and our goal are the winter, the Kaivalya-Samadhi, the Maha-sunya, the neuter.

(11)

Every name-form is an attribute; God in manifestation, in relatedness is an attribute. Hence all names are His, all

forms are He. He is all persons in Grammar and all cases, all conjugations. When He is the first person, He is I and reveals, and is, Vedanta; when He is second person, you, He is Yoga and Bhakti; when He is the third person, He, is Brahman, Karma. The Vedic Brahman is He, Karma-kânda, Science. Brahman, according to the dictionary, means (1) Karma, activity, gradation, order; (2) the Disc, the circle of light, heat, electricity; (3) the Hymn, the structure. When we conceive of Him, He seems to be, and is, infinitely small. The infinitely great is the other end. The trouble with the modern scientist is that he forgets that He as the infinitely small, the golden germ, womb, is the cause which contains within Itself, the infinitely great as well, and that He is the infinitely small of all, of chemistry, physics, philosophy, biology, etc.

God is a circle, quotes Emerson, whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. On a circle you are going ahead, outwards, towards creation and manifoldness while at the same time you are returning to the point you started from. You can of course start at any point. Now God, that is, the one, the two, the three, the points, the straight line and the triangle, the three gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, when creating, manifesting themselves, becoming manifold, diverse, is at the same time conserving Himself, returning towards Unity and Himself; He started as the Virâta man and He returns to Himself—they, the three, come Home at the same point—as Earth-man. The year begins with the conjunction of the three on the first of the month, Mâgha. As the winter proceeds, advances, it is growing while at the same time it is finishing its life and summer is coming near. Growth in individuality is at the same time advance in individuality-less-ness. As the recurring number on the right

side of the decimal repeats itself, advances, it is at the same time lessening as a whole.

The Yogi as he grows in the knowledge of the heart, the centre within, is knowing more and more about the external universe, its laws and cycles and processes and repetitions. The Upanishad is perfectly right when it says that the knowledge of the various universes and the various branches of action and thought can be obtained through contemplation of the human Chakras. So is right the Hindu philosopher who says that the intensive, extensive study of grammar, astronomy, poetics, dramatics, medicine, etc., etc., leads one to the knowledge of the self,—the poet, the dramatist, etc., in the end becoming a Rishi and finding at last that the laws of grammar, medicine, astronomy are nothing but the laws, processes, etc., of the discovery, realization of self. Worship any god (and you can worship only a god) and you will see, reach God.

Hindu literature (all literature) is of two kinds [or of 2×3 , $(2 \times 3) \times 3$]: it is either the theologization of Grammar, History, Medicine, Poetry, Dramaturgy, Astronomy, Physics, Biology, etc., or it is the Theos historicized, medicinized, poetized, dramatized, biologized, etc. In fact the pattern being the fundamental one, the strands of the processes of thought and action are similar, same, in god and man, gods and men. No action, no thought, no name, no form is outside the bosom of God. In other words all our thoughts and actions in the past, the present and the future, from the very constitution and nature of the universe, never go out of His Pattern, the Pattern that He is and we therefore think, act like Him, in Him, out of His power, in terms of the three or four divisions of time, the ten divisions of space, the three categories of His attributes, the sixteen divisions of energy, the

eighty-four divisions of form; we can but think and act in terms of analogy and identification, express not the thing Itself but as this and that, in respect of this and in respect of that. The similes, the metaphors of our thought, the ways of our outward and inward growth, the sources and forms of our good actions and evil are of (and in) the very nature of the processes, contents of the Universal Nature, Prakriti. The Prakriti, temperament, of man is the same as the Prakriti of God; the Shaktis of men and gods are the same. Saraswati is in all the three words, in all the three divisions of time, outward and inward and in all the branches of science and art. Thus, what is God?—can neither be put nor answered as such; it must be framed and attended to in the form of what is God in geology, in astronomy, in ethics, in history, in poetry; it has to be further modified in the light of the discussion gone before and re-stated as what does God become in geology, in astronomy which is the same as to say which is the astronomical god, which is the historical god, which or of what name and functions is the god of biology. We thus get gods whose functions in their respective fields, it is our business to inquire into. Once we grasp this the position of the Hindu authors of the sacred books will be fully vindicated in our eyes, for it is only by such theologization and secularization, by this analysis and synthesis that we see Him in ourselves. To the ordinary man for whom this exposition is meant, such an understanding of what is God as outlined in the present essay is immediately, intimately and supremely useful, for then he will cease to quarrel with the followers of other gods, idols and ideals, will not hate himself or the ascetic, will effectively worship through hymning, contemplation, representative ceremonial, self-identification, sacrifice, one particular god, Ishta, of His need

and choice, rather than ineffectually profess to be a Theist, a believer in one God; he will then actively assist "God" as gods in establishing "themselves" in the hearts of the devotees, in groups of men, in periods of history and will be able to read God, be with God in every act and thought. In fact he will cease to worry about Theos as a kind, merciful God and engage himself in carrying out the duties of his order selflessly so that he may fall in step with the other orders within the Divine Order. Duty for him will acquire a richer meaning and Dharma for him will become the essence of God-realization. It is such stories of gods, such hymns to gods, such praises of the gods, such accounts of the incarnations as are logically true, in terms of which we can really think of, conceive God, which can be truly useful to man in any stage. Such an apprehension of God will give the man-in-the-street a much better idea of himself, confidence in himself and a better method for His worship than Theology can. For then he will start not as a sinner, a thief, a murderer, a Sudra, a Hindu but as a god, a physical child of the Divine Manu, a name-form, a time-space, of "God" whose business it is to find his place, compare himself with others and see the basic and processional similarity and finally identify himself with the interests of other name-forms, time-space units, by the instrumentality of praise, representational Yajna and contemplation. And this function not man alone has to fulfil consciously; every god has also to perform; every god is performing that and man has only to imitate his god, the whole universe. Man, constitutionally, unconsciously, is a God; through "worship" of the gods he has consciously to become a God, then the God, the Virâta and then he is God. In eternal Time he, like God, is to be what he is in Eternity. Of God un-

manifest we can know and say nothing, for He is beyond nothing and everything; of God manifest we can say that He is everything, process, principle, category from fatherhood, through

motherhood, to sonship in eternal repetition. He is all what we are constituted, patterned to conceive of Him and the reverse of what we can image Him to be.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE HINDUS

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA

If we consider that the Hindus are the oldest race of people, if we consider that religion has always been the main aim and object of the life of the Hindus, if we consider that everything in India has always been made subservient to the supreme end, namely, God-realization, then we need not be surprised that in India we find religion developed to a degree, of which we, Westerners, can hardly form any conception.

Through innumerable ages the Hindus have struggled with the problems of existence. What is man? What is the universe? What is God? Such questions have always agitated their minds.

It is not strange then that in the religion of the Hindus we find a wealth of ideas, of beliefs and practices, found nowhere else. Each age has added to this storehouse of ancient wisdom.

To-day even we may find strange practices amongst the Hindus, and as everything foreign startles the mind, so also when we hear or read of these practices we are only too apt to condemn them without further investigation. But those who have taken the trouble to examine the matter more closely assure us that behind these strange appearances, lies a sublime truth.

The Hindu religion is based on a vast mass of literature which goes by the general name of the Vedas. The different sects in Hinduism have selected from these Vedas certain groups of scriptures,

which they hold as most essential. And their religious life is built and moulded according to the teachings of such selected scriptures, each sect, of course, regarding its own scriptures as the best.

The Hindus regard their scriptures as the word of God. But that does not mean that God spoke in human language or that He or one of His angels wrote out the divine revelations and then handed it over to man. The 'word' here means the thought of God, His divine ideation. Sometimes it is called the breath of God. Now from this word of God, from this thought, the universe is said to evolve. The Vedas are not only the message of God to man, but they are also the recorded means by which the Supreme Being created or evolved the universe.

Swami Vivekananda said that the whole universe is only the *meaning of words*. After the word comes the thing. The word, and back of the word, the thought, is the real thing. The thing is but a feeble manifestation of the pre-existing, eternal Idea. Everything is in the mind and the material is nothing more than ideas concretized. So the name of God is greater than God. God himself is merely the objectification of that eternal Idea. Your name is greater than the person, you!

We find the same idea in the Christian scripture. In the Gospel of St. John we read that in the beginning was the

Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. In the beginning God alone was. So when the universe evolved, it must have evolved out of Him and the universe and God must be the same, even as cause and effect are the same, the effect being the cause manifested. The Word or the Idea existed first and that concretized is the universe. On all this is based the Hindu practice of what they call *japam*, that is, the repetition of the name of God, and meditation on the meaning of that name. Thus, from the name they come to the conception of God.

So we see how, according to the Hindus, God and the universe are inseparable, the universe being a partial manifestation of God. God is the cause of all that is. So the world is neither an illusion, nor a non-reality. It is, as it were, God's reflection. He thought and that thought was projected outward. And thus we get the double conception of God,—God manifested and God unmanifested, or God and the universe.

When God becomes thus, as it were, divided, the universe is regarded by the Hindus as God's play-ground and God himself is then worshipped as the Divine Mother of the universe. For from her womb the universe was born. In this way, through devotion and self-culture, the devotee is made to feel and to realize that God is the all-blissful Mother of the universe. And that She Herself is manifested in the universe as the living creatures. So, every man and woman is then regarded as a manifestation of God. And every living object becomes thus an object of worship. For divinity is shining behind all life.

The Hindus recognize in God the powers of creating, preserving and destroying. And they worship God in these three aspects as creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. There-

fore we find some of their images representing God with three heads on one trunk—each head standing for one of his three powers and the trunk standing for the all-including God-head. God as creator is not regarded as greater than God the destroyer or God the preserver. God is equally great in all His operations and the worshipper is at perfect liberty to select any one of these three aspects of God as the object of his special devotion. Some devotees prefer to think of God as the creator of all things. They call Him, Brahma, others again feel attracted towards God in His sweet aspect of the preserver of all things. And they direct their devotions to God the preserver. They call Him Vishnu. And there are still others who see His mighty power manifested in destruction,—destruction not only of life and form, but also of error and ignorance. They see that the death of the old brings in the new, that the destruction of the lesser creates the greater. So they worship God as the destroyer, the terrible one, and they call Him Siva. So Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, though worshipped by different sects and represented by different images, are, as every Hindu knows, one and the same God in His different aspects.

So there is nothing wrong in worshipping God in one of these aspects, nor is it wrong to worship Him as the most terrible of the terrible. And we need not be disgusted when in India we find images and pictures of God representing him in that terrible aspect. For fearful as these representations are, they are not more fearful than God's power of destruction as we actually see it in nature.

But there are those heroes among devotees who are not satisfied to see only one phase of the Supreme. The blissful Mother, smiling at her children, the Mother garlanded with beautiful

flowers, bestowing blessings on mankind is not the whole aspect of God. If God is benevolent, if He grants boons, if He brings peace and happiness on earth, He also is all-devouring, the cause of disease, of pestilence, of wars, of floods and famine. He slays our friends, our most beloved; He throws us in the deepest despair. "Let me know Him then, as He is," says the Hindu, "in all His aspects." It is easy to sing: God is in His heaven, all is right with the world. But to sing so, one must be blind to facts. Life is a tragedy as well as a comedy.

The devotees of the terrible aspect of God worship the image of Kali, the Mother. With one hand she holds out blessings to humanity. In the other hand she holds a sword dripping with blood. That is true love, to love for love's sake, to love when blessings come, to love when misery is our share. "Who dares misery love, and hug the form of death, dance in destruction's dance, to him the Mother comes" says Swami Vivekananda. And elsewhere is written: "Tho' Thou slayest me, still shall I trust in Thee." The soul is eternal, the real man can never be destroyed. "Him the fire cannot burn, him the sword cannot cut." It is only the semblance of man, the form, the apparent man that can be destroyed. The soul is eternal.

Who then cares for this body, for happiness or misery in this short span of life? Let pleasure come, let pain come, and disease! Let misery be our share,—the soul lives for ever. The devotee knowing this, worships misery, for through misery he will rise beyond misery. He worships pain, for through pain he will soar into the realm of eternal beatitude. This kind of worship is called the heroic worship. It matters not what path we choose. It matters not how we enter into that ocean of

Bliss, which is God. Happiness and misery go hand in hand in this life; we cannot accept the one and escape the other. Both will meet us in this world. But we can rise beyond all relative conditions, we can realize our true nature which is beyond pleasure and pain, which is Bliss absolute. That is the object of all practice. Know yourself, says the true devotee, and you will know God. And knowing God is becoming God. And that is the aim of all evolution,—to become perfect, to become conscious of our godly nature, to be eternally united with God.

We have entered here upon another belief and practice of the Hindus, the worship of God through images,—a practice as universally condemned in the West, as it is accepted in the East. How is it that the Hindus through all these ages adhere to a practice which we, Westerners, so emphatically decry? I think the answer is not far to seek. We condemn, because we do not understand. The Hindu continues in his practice because he is spiritually benefited by it.

Let us try to understand what the Hindu means by image worship. Then, perhaps, we will no longer decry it as idolatry and heathenism. But we must remember that no religious practice can be really understood from outside. Only the worshipper understands what he is doing, and he feels the effect. Unless we practise ourselves, we will never get a true insight into any practice. We can, at most, come to an intellectual understanding.

First of all, let me point out that it is sometimes believed that image worship is only a means of producing steadiness of mind and therefore helpful only so long as we have not yet learned to concentrate the mind.

But this is not according to Hindu belief nor is this the experience of devo-

tees. For through image worship they find a constant outflow of love towards God and an ever-renewed realization of His presence, not only in the image, but also in themselves and in all nature.

To the worshipper, God is ever present in the image. The image is the receptacle of which God takes possession, where He dwells as the divine form of the image. And through that form God holds communion with the devotee. The devotee sees God in the image; in the image God reveals Himself to the devotee.

The first act of worship for the devotee is therefore to offer at the blessed feet of his Beloved, all that is his, all that he calls me and mine, even his own personality. Through such whole-hearted devotion, God, who is all-conscious, is drawn towards and is made to appear in the image. Thus earth, or wood, or stone is made to yield to the devotee the fruit of his sincere love for God.

The fruit of such worship then is much more than a means to practise concentration of mind. It is an actual communion with God. Through true devotion with the help of images, God, the unmanifested, is seen as manifested. This is not simply imagination, it is a fact, realized and perceived as other things in this world are perceived. Only this perception is of a subtler and, therefore, of more intense nature.

Love and devotion bring man and man together. And so it is with man and God. When love is very intense, two persons seem almost to merge in each other; they become like one mind. So it is with God and His devotee. The devotee, as he draws closer to God, partakes of his nature; he becomes more and more God-like.

Through image worship that love for God is strengthened and the mind thinks of God constantly. And as we become what we think, so this yearning for God brings union with God.

I may mention in conclusion that the Hindus recognize two kinds of image worship, the lower and the higher. In the lower form, celestial beings, angels and departed saints are worshipped. These celestial beings have the power to bestow blessings on man. But that is as far as the worship leads. The devotee may get wealth, or offspring, or other boons. But that is not the aim of man's life. The higher form of worship is the worship of the Supreme Being. From Him not only all blessings flow, but He reveals His own blissful Being to the devotee. This is pure image worship. There is no desire for material results. It is an act of love, of devotion, an urge of the soul to approach and finally to unite with God.

When such is the object of image worship, no thinking being can condemn it. And when we consider the result that has come to man through such worship, as we find it recorded in innumerable cases, we can no longer doubt that image worship done with the only motive of realizing God, is a wholesome and most desirable practice for those to whom it appeals. Whether we shall adopt this mode of worship is another question. It depends on the temperament of each individual.

But blessed is he who attains God-realization, be it through image worship or through any other means. It is open to every one to adopt such means as bring to him the greatest and surest and quickest results.

THE FAITH OF A UNIVERSALIST

BY PROF. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN, M.A., PH.D.

The Mediæval Age, when the kings ruled the people, the gods ruled the kings and the priests ruled the gods, was a theological era. Religion, as it was understood then, was doctrinal and dogmatic. Religiosity meant blind submission to Authority, adherence to set codes, and unquestioning acceptance of traditional doctrines. Reason was bound in chains at the feet of tradition. If it had any business, it was merely to receive, register and transmit the traditions which were thought to be the real substance of man's experience. Reason was like "the curator of a museum who catalogues and labels treasures that are not his own."

The thoughtful world at the dawn of the modern era rightly revolted against such a religious attitude. But the old idol was removed only to be replaced by a new one equally pernicious. The worship of the State, and narrow nationalism miscalled patriotism took the place of theologicism. The cry of 'everyman for his country' rent the air which culminated in the last Great War, a large-scale, legalised human massacre. Man does not seem to profit by experience. Dictators of men still prefer to rely on their guns. They refuse to look at the foot-prints of man's history, which are stained with blood.

Socialism professes to show a way out of the difficulties and iniquities of mankind. Religion is regarded as a bourgeois prejudice and superstition whose eradication at any cost is one of the planks on which doctrinal socialism stands. The cry of communism is, "Take the gods out of the skies and remove Capitalism from the earth.

Make way for the youth of communism." The economic reading of history and the philosophy that all men are equal and have an equal right to share the bounty of nature are good as they go. But will the methods advocated by Socialists and Communists bring about an equitable distribution of wealth? And even if they succeed, what guarantee is there that men will not fall at each other's throat again and create confusion and disorder in the world? The Socialism of the present is impractical and unethical in character. It cannot remove human selfishness. As Professor Gilbert Murray has somewhere declared, the salvation of humanity lies in the recognition of the brotherhood of mankind. And this recognition is impossible without a spiritual view of world-history. Unless the world be regarded as interfused with the light divine, all talk of liberty, equality and fraternity is empty jargon.

The ill-repute into which religion has fallen is not a little due to petty-minded priests and protagonists of traditional theology. The custodians of tradition tabooed the clear light of reason and combated common sense and sane incredulity. They were afraid of removing the cloud of ignorance and the cobwebs of prejudice. With threats of a hellish hereafter and promises of a paradise they sought to rule the destinies of men. And it is no wonder that, when thinking men began to question the slender foundations on which their theories were built, the whole edifice which they thought to be religion shook and was shattered to pieces.

When we maintain that the best remedy for the growing cancer of hatred and strife in the world is a spiritual view of the universe, we do not mean the dogmatic theology which is afraid of the light of rational criticism. Religious experience no doubt transcends reason. But it does not shun it. An irrational religion is a contradiction in terms. Faith is supra-rational and not contra-rational. It is not a-logical but supra-logical. In the words of Henry Jones, "Tradition and reason are elements which interpenetrate and cannot be sundered without being destroyed. The one lives and grows in virtue of the other." The authoritarian and the atheist alike do not understand the true meaning of faith. Strangely enough, the two extremes meet. The one clings to false religion and the other thinks that in having fought with shadows, he has struck down the real.

Before we try to consider what the universalist's view of faith is, it is necessary to define faith or religion. The psychologist's conception of faith is quite inadequate and mischievous. To define God as a function of the unconscious and religion as "a mere misrepresentation of sex ecstasy" has not even a shadow of justification. Nor is religion "a disease born of fear and a source of untold misery to the human race." Man in his sublime nature does not look upon God as a detective of crimes or a cruel despot or a glorified pedagogue. To confine religious experience to the mentally depraved, physically weak, neurotics and savages is to confess ignorance of the meaning of faith. Religion is not the acceptance of a set doctrine; nor is it meticulous performance of prescribed rites and rituals. It has its root in the foundations of man's being. It is the attitude of the whole man to the whole of reality. Sincerity, strength, and a sense of the

sublime are what characterise real faith. Religion is integral experience, a synthetic view, and in Plato's phrase, a synoptic vision (*sâkshâtkâra*).

The idea of evolution dominates the realm of thought. There is no science from Geology to Theology which does not adopt the theory as its guide. Even philosophers have swallowed the 'evolutionary camel' with an avidity which is astounding. Though the efficacy of the Darwinian theory may be doubtful elsewhere, it is worthwhile to view matters of faith from the evolutionary standpoint. By holding that there is an evolution in faith we do not mean that there is a growth in or of God or that God is in the making. There is a growth in our idea of God from the grotesque to the sublime, from the ludicrous to the lofty. Human mind is fugitive, finite and fumbling for light. It cannot have a complete vision of that which is beyond the reach of speech and mind. Hence conceptions of God are bound to be inadequate. But every sincere attempt in the quest has a title to be called faith. In fact, there are as many faiths as there are sentient beings in the world. Religion is personal and private, the priceless possession of each individual. There can be no mechanical uniformity in faith. Human minds are not commodities to be tied up in neat parcels. Hence the universalist is one who regards all faiths as different approximations to the ultimate truth. Religion is not an end in itself. It is but a means to an end. Truth is its goal. Any faith that takes man nearer truth has a place in the universalist's scheme of life. Man begins his religious career by worshipping many gods. Natural phenomena are regarded as due to supernatural agencies. But Polytheism, though it satisfies the primitive mind, cannot stand the test of critical enquiry. Scepticism throws men into

the whirlpool of Atheism. Then the crusade against God begins. But atheism is a passing phase and not a permanent mood. Plato compares Man in all the ages to the puppy dog. He must tear things to pieces during the period of his teething. It is he that has passed through the fire of doubt that can be firm and fixed in the final faith which he reaches by constant and continued effort in self-inquiry. Monotheism marks a high level in the spiritual evolution, but it is not its last chapter. The unitive experience of the distinctionless non-dual Spirit is the supreme goal of religion. It is here that all prophets agree. William James writes: "The overcoming of all the usual barriers between the individual and the Absolute is the great mystic achievement. In mystic states we become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness. This is the everlasting and triumphant mystic

tradition, hardly altered by difference of clime and creed."

The Masters and man-gods of the world like Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna are the true universalists. Provincialism in truth is foreign to their soul. They are citizens of the world, torch-bearers of truth. If men had followed their foot-steps without proving traitors to them, there would have been no cause for bitterness and spite. Witness the declaration of Sri Krishna:

"Whatever may be the form which a devotee desires to worship with faith—I make his faith steadfast therein alone."

"Howsoever men seek me, even so do I accept them; it is my path that they tread everywhere, O Arjuna."

Should we not hearken to the message of the seers and make the conflict of creeds and sects a thing of the dead past?

A SOCIOLOGY OF HINDU FESTIVALS

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR, M.A., DR. GEOG. H.C.

An extensive anthropological work of substantial importance bearing on Indian morals, manners and sentiments has been delivered by J. J. Meyer, the Indologist, whose translation of and studies in Kautilya and researches into the Hindu law-books and other topics are well known in the world of comparative politics and jurisprudence. The present work is made up of three large monographs separately paged, but stitched together as one volume with a post-script and two indices, one for topics and persons and the other for Sanskrit words. The book comprises some 850 pages of Royal octavo size (Max Niehans Verlag, Zurich and Leipzig, 1937).

The common title of this work is *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation* (Trilogy of Hindu Vegetation Powers and Festivals). In the subtitle the volume is described as a contribution to comparative religions and culture-history as well as to the comparative study of festivals and folk-life.

Investigations in social anthropology are as a rule based on a first hand study of the folk-life in villages, forests, mountains and river-valleys. This is the method of field-work. Meyer did not go out of his Swiss home into the nooks and corners of India or of any of the countries described in this book. His authorities are all printed texts. The

fundamental basis is the Sanskrit encyclopaedias, the Puranas in so far as most of these researches are concerned. *Rig-Veda* comes in for the third monograph. Travellers' books about India or ethnological works dealing with the Indian festivals and customs in the field-method way of composition have been requisitioned by Meyer either to illustrate his Sanskrit originals or to supplement them wherever necessary. He has made it a point to furnish as full a translation as possible of the chapters in the Sanskrit authorities dealing with the topic in question.

In the present writer's *Folk-element in Hindu Culture: A Socio-religious Study in Hindu Folk-institutions* (London, 1917), the method adopted was just the reverse of Meyer's. There the field of study in connection with the April festivals of Shiva in the villages of North Bengal furnished the foundation. This was supplemented by illustrations from and historical references to Bengali and Sanskrit texts. The result, however, is the same. We are led to the conclusion that the so-called culture-lore of India is overwhelmingly dominated by her folk-lore, nay, is very often but a euphemism for her folk-lore. The folk-elements, again, are profoundly materialistic and secular (as contrasted with metaphysical and other-worldly). Last but not least, the sex-elements constitute a most preponderant feature of the folklores and folk-institutions.

Meyer's work takes us farther. It brings us into contact with the folklores and folk-institutions of Asia, Europe, Africa and America. He may be said to have contributed another volume to Thurnwaldt's *Ethnosozologie*. The agricultural and sexual aspects of the folk-gods and folk-festivals have been proved by him to be too hemispherical, too elemental, too human to be described in terms of geographical

regions or ethnographic races. Neither the climatic nor the geographical nor the racial 'interpretation' of history or culture can call Meyer its own. The parallelisms, identities, analogies between the East and the West constitute some of the most substantial contributions of Meyer in this voluminous treatise. The result is a piece of research which is well calculated to cry halt to the pruderies and chauvinistic idiosyncrasies of Eur-American scholars who while dealing with Indian themes generally manage to forget, ignore or overlook the mass of superstitions, sex-motifs and phallic institutions governing their daily life. On the other hand, Meyer's work is of exceptional value to such Indian scholars as, owing to the absence of intimate familiarity with the folk-life of Christian and pre-Christian Occident fail to find in Eur-America the duplicates of certain conventionally objectionable manners and customs of the Indian people and are easily tempted to discover something extraordinarily transcendental, esoteric and divine even in the most unspeakably earthly and muddy crudities of India. For, Meyer discovers "the human, the all-too human" here and there and everywhere. This *Trilogie* has turned out to be a study in the superstitions of all mankind organically connected as they are with Mother Earth, vegetation and fertility.

Tamuz and Ishtar of Babylonia, Isis and Osiris of Egypt, Adonis and Astarte (or Aphrodite) of Syria, western Asia and Greece, Attis and Kybele of Phrygia are the male and female divinities respectively of the ancient world embodying as they do the human hunger for growth, fertility, procreation, rebirth and rejuvenation. In India Siva, Varuna, Skanda, Kumara, Bali and Kama are to be seen only as the Indian counterparts of the extra-Indian gods from Tamuz to Attis (Part I, Pp. 2-4).

So far as the author is concerned this book is declared by himself to be a small thanksgiving to Nature, the plant-world, the cultivators, and the Mother Earth who constitutes the central topic of the study. He believes also that in the atmosphere of these investigations he can feel somewhat the spirit of the origins of agriculture and the soul of the people associated with it (III, p. 272).

The reasons are not far to seek. Meyer was a farmer for many years of his life, and during this period a very large part was dominated by the ideas of the eleven Upanishads which he first studied at that time. The actual life of the peasant as lived by himself as well as intimate contact with the literature that had grown in that *milieu*, although in the East, combined to produce in him a sense of profound unison with the plant-world, with forests, with cultivated fields, with the rows of maize and with the lights of flowers (II, 271).

This trilogy is for Meyer not therefore a merely anthropological or antiquarian study into the origins of folk-manners and folk-festivals. It is for him virtually a searching analysis of his deepest convictions, the examination, so to say, of his own religious sentiments in the widest sense. The data relate indeed to the three or rather four Hindu gods, Kama, Bali, Indra and Varuna as well as their festivals. And they are collected chiefly from the medieval and rather recent Sanskrit literature. The chapters on Indra are based, however, mainly on the *Rig-Veda*. But this indological material has led him away from India into far-off nooks and corners of the world. And he is convinced that not only his own religion, but that every man's and every woman's religion are in the final and honest analysis profoundly rooted in the natural and agricultural rites and ceremonies—the peasant's hopes, fears, ambitions and anxieties,

etc. The farmer complex which lies in the pre-history or at the bottom of all culture-systems of antiquity and modern times of the East and the West, has furnished the *leit motif*, so he believes, of many of the folk-elements in the religious thoughts and practices of nations.

Meyer's *Trilogie* has dealt at length with the analogies or identities between India and Eur-America, old and new, a topic on which considerable attention was bestowed in several chapters of the present writer's *Futurism of Young Asia* (Berlin, 1922). The Indian student of Western superstitions will find Meyer exceedingly helpful.

In India the cat is sacred to Mother Shashthi, the goddess of children. In Teutonic Germany the goddesses of fertility and children such as Freya, Frouwa, Berchta, etc., have the cat as their pet animal (I, 7).

While going out on a journey the Hindu considers meeting a public woman as a lucky thing. This folk-belief is prevalent in ancient Greece and Rome, as well as in Germany, England, Sweden and France. On the other hand, in India as in Europe an ascetic or a nun portends bad-luck. The priest or the monk stands for the annihilation of fertility and is therefore shunned, says Meyer (I, 8-9).

The spring-festivals generally known in India as *holi* are associated with lewd manners. Parallels are to be found in the obscenities in the women's songs and dances of Egypt in connection with the worship of Isis. Immoralities of the ancient Roman festivals can also be referred to (I, 67). Whether the story is of India or of Africa, America and Europe, Meyer objects to the use of the word "obscene" in the conventional sense in the description of these manners and customs. In his judgment all these alleged obscenities are organic features

of a religion which considers fertility, child-production and sex-act as the most sacred things of Nature and Man (I, 67-68).

In his analysis of analogies and parallelism between the East and the West in regard to the alleged obscenities he differs from Hopkins who says that "no Western carnival at its worst is as frankly sensual as the spring festival of India." He accepts Wilson's statement as valid according to which the Christian Easter festivals are marked by "an indecency of which even the *holi* players are never guilty" (I, 70). Meyer considers the nakedness of women in Eve's costume on the occasion of the Christian festival of Johannis, and the shameless behaviour of the Greek and Romans as much too unspeakable (I, 70-71).

The harvest festivals of Europe, especially of Germany, have been described by Meyer in illustration of his thesis that obscenities and phallic orgies belong to religion in the life of peasants used to the worship of agricultural divinities or saints. The use of pictures and figures of the procreative organ of man is referred to as a common phenomenon in Europe. Some of the obscene performances are associated with Church Yards, and persons dressed as priests are said to participate therein. Meyer observes that in Classical Greece and Rome as in India or old Germany and Christian Europe most of the festivals and ceremonies in which the conventional morality is violated are directly or indirectly religious in nature and origin. But in many of the medieval and modern obscenities of European social life there is hardly any excuse from the religious side (I, 74).

There is a sixteenth century work in Latin, *Regnum Papisticum*, by Thomas Naogeorgus. It describes among other things the superstitions and activities of

the Catholics in connection with the festivals of the year. The orgies of the carnival have demanded the author's special attention. Some of the participants run about in the streets naked (*ein Teil von ihnen laeuft nackt um her*), their faces alone being covered with masks. The men are dressed like women, and the women, specially young girls, like men. Many of them ramble about clothed as monks, some like kings and others as quadrupeds, as bears, wolves, lions, storks, monkeys and what not. They carry manure, both animal and human (*frischen Menschen Koht*), into market place, attended by somebody who drives the flies away with a fly-brush. Lascivious songs and dances belong to this and other festivities. Wagons of ordure and night soil accompany these processions (I, 77-78).

The procreative organ of man was made into a saint. For instance, in a carnival procession in the kingdom of Naples a wooden statue used to be carried which was prominent because of this item. It was called *Santo Membro* (the holy limb or organ). Dulaire's *Divinities generatices* furnishes numerous examples of the phallic figures in Catholic life. Saints Kosmas and Damianus in Osternia, the Child Jesus between Mons and Brussels, St. Foutin, etc., are known for their phallic representation. Meyer finds the erotic representations in some of the temples of Hindu India as but spiritually linked up with the sexual representations and symbolism of Christian art (I, 93-95).

The Hindu custom of offering beans and pulses to ancestors on the occasion of the *srâddha* ceremony is calculated to pacify the hungry manes. Meyer observes that India is not *sui generis* in this regard. The Greeks, Roman and Iranians as well as the Germans are used to the same custom. In the German communities of the Valsugana Valley in

North Italy cooked beans on wooden plates were offered to the grave of the relative or friend on the day of All-Souls. They were kept there for several hours and then distributed among the poor (II, 42).

Cow-dung and dirt play not an insignificant part in Indian folk-religion. From the European side Meyer quotes popular beliefs from English farmers about the efficiency of such blissful dirt (II, 50).

The visit of Lakshmi, the goddess of luck, to the families about midnight on the new moon day in September-October belongs to one of the folk-beliefs of the Hindus. According to Meyer we read of such visits in the legends of countries from India to North Germany (Mucukunda, Nerthus, spring sojourn of Freyer, Emperor Charles, etc.). In many places of Hungary a lamp is kept lighted the whole night on Christmas eve in order that Mother Mary can come and bring luck (II, 87). The driving away of evil by women while winnowing the corn has a place in the folk-religions of many countries old and new, in the East and the West (II, 140-141).

In India cultivators are forbidden to plough the ground on the 15th of Aswin and the 15th of Kârttika (about the 30th of September and October) as these days are consecrated to the ancestors. In Germany, says Meyer, on the day of All-Souls corn is not to be sown (II, 236). The harvest festivals and the festivals of the manes are thus intimately mixed up in India as in Germany. The German dates are September 29 (Michaelis Day) and November 11 (Martin Day). On the evening of St. Martin's Day, thousands of little lamps are lighted on the mountains and high lands on both banks of the Rhine between Cologne and Coblenz. The Siebengebirge becomes especially prominent on account of the numerous lights and fire-festivals. St.

Martin is the protector of cattle, shepherds, corn, fruits, wine, etc.

An important item in the festival of Indra is the procession or march into the forest in order to select and fell the tree. In this connection Meyer draws our attention to the several sun and growth festivals of Europe. The tree that is used on these occasions is generally known as the May Pole. The carrying away of the May tree from the woods is an exciting ceremony or incident with the young people. We are told that young girls who join the crowds on such May festivities in Europe go out as virgins but do not come back as such (III, 62).

Among the many trees forbidden for the purpose of the Indra festival is the one on which bees have sat or made their hives. The magical evils associated with bees, for instance, in the *Brihat Samhita* (43, 63; 59, 3; 79, 3; 95, 58) have their analogies in European and specially German mentality. The *Handwörterbuch des deutachen Aberglaubens* (Dictionary of German Superstition) is quoted by Meyer to show that according to German folk-belief a beehive hanging on a tree belonging to one's own lands is an evil omen, on a garden-tree brings death in the family and on a house is likely to cause an outbreak of fire. The appearance of bees in soldiers' camps portends defeat as known from their association with Drusus in ancient Rome and Count Leopold of Austria. To dream of bees is to court death or disaster.

The association of bees with death and funeral ceremonies is one of the folk-elements in primitive Indo-German culture (III, 78). Another aspect of bees is their association with fertility, pregnancy and so forth. In ancient Greece the bee is the symbol of Artemis, the spirit of fertility. The priests of Artemis as well as those of Demeter the

spirit of corn are called bees. The bees are protected in Greek mythology by Pan and Priapus, the spirits of fertility. In German folk-belief, if a woman eats a bee, she will become pregnant.

According to Meyer the role of bees as ancestors is not so prominent in the folk-elements of Indian culture as in those of German. But in India the conception of bees as portents is very powerful (III, 82). The friendly aspects of bees were unknown in India, Greece and Rome because in all these countries the bees remained always wild. There was no "bee-culture" as in Germany. The bees as animals of forests were feared and their approach to human habitations dreaded as omens. The trees on which they sat were therefore declared unfit for use in regard to the construction not only of the Indra tree but also of statues for gods, stools, bed-steads, temples and houses.

In Germany the felling of the tree on similar occasions is attended with awe and respect. Pardon is asked for. In certain cantons of Switzerland a cross is engraved on the tree previous to the laying of the wood-cutters axe (III, 89).

Trees similar to that of Indra are known in the East and the West, especially in Germanic countries including England. Nowhere are those trees associated with rain. The most universal feature is that of the sun and fertility spirits. Like its cognates in other countries the "Indra banner" represents the spirit of vegetation. It is phallic (III, 134, 154, 163-166, 186-190). Meyer is strong on the point that Indra is not originally a rain and thunder god in the *Rig-Veda* but a fertility god. Indra's role as rain-god appeared in subsequent developments.

One of the longest chapters in this work is the one on Indra as phallic god, the god of vegetation and fertility. Some

forty pages are given over to the word, phrases and *richs* of the *Rig-Veda* to illustrate the phallic elements in the Indra complex. The following equations are established: (1) Indra = procreative organ, (2) *soma* = *kâmasalila*, (3) pressing of *soma-juice* = sex-act (III, 180, 187-188). Some of the references are as follows: *Rig-Veda*: VI, 46, 3; I, 129, 3; IX, 74, 5; II, 15, 7; IV, 30, 16; 19, 9; X, 10, 7; I, 104, 8; VIII, 40, 11; X, 162; VIII, 80(90); I, 136, 3; X, 85, 40; X, 101, 12; X, 94, 5; 101, 3; I, 28, 3.

Incidentally Meyer brings out that neither the Vedic poets nor the compilers of their poetry had much interest in the "folk" and "folk-elements." For instance, agriculture as a profession is very much neglected in Vedic poetry, although its importance (X, 117, 7) is not unknown. The Vedic poets are interested more in the cattle-wealth, in horses. It is not the gifts of land that they care for like the Brahmans of later times. The *milieu* of Vedic thought is not that of the entire people but of a class. It is the class of "cattle-magnates" that furnishes the inspiration of the Vedic poets. The poetry of the Vedas is a class-poetry, the poetry of the *Viehbarone* (cattle barons) and their satellites. The Vedic gods are likewise class-gods. They are partial in the distribution of their favours. Just as Homer does not furnish a real picture of the folk-religion of the Greeks, so also does the *Rig-Veda* fail to indicate the real folk-religion of the India on those days. Vedic religion is the religion of a class, although no doubt developed out of the folk-religion (III, 189-190).

The appendix of Part III is devoted to Varuna. This, the grandest and the most splendid God of the Vedas, is described as being originally a phallic god (III, 201). The association of the tortoise with Varuna (III, 226-230) furnishes some hints in this regard. The

association of the horse (III, 236-250) with Varuna is another strong indication. The story of the horse *vis-a-vis* the queen in the horse-sacrifice (*Satapatha Brahmana* XIII, 4, 1, 8), establishes the phallic character of Varuna in an equally powerful manner. According to Meyer the horse-sacrifice is a fertility festival (III, 246).

Spiritual life is essentially the life of anxiety and fear and the life of sexual urge, says Meyer. In the depths of conduct as exhibited by primitive man are to be found these two "drives," to use an expression from the Italian sociologist Pareto. The Bible is quoted by Meyer to indicate that man becomes enslaved for life on account of fear and that this fear of primitive man is at bottom mostly the fear from death that follows him in the manner of evil spirits or magical powers. Then there is another fear that overpowers the peasants. They are perpetually liable to the suspicion that the Earth and the other vegetation powers may fail or may not wish to furnish them with the desired gifts of the soil. The power that serves to remove the anxieties or fears of the primitive people is the mighty sex-urge, the "wonder of their body." In the view of the primitives every "becoming" in the growth of culture is not only similar to but identical with the sex-act of human beings. Man, therefore, has but to consecrate himself to this act in definite seasons. The powers of Nature are strengthened on account of his sex-act and contribute what he wishes from her. In primitive mentality, then, orgies and religion are very often one and the same. Through lascivious dances, wild drinking, sex-enjoyments, etc., people even of higher culture systems often believe that they rise up to divinity. So far as the wild races are concerned, orgies and intoxications, lewd merrymakings and so forth belong as a

rule to all their festivals, especially to those bearing on vegetation (III, 273).

Primitive man fears that Nature may become so weak that there may not be a reawakening, that once the plants die there may not be rebirth. The powers of Nature must not die or must not become weak, the growth of plants must go on for ever,—this is the wish or prayer that is at the bottom of all sorrows regarding dying or dead gods as well as all joys bearing on their revival, reappearance and rebirth. The harvest festivals of the most diverse races of mankind embody those fears and hopes, griefs and happinesses of the human soul (I, 1-2).

There are no monistic obsessions, be it observed finally in Meyer's interpretation. He harps naturally on agriculture and sex, and on sex and agriculture from beginning to end. But he has left room for other forces and drives. Frazer is certainly one of his favourite authors. And he has dedicated his work to the German scholar, Mannhardt, whom he describes as the pioneer. Mannhardt is the author of *Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarvoelker* (The Tree Cult of the Germans and their Neighbouring Peoples). But he is careful enough to point out that the attempt to interpret all the incidents in the myths, festivals and customs according to a single formula, standpoint or origin is defective. For instance, he is prepared to see solar rites and solar magic in some of the growth and fire festivals (I, 5). In other words, even as an agricultural interpreter he is not a determinist of the Marxian school. Nor in his sexual interpretations can he be classed with the Freudians.

The different chapters of this bulky *Trilogie* have proven incidentally that one may depend exclusively on Sanskrit books in order to get an intensive and

detailed idea of even the most common place, popular and vulgar manners, customs, rites, ceremonies, festivals, sports and merrymakings of the diverse classes of the people. Treatises in Sanskrit language appear to us therefore in a new guise. Many of them are essentially earthly, secular, materialistic and positive. There is hardly any item of folk-life and worldly human interests, individual or collective, that has not been sedulously described by the Hindu authors in the "language of their gods," Sanskrit. And in this regard Sanskrit is

not less profane than the spoken languages of the peoples, the so-called vernaculars. Those scholars who had been used to look upon Sanskrit as essentially the medium of metaphysics, philosophy, religion, theology, *belles-lettres*, etc., would be agreeably surprised to find that from the *Rig-Veda* to the latest *Upa-Purana* of the eighteenth century it is at the same time anthropology all the way. Like the other works of Meyer's this one also will serve to establish Hindu culture in its institutions and ideals on the positive basis.

BUDDHISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF NAGARJUNA

BY SWAMI VIMUKTANANDA

THE EMERGENCE OF MAHAYANA ITS PRECURSORS

The long controversy that owed its origin, as early as the lifetime of Buddha, to some doctrinal differences among his disciples, did not die out even after the first Council at Rajagriha, which was called with a view to setting it at rest. After the compilation of the Master's teachings in the form of the Tripitakas, which were thenceforward vigorously propagated as the only authoritative guide for the faithful in all matters, whether religious or secular, the elders of the Sangha heaved a sigh of relief, thinking that they had nipped the spirit of revolt in the bud. There was no doubt a lull for a time, but the discontent among the brethren soon raised its hood and poisoned the peaceful atmosphere of the Sangha. The differences among them became more acute and pronounced than ever. Just one hundred years after Buddha's Parinirvâna, a second Council was convoked at Vaisâli to bring to terms the Vrijjian monks, who were accused of

malpractices. The conveners at once found themselves in the vortex of bitter disputes; the meeting came to an abrupt close, and the long feared schism that threatened the solidarity of the Order immediately followed. The schismatics held another Council, wherein, it is said, nearly ten thousand people participated. They came to their own decisions about Vinaya (monastic rules) and seceded from the mother church. Since then they were called Mahâsanghikas after this Mahâsangha or Great Council. The orthodox section excommunicated them and began to use such derogatory epithets as Pâpa Bhikshu (sinful monk) and Adharmavâdin (holder of heretical doctrines) while referring to them. Ignoring the opposition of the Theras, they proceeded along the new line of activity with renewed vigour and assiduously applied themselves to the task of compiling new canons of their own. In a few decades they grew wonderfully in power and popularity, and a good number of Sutras, which they gave out as the

sayings of Buddha, were composed and canonized. They propagated the new Gospel throughout the country, even in the teeth of opposition from their adversaries, and posterity knows only too well how great was the success they attained in their attempts to disseminate the message of the Master in and outside India. These Mahâsânghikas are the pioneers of the Mahâyâna movement and are the creators of its philosophy, which was afterwards formulated and given a practical shape by Nâgârjuna.

THE NEW CONNOTATION OF THE TERM MAHAYANA

The word Mahâyâna, however, was not yet in great vogue, and, where used, could hardly have been understood in its later connotation. The Mahâsânghikas, while referring to their own doctrines, used to designate them by such terms as Ekayâna, Agrayâna, Bhadrâyâna, Paramârthayâna, Bodhisatvayâna, Buddhayâna and also as Mahâyâna, and while speaking of the philosophy of the Theras, they used to describe it by the names of Dviyâna, Triyâna, Arhatayâna, Shrâvakayâna and Himayâna. In order to indicate a well-marked doctrinal difference between themselves and the Theras, and also to retaliate on the latter for their condemnation of the new sect, the seceders at last found the terms Hinayâna and Mahâyâna best suited to their purpose. From a strong sense of superiority they used for their own doctrines the term Mahâyâna (Great Vehicle) and for that of the Theras the term Hinayâna (Small or Narrow Vehicle). In the Sûtras, however, these two terms were used more to distinguish between the ontological and phenomenological perception of Buddha than to indicate any relationship between themselves and the Theras. It is from the time of Nâgâr-

juna that they came to be used in the latter sense.

IMPACT OF HINDUISM ON BUDDHISM

Though the circumstances that led to the schism and, subsequently, to the emergence of Mahâyâna, were created to a large extent by some internal differences among the brethren of the Sangha, yet it cannot be denied that there were other formidable forces working from outside that played their part in the matter. The Theras were a set of most conservative people, who could scarcely think of any change in the original form of their faith. They, however, enjoyed unmitigated freedom for a few decades, as there was hardly any movement antagonistic to them. But when Vedic religion, giving up its age-long stereotyped form, revived under the patronage of the Sunga dynasty, it could not but have its repercussions on Buddhism. Apropos of Vedic revival, Vaishnavism, another phase of Hinduism, came to the forefront with its Bhakti cult, which had a special fascination for the masses. Thwarted in its onward march, Buddhism strongly reacted against the sudden aggression of Hinduism, and progressive movements within its fold came into existence out of the necessity for self-preservation. The reactionaries, or, more truly, the Mahâyânists, following the tenets of Vaishnavism, introduced the recitation of Buddha's name and worship of his personality in a greater measure. The idea of Amitâbha (of Immeasurable Resplendence) was in all probability borrowed from the Vedic Mitra (sun) worship; and that of Avalokiteshvara, or the Compassionate One who incarnates himself for the redemption of the world, was but a replica of the Avatâravâda of the Hindus. These, and many more factors entirely changed the colour of Buddhism, and it can fairly be asserted that the

impact of Hinduism was responsible to a degree for the creation of this new phase of Buddhism, viz., Mahâyânism.

But whatever might have been the extraneous causes of this sudden change of front, the Mahâyânists never entirely dissociated themselves from the original Buddhism. Although they created some new canons apart from the old ones, yet they could not cut off the link with the mother church. In spite of their repudiating the Pali canons, they have drawn ample inspiration from them; and most of the interlocutors in the Mahâyâna Sutras, such as Subhuti and Shâriputra, are but Hinayâna personalities. Mahâyâna is only a reinterpretation and reorientation of Buddha's teachings to suit the changed circumstances and to fit in with the advanced philosophical outlook. It was therefore an evolution from within, effected by the progressive section.

ITS LITERATURE

Among the early Mahâyâna works Prajñâpâramitâ-sutras occupy a most exalted place. Many of the Mahâyâna savants thought it expedient to devote much of their time and energy to comprehend the true import of the philosophy embodied in them. During the later period the Mahâyâna philosophers, while compiling their various Shâstras (philosophical treatises), looked to the Pâramitâs for inspiration and guidance.

These Prajñâpâramitâs are, however, found in various versions, such as *Shatasâhasrikâ*, *Panchavimshati-Sâhasrikâ*, *Ashtâdasha-Sâhasrikâ*, *Dasha-Sâhasrikâ*, *Ashta-Sâhasrikâ*, *Sapta-Shatikâ*, *Ardha-Shatikâ* and *Ekâkshari*. Some smaller ones are the abridgments of the bigger ones, but most of them are independent works composed at different times. All the Pâramitâ-sutras aim at establishing the *sunyatâ*-philosophy and exhort every one to reach the highest

perfection through the practice of the Pâramitâs, which are *Dâna* (alms-giving), *Shila* (morality), *Kshânti* (forbearance), *Virya* (energy), *Dhyâna* (meditation) and *Prajñâ* (wisdom).

Besides these, there are other Sutras such as *Sadharmapundarika*, *Amitâyus*, *Vimalakirti*, *Mahâparinirvâna*,¹ *Lankâvatâra*, *Mahâyâna*, *Ratnakuta*, *Ratnamegha*, *Ratnarâshi*, *Vajrachedika*, *Shalistanbha Samâdhirâja* and *Sukhavati*, some of which existed before Nâgârjuna, and the majority were written between 100 B.C. and 400 A.D.

But, curiously enough, one finds all the Mahâyâna Sutras written in some form of Sanskrit, whether pure or mutilated. The reason for this is not far to seek. Since the advent of Buddha, who showed preference to Pali as the vehicle of his message, Sanskrit suffered a set-back for a time. But with the Hindu revival during the second century B.C., Sanskrit regained its lost status as a language of refinement and culture, and Pali was shoved to the background. This is why the Mahâyânists preferred Sanskrit while composing their works.

THE PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT

The first period of development of Mahâyâna may broadly be called the Sutra period. During this period, various Sutras were composed, and the main tenets of Mahâyâna were set forth; but one could scarcely find in them any systematic treatment of its philosophy. During the second period, which can roughly be called the school period, a regular attempt was made to evolve various systems of philosophy out of the chaotic mass of Sutras. Different Shâstras or commentaries on the Sutras and many independent treatises were written. The most note-worthy of them

¹ Which is different from the Mahâparinirvâna of Hinayâna.

are the *Prajñâpâramitâ-shâstra*, a commentary on the *Prajñâpâramitâ-sutra* and the *Mulamadhyamakârika* of Nâgârjuna, who was the pioneer of this new movement.

THE CARDINAL DOCTRINES OF MAHAYANA

The Hinayânists believed that a person could attain Nirvâna or final deliverance from the world, comprehending the Noble Truths and Pratitya-samutpâda, which they regarded as belonging to the Noumenon. The Mahâyânists on the other hand declared that Nirvâna is attained when one realizes that the Noble Truths, etc., are in the realm of phenomena and *sunyatâ* is the only reality. Unlike their predecessors, the Mahâyânists believed in the *sunyatâ* of both *puḍgala* (soul) and *dharma* (thing) and declared that final emancipation can only be attained by removing both *kleshâvarana* (the veil of sufferings) and *jñeyâvarana* (the covering of ignorance) through the knowledge of the two-fold *sunyatâ*. Regarding Buddha-logy the Mahâyânists did not believe in the personality of Buddha. Though they have mentioned the *trikâya* (Nirmânakâya, Sambhogakâya and Dharmakâya) of Buddha, yet in point of fact these *kâyas* (forms) are no better than phantoms, belonging to the realm of phenomena. Buddha can never be born and cannot assume any physical or spiritual form; it is through ignorance that one sees him as a man of flesh and blood and thinks of him as following the ways of the world and preaching the religion; in essence he is equated with *sunya*.

The most outstanding feature of Mahâyâna is its ideal of Bodhisattva, which brought about a thorough change in the religious outlook of Buddhism. The Theras were preoccupied with working out their personal salvation and could hardly think of an altruistic ideal

in life. Although Buddha has admonished his followers to go as preachers to preach, out of compassion, the religion "for the benefit of many, for the happiness of many, for the good and happiness of both men and gods,"² yet his immediate followers laid stress on working out their individual salvation and aspired only after arhathood and not Buddhahood, which they considered to be beyond their ken. The Mahâyânists asserted that every being is a potential Buddha, and he can become a Buddha *de facto* if he only follows the ideal of Bodhisattva in his life. A Bodhisattva is pledged to the attainment of his own salvation through the salvation of others. A Buddha is a Bodhisattva who embodies himself for the redemption of his fellow beings, and everyone can grow to the full stature of Buddhahood if he takes up the vow of realizing the *summum bonum* through universal salvation and thus develops in himself *Bodhichitta*,³ and imbibes the spirit of *mahâkarunâ* (great compassion). This attitude in life can be well compared with the Gita ideal of *moksha* (emancipation) through selfless activity. Moreover, the laity were so long merely the supporters of the Sangha and not its actual members. The arhatship was not for them, unless they could give up their hearth and home and embrace the life of a monk. But the Mahâyânists gave out that everybody irrespective of his station in life was destined to develop not only arhathood but also Buddhahood. A householder is as much a Bodhisattva as any Bhikshu, if he only takes up the ideal of great compassion and undergoes the requisite *charyas* (practices) prescribed for a Bodhisattva. Thus the Mahâyânists have granted

² Digha. N. II.

³ Which means the vow or aspiration of a being to become a Buddha and attain all his qualities.

more religious facility to the lay devotees and formally included them in the Order. This new gesture has drawn an ever-increasing number of votaries to the faith and thus strengthened the Sangha more than ever.

SCHOOLS OF MAHAYANA

In the course of its evolution Mahâyâna branched off into different schools of thought, of which the Mâdhyamika or Sunyavâda school of Nâgârjuna and the Yogâchâra or Vijñânâvâda school of Maitreyanâtha are the most noteworthy. The task before the Mâdhyamikas was to state the nature of the ultimate reality, whereas the Yogâchâras, tacitly accepting the conclusion of their predecessors, busied themselves in explaining the phenomena of consciousness or how events and things appeared in and through *vijñâna* or mind, which was the repository of all knowledge (*âlaya-vijñâna*). The two schools arrived at their respective conclusions of Sunyavâda or transcendental negativism and Vijñânâvâda or subjective idealism. In spite of their differences they were unanimous in their attack on the Hinayâna philosophy and worked in unison to expose the hollowness of its dogmas and doctrines.

Besides these two systems of thought the philosophy of Ashvaghosha II, who flourished during the reign of King Kanishka, formed a distinctive school of its own. This is called Tathatâ (suchness) or Bhutatathatâ (suchness of existence) philosophy. The quintessence of its doctrine is the "oneness of the totality of things or *dharmadhatus*," which is an all-comprising whole, ever uncreated and eternal. Here the Noumenon and phenomena are harmoniously blended into one. Looked at from the standpoint of the ultimate reality, it will appear to be one homogeneous whole without any quality whatsoever, but

viewed from the phenomenal state, it will be seen to possess different activities and imbued with divergent attributes. But the phenomena are never different from the Noumenon, as much as the waves and earthenwares are not separable from water and earth. Thatness (Tathatâ) embraces in itself both phenomena and Noumenon or *samsâra* and Nirvâna. This Tathatâ philosophy of Ashvaghosha and the *sunyatâ* philosophy of Nâgârjuna are not substantially at variance with each other. The only difference is that Nâgârjuna has laid more stress on the ontological aspect and described the reality in a negative way, whereas Ashvaghosha, without losing sight of that aspect, has dealt more with the phenomenal side and expressed the truth in a positive manner. Tathatâ philosophy may be taken as furnishing a link between the negativism of the Mâdhyamikas and the phenomenology of the Yogâchâras.

During the later periods many philosophers of note appeared in the arena of Buddhistic thought and enriched its metaphysics by their individual and corporate labour. To mention only a few, there were Aryadeva, Sthiramati, Kumârajiva, Buddhapâlita, Bhâvaviveka, Shântideva, Chandrakirti and others, who belonged to the line of Nâgârjuna and were staunch followers of the Mâdhyamika school, and Asanga, Vasubandhu, Gunamati, Dingnâga, Dharmapâla, Shilabhadra and others, who adhered to the Yogâchâra school of Maitreyanâtha.

Buddhism was in the height of its glory during the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. and reached the acme of philosophical speculation. Hinduism was then in ascendance and had a great revival through such gigantic personalities as Kumârilla, Gaudapâda and Sankara. Frequent conflicts between these two rival sects in the intellectual

field contributed not a little to the evolution and enrichment of Indian thought. But by this time Buddhism was on the wane, and after Dharmakirti, who was most probably a contemporary of Kumârilla, one scarcely hears about any original thinker among the Buddhists.

We have made here a brief survey of Buddhistic thought as it was before Nâgârjuna and attempted to give a bare outline of what took place after him. It will be somewhat easy for us now to understand Nâgârjuna's philosophy in its true perspective.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

In the *Editorial* we have dealt with the cardinal teachings of the Advaita Vedanta and shown *inter alia* how the interpretation put by some scholars of India on certain Sruti texts regarding *avasthâtraya* is likely to belittle the importance of spiritual discipline enjoined in the scriptures for the realisation of Truth. In the *Spiritual Significance of Sri Krishna's Life-Story* by Prof. Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, M.A., Professor of Philosophy, Anandamohan College, Mymensingh, the readers will find a learned exposition of the underlying significance of Sri Krishna's activities in Brindavan, Mathura, Dwaraka and Kurukshetra. Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, U. S. A., has pointed out in his article on *Path to India's Freedom* that the political emancipation of India lies through the intensification of her spiritual ideals and not through the blind imitation of the Western brand of Communism which is quite unsuited to the cultural genius of the Indian people. The article on *What is God* by Prof. Mohan Singh, M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt., of the Lahore Oriental College, deals with the true import of the term 'God' and shows in the light of the various scriptures that the real God is not a figment of imagination but is all things at the centre and at the circumference and is

all through. He is in short the Principle and practice—the process of Unity in multiplicity, and multiplicity in Unity. In *Beliefs and Practices of the Hindus* by Swami Atulananda, an American monk of the Ramakrishna Mission, the readers will find a rational interpretation of some of the religious practices observed by the adherents of Hinduism. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph. D., Asst. Professor of Philosophy in the Pachaiyappa's College, Madras, has ably shown in *The Faith of a Universalist* that to the synthetic vision of a universalist all faiths are but different approximations to the ultimate truth, and as such all sense of provincialism in truth is altogether foreign to his soul. In *A Sociology of Hindu Festivals*, Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, M.A., D. Geog. H.C., of the Calcutta University, makes a comparative study of the festivals and folk-life of the East and the West in the light of Mr. Meyer's book on 'Triology of Hindu Vegetation Powers and Festivals' and points out their utility in the socio-religious life of the Hindus. Swami Vimuktananda of the Ramakrishna Mission continues his thoughtful article on *Buddhism and the Philosophy of Nagarjuna* and discusses here in brief the salient features of the philosophy of the Mahâsânghikas, the precursors of Mahayanism that subsequently received its final shape at the hand of Nagarjuna.

EDUCATION THAT INDIA NEEDS

One of the greatest needs of our age, as for all ages, is education of the right type, the aim of which should be to equip one with enough intellectual conscience and moral courage for facing the battles of life efficiently. The whole world is passing through a great chaos and unsettlement. 'Might is right' has become the motto of the day and even the fundamental principles of civilisation are being openly violated. Most of the countries are attempting, in various ways, to change their existing systems of education, its aims and methods, so as to suit their national purposes. Under such conditions, India can no longer lag behind the other progressive countries of the world, and we badly need to reorganise our present system of education in such a way as to make it more practical and to relate it to the economic and social needs of our country. Looking back to hoary antiquity, we find that ancient Indian education was characterised by a healthy combination of learning and knowledge, both secular and religious, the ideal relationship between the teacher and the taught during the latter's residence in the *guru-griha*, and the individualistic nature of the teaching and the training imparted through intimate personal contact. But to-day we find that the very purpose of education has been defeated by driving home into the mind of the student, who is looked upon more or less as a receiving machine, a mass of words and theories from a number of text books on a variety of subjects. Modern education, as it stands to-day, has thoroughly failed to produce the right type of persons who are fit to become self-sacrificing citizens and national leaders. It is but meet that such a system of education requires

'drastic revision from the foundation to the flag-pole.'

During the course of his inaugural address at the sixth session of the Federation of Recognised Institutions of the Central Provinces and Berar, Mr. T. J. Kedar, Vice-Chancellor of the Nagpur University, observed, "The world conditions require resurgence of a new India, full of vitality, and strength, ready to recover her lost soul. Truly does the Upanishad say: the soul cannot be recovered by scientific discussion, nor by intelligence nor by a good deal of intellectual training. . . the soul cannot be recovered by one devoid of strength, by one without prudence and foresight or by one without self-less sacrifice. . . And education that is wanting in these is not worth-having. . . This means we must have a new orientation and a complete overhaul of our present system. . . What I want is that our curriculum should be so adjusted as to leave sufficient margin everyday for physical training. . . The vernacular medium can be utilised on an extensive scale and secondary education can be made more wide and more general by including social studies and elementary science. . . A basic scheme of national education means, in my humble opinion, that the schools shall be lifted to a higher plane in the task of nation-building—the making of men, citizens and workers." A complete system of education implies a balance and harmony between the properly developed body, mind and soul. According to Swami Vivekananda, what our country needs are "muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist . . .", and to achieve this, much stress has to be laid on physical culture and absolute Brahmacharyam during the entire period of student-life. Without a healthy body, a healthy mind cannot

be developed; but India needs to-day men of great self-control and fertile brain who can lead her in her march towards the goal of freedom.

The object of the ideal system of education should not be mere advancement of theoretical knowledge but the advancement of life, the development of true manhood and an all-round culture, physical and spiritual. "Education", says Swami Vivekananda, "is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. It is neither book-learning, nor diverse knowledge but the training by which the current and expression of the will are brought under control and become fruitful. . . . We must have life-building, man-making, character-building assimilation of ideas. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect expanded and by which one can stand on his own feet." "That education should train young men and women for vital and enlightened citizenship dedicated to the common good and inspired by goodwill not only towards those within the political frontiers of our own country, but towards all nations and races,"—was the view expressed by Dewan Bahadur

S. E. Ranganadhan, Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University, in addressing the Conference of the Mysore Educational League. In India to-day, the bogey of communalism has raised its head and our system of education should be so reorganised as to promote mutual understanding and goodwill among the various communities. In recent years some of our leading educationists have asked the question: why blend the spiritual education with the secular? With the vision of a seer that he was, Swami Vivekananda included in his scheme of education both Western Science and Hindu Vedanta, all forms of healthy up-to-date secular learning and also moral and spiritual culture. Every nation has a national purpose of its own and the nation dies when that culture is neglected. Religion is our life-blood, our national life-current, and our education should be put on a religious basis. Ancient India as well as the Mohammedans had done so, and to-day it is absolutely necessary to re-introduce this spiritual and moral element in our education, through which alone is it possible to cultivate the *shraddhâ* or faith in one's own self, which is the corner-stone in the edifice of future education for India.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, VOLS. I AND II: BY SADHU SANTINATH. *Published by The Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner. Pages 1,110.*

The two volumes of the work under review embody, as the author tells us in the Preface, the result of his years of experience as a spiritual seeker and as a student of philosophy. He tells us that he began his spiritual journey as a staunch believer and has come to its end(?) as an "inveterate agnostic or critic." The author maintains

that the fundamentals of religion cannot bear rational scrutiny and to vindicate this he essays to point out the "logical difficulties" in all the religio-philosophical systems of India—the Nyâya-Vaisesika, the Samkhya-Pâtanjala, the Pâsupata-Mâdhva, the Vaisnavic, Saivaite and the Tântic systems, Buddhism, Jainism, the Mimâmsâ, and the Visistâdvaitic and the Advaitic systems. The author reviews these systems critically with special reference to what he regards as the fundamentals of religion which are enumerated as:—(1) Reverence for the Scriptures, (2) Faith in Supernatural Power as

controlling natural phenomena and human destinies, (3) Strict or restricted allegiance to the Law of 'Karma' and (4) Belief in the self and its capacity for spiritual self-discipline (Sâdhanâ) and attainment of liberation (Mukti).

We doubt neither the author's erudition and learning nor his sincerity of purpose, but we are tempted to say at the very outset that he is entirely on the wrong track and that his massive work of 'logic-chopping' has every promise of being passed over in disgust by all those to whom religion means, not a maze of beliefs and doctrines or the logistical framework of a theory, but an integral and veridical experience which has to be interpreted in its own terms. A philosophy that does not concern itself with the phases of the specific *religious experience* could never be called a 'philosophy of religion'—at any rate, that is not the meaning of the term in modern philosophical thought—and as such the title of the work is a misnomer. References to the states of Samadhi are, no doubt, made, but the doctrinal dissensions fill the major portion of the work.

With regard to the Advaitic conclusion, the author opines that "the first and primary proof" for this conclusion is "that it is so proclaimed by the scriptures" and he adds in a foot-note that "the Vedantists declare that reasoning is without any finality (*tarkâpratisthânât*), that is, they want to discard reasoning and establish the validity of the Scriptures as a superior source of true knowledge. On the ground that one person's careful reasoning is found to be refuted by others, they think that they are justified in discarding reasoning as a source of the knowledge of the ultimate truth" (P. 454). Now, it is quite true that the Vedantists regard the Scriptural utterances regarding the ultimate truth or the *mahāvâkyas* as they are known as beyond dispute, but it is the most daring distortion of facts to say that "they want to discard reasoning." It is an undeniable fact that the Vedantic teachers have employed the subtlest of dialectics in combating rival systems and that their literature does embody a definite rational metaphysics for which they have claimed the added authority of the Sruti. Samkara, the foremost of Vedantic teachers, as is well known to his students, employs the subtlest of reasoning in combating the rival materialistic, mentalistic, and nihilistic principles of the

Samkhya and the Buddhistic systems. From this it is clear that he is not averse to ratiocination about fundamental principles. He has written: "Rational inference also, such as does not conflict with the Vedânta texts, can be accepted as a valid means of knowledge, for even the Sruti accepts argumentation as an auxiliary" (S. B. 1. 1. 2.). When he says '*tarkam is apratisthitam*', all he means is that a conclusion (right or wrong) arrived at by reasoning, does not carry an unquestionable certainty (which is a different thing from uncertainty) with it, but *allows* doubting about it; whereas the integral experience of Truth or intuition does not. This being so, I see no reason why the superior authority of intuition ought to be grudged. And the superior authority of Sruti means at bottom the superior authority of intuition; for, what are the *mahāvâkyas* but the intuitive deliverances of the *seers* of Truth? Of course, there have been, as the author complains, conflicting interpretations of the same texts, but that is because the commentators have approached them with their own preconceived metaphysical notions. One is however perfectly at liberty to argue out for himself as to what interpretation would be the most natural and tenable. The Advaitin claims that his interpretations of the Sruti texts stand to reason and are in conformity with the obvious meaning of the *mahāvâkyas* and with the highest intuitional experience.

Now I come to the author's treatment of the problem of God which, of course, is the central problem in the philosophy of religion. The author classifies all the different conceptions of God in the different religio-philosophical systems of the world under three main heads: (1) God as only the efficient cause of the world, (2) God as both the efficient and the material cause of the world and (3) God as the illusory material and efficient cause of the world. The author says that there are logical difficulties in all these conceptions of God and he also argues that the existence of God cannot be established by any of the six *pramânas*, perception, inference, etc. The rightness or wrongness of the author's criticisms on these points apart, I wish to raise here a fundamental question of methodology. Has the author made the right approach to the problem of God? I emphatically say he has not. There is nothing new about the author's conten-

tion that the existence of God cannot be logically proved or demonstrated. Kant showed this long ago in a manner which it is difficult for anyone to surpass. Modern philosophical thought (about religion) has, however, switched off from this logistical railroad and come to a study of the *actual* deliverances of the religious consciousness. Present day religious philosophy concerns itself about God as the *factual* content of living experience. It no longer thinks that the proof of God's existence consists in "a process of building a precarious speculative bridge from the world we see to its unseen author." Prof. R. F. A. Hoernlé pertinently observes: "We know God through religion, and there is no other way of knowing Him. It is not that we are religious because we have become convinced antecedently, from other sources, that there is a God. Nor do we gain our conviction by an exercise of the 'will to believe', if that means Pascal-wise, taking a gambler's chance on the possibility of there being a God. If there is a 'venture of faith' which outruns demonstration and yet is not sapped by doubt, it is because in religion we live by a conviction which the very habit of living by it re-inforces and sustains, and which justifies itself by a stability of outlook and response unshaken by the vicissitudes of human fortune, and by a strength equal to every call upon it."

The author has an ingenious way of proving the invalidity of *Samâdhî* which he translates as the 'trance' state. Here is his argument in his own words: "In trance with thought (*savikalpa samadhi*), the experience of the mental object varies according to the character of the contemplation of the student practising. So there cannot be the ascertainment of truth through it. The object intuited has no existence independent of our mind, but exists so long as the trance lasts and ceases to exist as soon as the trance ceases Because at the time of the trance without thought (*nirvikalpa samadhi*), the initial thought gets lost and another thought does not arise, because it is a state where mental function cannot be known, no thought or experience is possible there, and no person can have the capacity of ascertaining the nature of things and thoughts there" (pp. 213-15). Now, does the functioning of thought in *savikalpa samâdhi* make it only a subjective experience, a creation of the mind? I believe the infer-

ence is unwarranted. We have the functioning of thought in our normal waking experience also, but we do not on that account regard the world of our waking experience as a mental creation merely. There is no reason to disbelieve that our thinking in the *savikalpa samâdhi* state has as much *reference to an objective reality* as it has in the waking experience. Similarly, as the withdrawal of individual awareness does not destroy the permanent reality of the world in waking experience, so also we cannot say that the reality experienced in *samâdhi* ceases to be with the disappearance of *samâdhi*. As to individual variations in the character of experience in *savikalpa samâdhi*, it may be conceded that there are variations to some extent, but that will not nonsuit the validity of the object of experience. The author's conclusion regarding *nirvikalpa samâdhi* is likewise untenable. Because there is the cessation of mental activity in that state, it certainly does not follow that it is no experience at all. "Another thought does not arise there," true; but a kind of knowledge higher than the ordinary conceptual or relational knowledge which is designated gnosis does arise there. This gnosis is not a lapse into a negative blank, but a truth-revealing consciousness (*ritam-bharâ tatra prajñâ*).

We should have expected of one who commenced his "spiritual career at the very dawn of youth" and has been studying all his life "the dialectical works of the different religio-philosophical systems" that he would bring a message of solace and assurance to the convulsed humanity of to-day, but instead, our author leaves hanging over our heads a cloud of "mysteries within mysteries and mysteries above mysteries" and exhorts us to surrender to "the consciousness that the mystery is insoluble." If this were all he had to deliver, we cannot help wondering why the author wasted so much time and energy in writing a book of above thousand pages! But what strikes as most bizarre to us is that the author who has throughout assumed the validity of the canons of reason and played the "critic" with their aid, should in the end come to a position of utter agnosticism. Can the agnostic, consistently with his creed, give *any* ultimate predicate to reality, even so much that it is a 'mystery'?

—PROF. S. N. L. SRIVASTAVA, M.A.

PUNJAB SUFI POETS. BY LAJWANTI RAMA KRISHNA. *Published by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. Pp. 142. Price Rs. 5.*

Perhaps this is the first time that a competent scholar has taken up the arduous task of writing a chronological account of the lives of Punjabi Sufi poets. In this laudable attempt the author has utilised manuscripts, printed poems and other historical evidences. The scholarly introduction deals with the history, origin and development of Sufism outside India and describes how the Sufi mystics came to India with the Mohammedan conquest and how they were influenced by the philosophy of the Vedas and Puranas. These gentle and peaceful poet-mystics preached the ideal of finding God in all His creation and thus attaining union with Him. They composed poems, songs and hymns in praise of God the Beloved, describing the pain and sorrow caused by separation and the joy and peace gained in the union, and exercised a great influence on the life and literature of the Punjab. Needless to say that the author's attempt at depicting the life of each poet by a careful selection and translation of extracts from his works has been attended with great success.

This book has satisfied a long-felt want and we have every reason to believe that it will stimulate the interest of the students and admirers of Sufism in India.

INSPIRED TALKS. BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. *Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 220. Pocket size. Price Re. 1-12.*

This is a faithful record of a series of talks given by Swami Vivekananda to a group of his intimate friends and disciples who gathered round him at a quite out-of-the-way cottage in Thousand Island Park in

the St. Lawrence River whither the Swami repaired for rest and solitude after a couple of years of strenuous preaching and lecturing in America. These talks not being regular lectures, were taken in long hand and safely preserved by a loving lady disciple. Those inspiring words were first brought out in a book form in 1908 with the ardent hope that they must have the power to bring comfort and solace to all souls. The book has since run through several editions which show its intrinsic worth and popularity.

The talks range over various subjects taken from such sacred books as the Holy Bible, Bhagavad Gita, Vedanta-Sutras, Upanishads, Bhakti Sutras of Narada and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. There are also talks on Sri Ramakrishna Deva and the Divine Mother; in the former we get a brief sketch of the Master and in the latter a masterly exposition in a succinct manner of Sakti Worship or the worship of Universal Energy as Mother.

The language is simple and is marked by brevity and directness appealing straight to the heart and intellect as well. Swami Vivekananda known to many as a thundering orator and a convincing debator is seen in these pages, on the contrary, as a peaceful Rishi of the Vedic ages sitting in the midst of a few ardent souls, mildly disseminating the message of peace and bliss and uttering words of profoundest wisdom.

The talks proper are preceded by two essays, viz., "Introductory Narrative" and "The Master" where we have touching reminiscences of the great Swami. An exhaustive Index also has been added to this new edition. The book is printed in clear and bold types and the get-up is handy and attractive.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HEADQUARTERS

REPORT OF ITS ACTIVITIES FOR 1936 AND 1937

The activities of the Mission Headquarters fall under the following main heads:

(1) *Administration of the different centres*: There were in all 50 Mission centres including the Headquarters, of which 12 were institutions of general service, 21 institu-

tions mainly educational, and 16 institutions of various activities.

(2) *Out-door Charitable Dispensary at Belur*: The total number of cases, including repetitions, treated in the Dispensary was 18,981 in 1936 and 23,614 in 1937.

(3) *Mass Education Work*: During the years under review 16 different schools received aid from the Mass Education Fund.

(4) *Temporary Relief Work* : Temporary Relief Work was done in times of distress caused by floods, famine, cyclone or epidemics in the districts of Bankura, Hooghly, Burdwan, Khulna, Malda, Birbhum, Guntur, Cawnpore, Midnapore, as well as in Burma and Orissa.

(5) *Help to the Poor* : Regular pecuniary help was given to 59 families and 11 students in 1936 and 59 families and 12 students in 1937. Temporary help from The Poor Fund was given to 52 indigent persons in 1936 and to 37 in 1937.

(6) *Needs* : The new Dispensary building is yet to be completed and requires Rs. 3,000/- for the purpose. Also a sum of Rs. 6,000/- is needed to add a few rooms to the second storey of the new Dispensary building. A wide road leading to the Mission Headquarters directly from the Grand Trunk Road, which was a great desideratum all these years, is now under construction. For this purpose a piece of land costing Rs. 5,700/- was purchased. The estimated cost of completing this metalled road including the amounts already advanced for the land and construction work is Rs. 18,000/-. An appeal is made to the generous public to come forward to help these various activities of the Mission. Remittances may kindly be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Howrah.

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS
REPORT FOR 1938**

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras, are fourfold, viz., the Home proper, the attached Residential School, the Mambalam Branch School and the Industrial School.

The Home proper : At the end of the year there were 182 students in the Home, of whom about half the number were in receipt of scholarships from various sources. Out of 36 boys that appeared in different examinations, 28 came out successful. The major portion of the household work was done by the boys themselves, supervised by 'captains' elected from among the senior students. The students got the benefit of tutorial guidance, physical training and games, garden work, vocational hobbies and moral and religious instruction. The Home contains a good library and reading-room and runs a music class for those interested in music.

The Residential High School : Its special

features are small classes, simplicity in furniture and dress, laboratory plan of teaching, compulsory Sanskrit up to IV Form and manual training up to VI Form. Its extra-curricular activities consist of the Literary Union and Manuscript Magazines, the Seva Sangham or Volunteer Corps and Excursions.

The Industrial School : This school trains students for the diploma in Automobile Engineering (L. A. E.) extending over a period of 5 years. It undertakes all kinds of repairs, including complete overhauling of any automobile, and the Jubilee Workshop attached to it is run on commercial lines being fully equipped with up-to-date machinery.

The Mambalam High School : Its strength during the year rose to 1838. Second Form was added in the North Branch School, each form was subdivided into sections, and two additional sections were opened in the IV Form. Out of 104 boys and 8 girls sent up for the S. S. L. C. Examination, 65 boys and 6 girls were declared eligible. The attached hostel, which is run on similar lines as the Home, contained 40 boarders during the year. An outstanding event of the year under review was the amalgamation of Sri Sarada Vidyalaya, located in Mambalam and containing 900 girls, with the Ramakrishna Mission.

**THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
STUDENT'S HOME, BATTICALOA,
CEYLON**

The orphanage known under the above name was started in 1929 in Kalladiuppodai, a picturesque part of Ceylon. The boys undergo a regular discipline making them lead a pure and holy life. The Home has its own electric power-house and water supply and a co-operative stores which supplies the provisions and other needs of the inmates. The students, who number a little over one hundred, are trained in nursing, gardening, keeping accounts and such other household duties. The Shivananda Vidyalaya, attached to the Home, possesses well-equipped laboratories and qualified staff and trains students up to the Senior School Certificate Examination.

**CHRISTMAS WEEK CELEBRATIONS AT
THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA
ASHRAMA, HOWRAH**

On the occasion of the Christmas Eve, a meeting was held at the Ramakrishna-

Vivekananda Ashrama, 4, Naskarpara Lane, Kasundia, Howrah, on the 24th December at 5 p.m. Swami Jagadiswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, while speaking on "Sri Ramakrishna and Jesus Christ", pointed out many similarities between these two great personalities and said that very little difference could be found in the lives and teachings of the Avatars (incarnations) of different religions. Miss MacLeod, disciple of Swami Vivekananda, also spoke in this meeting on the "Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda."

Swami Srivasananda of the Ramakrishna Mission delivered an impressive speech on the "Future of India" in the Library Hall of the Ashrama on the 26th December last.

On the 29th December last, Swami Virajananda, President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, visited the Ashrama along with Swami Madhavananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission and Swamis Abhayananda, Vireswarananda and Pavitrananda.

Swami Virajananda was given a hearty and respectful ovation. He was then shown round the different buildings of the Ashrama where different activities are carried on. The workers of the Ashrama who assembled on the occasion then requested the Swami to tell them something about Swami Vivekananda and the Swami in his inimitable style spoke on the personal reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda, which captivated the hearts of all assembled.

On the 30th December last Swami Sundarananda, Editor of the *Udbodhan*, delivered a speech on the "Ideal of Karmayoga", at the Library Hall of the Ashrama.

THE RAMAKRISHNA TEMPLE AT BELUR

Every Indian is proud of the magnificent temple in memory of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of modern India, on the banks of the Ganges at Belur in full view of the Dakshineswar temple, where he lived and realised that all religions are true. It was originally designed by Swami Vivekananda with the help of his brother-disciple Swami Vijnanananda, the late lamented President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, by whom it was dedicated a year ago. The temple fulfils the cherished dream of the Swamiji that Sri Ramakrishna's remains should be preserved in a suitable place, from where will issue a spiritual force that will

extend to the farthest corners of the earth.

Executed in stone, the noble edifice measures 233 feet from north to south and 109 feet from east to west, and reaches a height of 112 feet. In beauty and sublimity, it has already carved out a distinct place for itself, blending harmoniously, as it does, the best features of religious architecture, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern. It will go down the pages of history as a landmark of that cultural and spiritual synthesis for which India has already won the admiration of the world. By its universal appeal, the temple has eminently succeeded in drawing an ever-increasing number of admirers, irrespective of caste, creed and colour.

Few, however, realise that the temple has cost a huge amount, far beyond the means of a poor monastery like the Belur Math. The uninitiated are apt to be misled by appearances, and the tale has got current that the monastery is backed by the unlimited resources of America. The American friends are to be heartily thanked for what they have done, but that does not in any way circumscribe the duties of our countrymen. In fact, to make the temple strong enough to last for centuries, we had to face it with stone, with the result that the help from America, although exceedingly generous, was not sufficient for the purpose, and the monastery had to incur a debt of nearly Rs. 90,000/- for the temple, statue, altar, electric fixtures, protection wall, ghat, etc. The total cost reached nearly Rs. 7,88,000/- of which about Rs. 6,70,000/- was supplied by American friends and about Rs. 28,000/- was realised in India.

Is it too much to expect that when the facts are laid before our countrymen, they will readily respond by taking a more lively and active interest in the financial condition of this worthy memorial of Sri Ramakrishna, of whom they are justly proud? Will they not feel it an honour to associate themselves with this unique structure, which is a concrete symbol of the ideas and ideals that modern India stands for? Contributions, however small, earmarked for the Temple Fund will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Math, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI VIRAJANANDA,
President, Ramakrishna Math, Belur.